



Babies and Books

The Beginnings of Language and Literacy for Babies

Parents and caregivers play an important role in their child's language and emerging literacy activities. Children who are read to from an early age show that they develop a larger vocabulary and better language skills when they start school. (Teale 1986)

Babies learn to communicate from birth, making their needs known through body language, cooing, and gurgling sounds. Gradually, these sounds become meaningful communication and sounds become words.

Babies cannot understand print symbols but learn about books by turning the pages, holding the book right side up and "telling stories" about the pictures. (Jenkins & Bowen 1994)

What to do ?

- Play with your baby; talk to him/her, build on what interest them.
- Read simple books with them and name and point to the pictures. Wait for your child to respond, build on their communications skills.
- Choose books that will stand up to your baby's chewing, banging and throwing. Books that have large simple pictures, cloth or vinyl or board books are good for them.
- While on outings, point to signs or logos, let them see you make grocery lists, or check the calendar so that they know reading is a part of everyday life.
- Sing songs, say nursery rhymes and play games like Pat-a-Cake, Peek-a-Boo and This little Piggy. Your baby will enjoy them and begin to understand the pattern of language.



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