

## Why read with children?

Many experts say that daily reading to children at an early age is a great way for parents and caregivers to help children keep pace in school - and later in life. A proven way to achieve this is by making sure a child is read to every day for 20 minutes. This is known as the "20 Minute Miracle." Reading can do many things to help a child on the road to lifelong learning. Here are just a few examples of what reading can do.

- ✓ Children learn by being talked to and read to.
- ✓ Reading helps children learn about language - they learn new words and what they mean.
- ✓ Children hear words in books that they don't hear in conversation.
- ✓ Reading can calm and comfort a child.
- ✓ It exposes children to a wealth of experiences outside of their own.
- ✓ Reading can help stimulate a child's imagination.
- ✓ Colorful pictures in books give meaning to words.
- ✓ Reading with children helps prepare them for school success.
- ✓ Hearing books helps children learn to listen.
- ✓ As they follow along, children learn that the 'marks' on the pages have meaning. This gives them the background they need to learn to read.
- ✓ As you read for longer times, you help increase a child's attention span. Being able to pay attention in school will help a child succeed.
- ✓ It encourages a child to be comfortable with books and reading - this will lead to a lifelong love of books and learning!
- ✓ Reading is fun!

## Reading to Learn in School

Children can learn many things from looking at books with an adult. When a child enters school there are certain skills that the kindergarten teacher will look for in a child's development. Children who do not know basic skills associated with reading will not be ready to succeed. By reading with your child every day for 20 minutes your child will be exposed to the basics about books before entering school.



- ✓ Children learn that stories have a beginning and end.
- ✓ They learn that books have a front and back.
- ✓ As you point out letters and name them, some children can learn the letters. Children gradually learn to recognize letters in both capitals and lower case.
- ✓ Children learn new words.
- ✓ Children learn the names of objects in pictures and can talk about what is happening.
- ✓ Concepts such as colors, counting, things people do, and types of animals can be learned by pointing to pictures and talking about what the item is or what is happening.
- ✓ Children learn to answer age-appropriate questions about the illustrations and story. Encourage a child to talk about and think about a book and that will help develop the child's language skills.
- ✓ A child will be used to sitting still and will learn to concentrate on a book.
- ✓ Children can learn that those black squiggly marks represent words!
- ✓ Children will learn that reading goes from left to right, but that pages are turned from right to left!
- ✓ Children can 'read' too, if they hear a story often enough to memorize the story. Memorization is a step to reading and children love to hear a story over and over.

*Young children like books that are:  
funny, silly,  
exaggerate or fantasize!*

## What Children Like in Books

Every child is different. These are suggestions of what many children like to see, hear, and read about in a book.

### Babies up to 12 months:

- board books with photos of other babies
- brightly colored board books to touch and taste
- books that show and name familiar things like balls and bottles
- rhythmic sounds

### Toddlers 12 to 36 months:

- sturdy board books that they can carry
- photos of children doing things like sleeping and playing
- goodnight books for bedtime
- simple rhymes
- predictable words books about saying good-bye and hello
- books with only a few words on each page
- animal books

### Preschoolers 3 to 5 years:

- books that tell a story
- stories and pictures about children that look and live like they do
- books about making friends
- stories and pictures about going places (the zoo, school, doctor, park)
- books about having brothers and sisters
- books that have simple words that they can memorize or read



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## How to make reading fun!

If you are having fun, so will your child! If your child has fun they will learn to love books and that can lead to lifelong learning! We hope you find these ideas for read-alouds helpful.

**I know that one!** Choose a book that you like - one appropriate to the age of the child/children. Always read the book aloud yourself before attempting to read it with children.

**Rhymes at times!** Poems and rhymes are wonderful! Many children can learn to read faster if they hear rhymes at a young age.

**Picture Perfect!** When reading, hold the book so your child can see the pictures as you read.

**Forget it!** If a story doesn't seem to be working, stop! Say, "This book doesn't sound good to me today - let's try another one." Or "I don't think you are enjoying this story, let's try different one." You may need to put the book away and try later when your child is more interested in hearing a story.

**Slow down!** Read at an appropriate speed, taking time to show the illustrations and varying the tempo as the story calls for such variation.

**I can't hear you!** Make sure you are reading loud enough for your child to hear.

**Encore! Encore!** Repetition is important. Read the same book over and over, and over! Read books with the same character. Children enjoy hearing the same story over and over.

**Be an actor!** Possibly the most important point is animation. Your voice and tone should match the story.

If it is a serious story, be serious. If it is a funny story, your voice should be light and fun. Try to use different voices when you read to your child. If a small mouse is speaking, try to make your voice "squeak." If the character is a huge angry bear, make your voice loud and mean.

If a character is running, try to use speech that appears rapid and speak like you are out of breath.

If a character is described as a "teeny, tiny" person, emphasize the words "teeny" and "tiny" by lowering your voice.

***Remember that what you may consider silly behavior while reading is what will delight your child!***

### **The library is our friend!**

If you are having difficulty choosing books, stop by any branch of the Allen County Public Library for help. Tell them about your child and the wonderful staff will help you find fun books to read to your child.