

Parent Pages

Toddlers Are Taking Steps Toward Reading

Toddlers love activity and the chance to practice their growing language skills. You can use these traits to advance your toddler's pre-reading skills. Involve toddlers in the reading experience by asking questions and having them expand on the stories you read together. Toddlers who talk about the illustrations, characters, setting, actions, and other aspects of books step up the development of their language and reading skills.

Use the following suggestions to choose developmentally appropriate books for your toddler and make your shared reading time enjoyable and successful!

Read to your toddler twenty minutes every day. Don't save reading for a time when you have twenty minutes uninterrupted; anyone raising a toddler knows that time will never come! Instead find a few moments throughout the day to read together. Read aloud a book or retell a story from memory while eating breakfast. Read while your child is sitting on the toilet. Read while waiting for dinner to cook. Just a few minutes at a time add up to a lifetime of special reading memories. The important thing is to read every day.

Read alphabet books. Use alphabet books to increase your child's awareness of the letters in the alphabet. Two great alphabet books are *The Accidental Zucchini: An Unusual Alphabet* by Maw Grover and *Animalia* by Graeme Base.

Read Wordless picture books. Make up simple stories about the beautiful images found in these books. As your child becomes more comfortable, create more elaborate tales inviting your toddler to contribute ideas. Ask toddlers to label the images they see. These are also great books for toddlers to use when they are "reading" aloud to you and for independent use during quiet reading time.

Read books with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. These books are easy for your child to memorize, and your toddler will be able to pretend to read them to you. Toddlers love the predictability that comes from hearing the same story, song, or refrain again and again. Read nursery rhymes to enhance their phonemic awareness. Many nursery rhymes can be set to music, using different notes for each syllable.

Work with your toddler's developmental stages. Toddlers rarely sit still; find books that can be acted out: *Toddlerobics* by Zita Newcome, *Clap your Hands* by Lorinda Bryan Cauley, *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle and *Calling All Toddlers* by Francesca Simon. These great read alouds are fun and encourage movement.

Use the dialogic reading method. Although it sounds complicated, dialogic reading simply means having a dialogue while reading. Follow this basic model – ask questions, expand on what your child has to say, and follow up with additional questions. Try to use who, what, where, why, and how questions. By keeping your questions open-ended you are enhancing your child's language and narrative skills.

Books for Two to Three Year Olds

Where's My Teddy?
Jez Alborough

Time For Bed
Mem Fox

Mouse Paint
Ellen Stoll Walsh

Tumble Bumble
Felicia Bond

Barnyard Song
Rhonda Gowler Greene

Hi, Pizza Man!
Virginia Walter

Today is Monday
Eric Carle

The Doorbell Rang
Pat Hutchins

Mrs. McNosh and the Great Big
Squash
Sarah Weeks

The Very Busy Spider
Eric Earle

The Snowy Day
Ezra Jack Keats

If I were a Lion
Sarah Weeks

Polar Bear, Polar Bear
What do you Hear?
Eric Carle

Bouncing on the Bed
Jackie French Koller

Skip to my Lou
Nadine Bernard Wescott
Have you Seen the Crocodile?
Colin West

I Like Me!
Nancy L. Carlson

We All Went on Safari
Laurie Krebs

Bubble Gum, Bubble Gum
Lisa Wheeler

Jesse Bear, What Will You
Wear?
Nancy White Carlstrom

Boom
Bill Martin, Jr. &
John Archambault

The Neighborhood Mother
Goose
Nina Crews

Dogs Don't Wear Sneakers
Laura Numeroff

Bear Snores On
Karma Wilson

Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type
Denise Cronin

10 Minutes Till Bedtime
Peggy Rathmann

The Napping House
Audrey Wood

Feathers for Lunch
Lois Ehlert

Sheep in a Jeep
Nancy Shaw

How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?
Jane Yolen

Bark, George
Jules Feiffer

Owl Babies
Martin Waddell



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