



Family Stories

Telling family stories helps your child get to know special people in his life. Storytelling is also an important tradition in many cultures, and can help build a sense of family and community while giving children a foundation for early reading skills at the same time.

This article provides a number of ways that you can make storytelling a part of the time your family spends together.

What to Do

The first activities in the list below work well with younger children. As your child grows older, the later activities let him do more. But keep doing the first ones as long as he enjoys them.

Share family stories

Tell your child stories about your parents and grandparents or about others who are special to you and your family. You might put these stories in a book and add old photographs.

The storyteller's voice helps your child to hear the sounds of words and how they are put together to make meaning.

Think out loud about when you were little

Make a story out of something that happened, such as a family trip, a birthday party, or when you lost your first tooth.

Ask your child to share stories

Have your child tell you stories about what he did on special days, such as holidays, birthdays, and family vacations.

Keep family journals from trips and special events

If you go on a trip, write a trip journal with your child to make a new family story. Take photographs of special events. Writing down special events and pasting photographs of the events in the journal will tie the family story to a written history. You can also include everyday trips, such as going to the grocery store or the park.

adapted from Colorin Colorado



Getting Ready to Read: Using Storytelling, Rhymes, and More!

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You and your young child can choose from a variety of engaging activities that incorporate all of your senses while learning to read at home. From singing and rhyming to storytelling and acting, these activities will help your child to develop a wide array of reading readiness skills.

Storytelling at every age

From birth through grade school, your child will benefit from conversing, reading, and telling stories with you. You can use combinations of these strategies throughout your child's early years:

- **Listening and responding:** You can start to listen and talk to your child when she is as young as a newborn. Acknowledge and respond to the sounds that your baby makes in an expressive way by varying the tone of your voice as you talk to her. Help keep her interested and focused by making funny faces, singing nursery rhymes, and playing simple games like peek-a-boo.
- **Reading together:** When your baby gets a little older, you can start reading books to her every day, identifying familiar pictures as you go. Your baby will start to see reading as a special bonding time with you.
- **Asking and answering questions:** Toddlers love to use their developing language skills to ask questions. Encourage your toddler's new skills by engaging her in conversations, listening to her questions, and answering them patiently. Ask her specific questions to help her elaborate on stories that she tells you.
- **Sharing family stories:** You can also tell your child meaningful stories about yourself or other loved ones, using photos to illustrate your words. Listening to these personal stories will help your child both recognize sounds and develop an appreciation for her unique family history.

Helpful information about learning brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine

How to Read With a Squiggly Baby (or Toddler!)

Parents know they should read with their child every day. But reading together requires that your baby or toddler will actually sit still long enough for a book! If you've got a squiggler in your house, see if these tips help your reading time go a little more smoothly:

TIP 1: Read before bed, but don't wait too long!

Really tired little ones have a harder time focusing their attention. It may help to pull out your books before the bath, or right after dinnertime. If your child is too tired to read, don't force it. Keep book times happy times.

TIP 3: Sing along, or have some rhyme time!

Books meant to be sung, or books written in rhyme, mean that you and your child get to clap along, sing along, and bounce up and down to the rhythm of the language. The fun physical involvement will keep your child interested in reading.

TIP 5: Keep your favorites by your side

Your child will begin to develop favorite storytime books. Plan to read those books until the pages fall out! The repeated, enjoyable experience of reading favorite books goes a long way toward developing good reading habits.

TIP 2: Choose fun, brightly colored books!

The most engaging books for little ones have lots of bright, big pictures. Board books, the ones with stiff cardboard pages, are great for little hands to hold.

TIP 4: Be expressive!

Don't worry, no one is listening! As you read the book, change your voice for each character. Say loud words LOUDLY and soft words softly. Add hand gestures and foot stomping to go along with the story.

TIP 6: Help your child develop a reading habit

It's important to recognize that reading with a really young child looks and sounds different than reading with an older child. It's louder, with more action and movement. That's okay! The simple interaction with you, your child, and a book sends a powerful message about reading.

Visit www.ReadingRockets.org/atoz/reading_aloud for more resources!

Tell a Story Books!

Baby Happy Baby Sad by Leslie Patricelli

The Birthday Box/Mi Caja de Cumpleanos by Leslie Patricelli

Black and White by Tana Hoban

(also in series: *Black & White; 1, 2, 3 Board Book; Red, Blue, Yellow Shoe; White on Black, What is That?; Who are They?*)

Counting Kisses by Karen Katz

(also in series: *Peek-a-Baby; Toes, Ears and Nose; What Does Baby Say?; Where is Baby's Belly Button?; In Grandma's Arms*)

Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, illustrated by Tom Lichenheld

Fire Engine No. 9 by Mike Austin

Global Babies/Bebés del mundo and *Global Baby Girls*, a Global Fund for Children book

Good-Bye!! by Ethan Long

Good Dog Carl By Alexandra Day

(also in series: *Carl's Afternoon in the Park; Carl Goes Shopping; Good Night Good Dog Carl; Carl's Birthday; Carl's Summer Vacation; Carl's Snowy Afternoon*)

Good News Bad News by Jeff Mack

Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

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Baby Basics: A WETA Kids Book List

All of Baby, Nose to Toes by Victoria Adler, illustrated by Hiroe Nakata

Animals/Animales: My Very First Bilingual Book by Eric Carle

Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman
(also in series: *Bear Wants More, Bear's New Friend, Bear Feels Scared*)

The Birthday Box by Leslie Patricelli

Black and White by Tana Hoban
(also in series: *Black & White; 1, 2, 3 Board Book; Red, Blue, Yellow Shoe; White on Black, What is That?; Who are They?*)

Can You See What I See? by Walter Wick

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, illustrated by Lois Ehlert

Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury
(also in series: *All Fall Down; Say Goodnight; Tickle Tickle*)

Clap Your Hands by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

Counting Kisses by Karen Katz
(also in series: *Peek-a-Baby; Toes, Ears and Nose; What Does Baby Say?; Where is Baby's Belly Button?; In Grandma's Arms*)

Eyes, Nose, Fingers and Toes by Judy Hindley, illustrated by Brita Granstrum

Freight Train by Donald Crews

From Head to Toe by Eric Carle
(also try: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, illustrated by Eric Carle)

Global Babies/Bebés del mundo and *Global Baby Girls*, a Global Fund for Children book

A Good Day by Kevin Henkes