



Reading With Infants and Toddlers



3 Keys to Language Learning

1. Personal Relationships

Language thrives when communication is

- Personal
- Built on trust
- Face-to-face
- Mutual (give-and-take, joint)
- Responsive (attuned to children)
- Enjoyable
- Daily, ongoing

2. Sensory-Motor Experiences

Language growth thrives on experiences that

- Engage the senses
- Involve movement, action, thought
- Sustain choice, exploration, play
- Are daily, ongoing, varied

3. Vocabulary-rich environments

Language growth thrives in vocabulary-rich settings where

- Object, action, and idea words are used fluently.
- There are give-and-take conversations.
- Children are exposed to many words.
- Children hear new words many times.
- Sign language is used.

Benefits of Listening to Stories and Reading Aloud

Reading aloud

- ◆ Is pleasurable
- ◆ Is the beginning of reading, since very young children first read by interpreting the pictures
- ◆ Enables children to have fun with words and learn more about language
- ◆ Focuses on oral language
- ◆ Eventually leads to an understanding of written language
- ◆ Is one of the most important ways adults can foster children's emerging literacy
- ◆ "Improves [children's]...reading, writing, speaking, listening — and, best of all, their attitudes about reading" (Jim Trelease, 2001, *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, New York: The Penguin Group).

Strategies for Supporting Reading With Infants and Toddlers

1. Have a cozy place to read.

- ◆ Choose an area away from noisy distractions.
- ◆ Place soft items there for children and providers to lean and sit on: pillows, blankets, cushions, beanbag chair, love seat, small mattress on the floor, rocking chair (child and adult sized).
- ◆ Make the area cozy and homey with family pictures.
- ◆ If possible, place books so that children can see the covers. Stand some books up on the floor or shelf.
- ◆ Limit the number of books so it's not overwhelming to children.
- ◆ Place smaller baskets and containers of books around the house.
- ◆ Include the following kinds of books: soft, board, big, fabric, plastic, pop-up, and paperback.
- ◆ Allow children to carry books around.
- ◆ Keep familiar and favorite books on shelves.
- ◆ Add new books from time to time.
- ◆ Remove books according to children's interests.

2. Build reading and storytelling into your routine.

- ◆ Read throughout the day in a variety of settings (for example, at arrival, outside, nap, and play times).
- ◆ Place pictures of children and their families on the wall by the diapering table and tell stories about your children.
- ◆ Take pictures of children during the day and make little storybooks using small photo albums.
- ◆ Share rhymes and poems as stories.
- ◆ Share stories about events of the day (outside time, walks, play time).
- ◆ Ask toddlers to tell a story.
- ◆ Encourage parents to share pictures from home. Use them to tell stories in the classroom.

3. Use adult-child interaction strategies.

- ◆ Story time with the rest of the children should be optional for infants and toddlers. If they are interested, they will join.
- ◆ Consider children's abilities and preferences when choosing books.
- ◆ Keep all story groups as small and intimate as possible.
- ◆ Enjoy reading with and engaging children in the stories you read and tell.

- ◆ Read a wide variety of books.
- ◆ Involve children in the process of reading, before, during, and after! Encourage them to help select the book and choose where to sit. While you read, pause often so they can point to the illustrations and add their own comments. After you finish, ask if they would like to read the book again, select another book, or perhaps just carry the book around!
- ◆ Use props from time to time with stories.
- ◆ Follow children's lead as you interact with children during reading.
- ◆ Repeat stories that children are interested in hearing over and over again, which
 - Immerses the child in language of the story, making it easier to learn
 - Helps build children's confidence
 - Strengthens and reinforces the neural connections in children's brains
 - Improves children's vocabulary, sequencing, and memory skills
 - Increases the possibility that toddlers will be able to repeat the book on their own afterwards
 - Encourages toddlers to reenact their favorite stories
- ◆ Read in a natural voice.
- ◆ When appropriate, substitute children's names for the characters in stories.
- ◆ Talk with children about feelings depicted in stories.
- ◆ Practice reading with expression.
- ◆ Sing a story.
- ◆ Make simple comments about pictures in the story.
- ◆ Connect the story to children's lives.
- ◆ Encourage conversation about the story.

Recommended List of Young Children's Books

Infants:

B is for Bear
Baby Born
Baby Love's Series (I Can Smile at You)
Baby's First Book
Babyfaces Peek-A-Boo
Babyfaces Smiles
Big Fat Hen
Bouncing
Brian Wildsmith's ABC
Busy Toes
Busy Fingers
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
Clap hands
Ernie and Bert Can... Can you?
Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper
Friends
Goodnight Moon
Here Are My Hands
Hush Little Ones
I Love Animals
I See
I Went Walking
Looking at Animals
Love You Forever
Messy Baby
My First Mother Goose
My House
My Toys
Museum Colors
Peek-a-boo Plays Rhymes
Play With Me
Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young
Sleep, Sleep, Sleep: A Lullaby for Little Ones Around the World
Sleepyhead
The Baby's Lap Book
The Cow Says Moo
The First Word Picture Book
The Noisy Book
The Runaway Bunny
Time for Bed
Tomie DePaola's Mother Goose
What Does Baby See?
Winnie the Pooh's Rhymes

Toddlers:

All About Me
All by Myself
Best Word Book Ever
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Clifford, The Big Red Dog
Cookie's Week
Dancing Feet
De Colores and Other Latin-American Folk Songs for Children
Dimity Dumpty: The Story of Humpty's Little Sister
Eat Up, Gemma
Finger Rhymes
Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed
Freight Train
Goodnight Gorilla
Have You Seen My Duckling?
Hunky Dory Ate It
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie
Is Your Mama a Llama?
Jamberry
Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?
Jump Frog, Jump
Kisses
Let's Get Dressed
Mama, Do You Love Me?
Max's Bath
"More, More, More" Said the Baby
Mouse Paint
On the Day I Was Born
Peepo!
Peter's Chair
Seven Blind Mice
Sheep in a Jeep
Stellaluna
Ten in a Bed
Ten, Nine, Eight
The Bunny Planet
The Little Red Hen
The Very Quite Cricket
The Wheels on the Bus
Toddlerobics
Wait Till the Moon Is Full
When You Were a Baby
Will I Have a Friend?

