



Reading to Children is Essential to Learning

<https://childcenter.utexas.edu/news/reading-children-essential-learning>

A child's reading skills are important to their success in school and work. But if that's not enough, reading can also be a fun and imaginative activity for children — opening doors to all kinds of new worlds! “But my child can't read yet — why should I have books in the house?” Even before they know what words are, children benefit from watching and listening to you read aloud to them. Within their first year, they are able to learn basic language and reading concepts. The earlier children grasp these concepts, the easier they learn to read, and the easier it is to learn.

Reading and language skills begin to develop right from the start. Research has identified five early reading skills that are essential to learning:

1. Phonemic awareness — being able to hear, identify, and play with individual sounds in spoken words
2. Phonics — being able to connect the letters of written language with the sounds of spoken language
3. Vocabulary — the words children need to know to communicate effectively
4. Reading Comprehension — being able to understand and get meaning from what has been read
5. Fluency — being able to read text accurately and quickly

Reading to Babies

- Use small, chunky board books that your baby can easily hold onto.
- Talk about the pictures with your little one.
- Sing the text to keep their attention.
- Play peek-a-boo with lift-the-flap books.
- Help your baby to touch and feel the books.

Reading to Young Children

- Read slowly, with expression.
- Try using different voices for different characters.

- Follow the words with your finger as you read.
- Point to the pictures and say the names of objects and colors.
- Have your child help turn the pages.
- Ask your child to describe pictures, repeat phrases used in the story, and predict what will happen next
- Take time to answer questions.

Reading Aloud With Emergent Readers

Reading should be even more fun now as you can do it together!

- Take turns reading paragraphs or entire pages.
- Help your child with words they have trouble reading. Ask what word would make sense in the story.
- Be encouraging.
- Talk about the book as you read together.
- Ask questions that allow the child to express their own ideas and opinions.

Reading Aloud With Older Children & Teens

Giving them the opportunity to read interesting books that might be too difficult for them helps to motivate them to improve vocabulary and reading skills.

- Read short sections of books or articles aloud to catch your child's attention. Encourage her to read the rest on her own.
- Call your child's attention to an illustration or photo on the cover of a book or magazine. Ask what he thinks about it.
- Encourage them to read the book or article, and then discuss it with them.
- Encourage your child to read aloud to younger siblings or friends.