



# Read and Discuss Stories

## WHY?

The more we read with young children, the more prepared they become to enjoy reading and to do well in school. It is never too early to begin reading! Stories expose children to words and ideas that they would not otherwise experience. Books teach children to use their imaginations. What they learn about people, places and things can be important building blocks to later life success. For both parents and children, times together with books form fond and lasting memories.

## Tips for Toddlers (12-36 Months)

### Commit to Read Every Day

Try to set aside 15 minutes every day to read together. Get books from your local library.

### Warm Up

Before you open the book, check out the cover. Read the title. Look at the picture. Ask your child what they think the book might be about.

### Read and Discuss

Your toddler will learn the most if you have discussions while you read. Respond to their comments and questions about the story. Ask questions that get them thinking. "Why is the boy sad?" "What do you think is going to happen next?"

### Help Them Follow Along

Point to the words and pictures. This helps your toddler understand how reading works. For example, "We read from left to right on the page."

### Use Expression

Use your best reader's voice! Trying different voices for each character is fun.

### Enjoy the Pictures

Talk about what is happening in the pictures. You can talk about the colors and shapes you see or what the characters are doing.

### **Don't Be Too Serious**

Make it fun! Your toddler may want to turn the page before you've finished it. If they can't sit still for the whole book, that's okay.

### **Set a Great Example**

If toddlers see grownups reading and know that they enjoy it, they will learn that reading is a fun and important part of life.

### **Make a Card**

Help your child make cards for your loved ones. Fold the paper and give them some crayons or markers to decorate. Deliver the card or help them put it in the mailbox.

### **Look for Letters**

Look for letters when you're with your child. Try to find the first letter of their first name. See how many places you can find it while reading or on packaging or signs.

### **Re-Read**

Toddlers learn through repetition, so it is normal when they want to read the same book over and over again. Notice how proud they feel when they master the story. But try for variety too, because new books offer different things to see, hear and learn.

### **Act It Out**

Your child might be inspired to play based on the stories you read. Can they follow the characters' actions? What toys or objects might be props?

### **Ask Questions**

"What do you think will happen next?" or "Why is the girl happy?" Respond to your child's comments and questions. Show interest in their ideas.

### **Make Connections**

Help your child make personal connections to the stories you read. For example, "Do you remember when we saw the fire truck? How did it sound?"