



Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.

Sharing Books Together

Tip Sheet #4

Why?

Snuggling together and sharing books can be a special time for you and your child. Even the youngest baby will enjoy and learn from this experience. Your child will learn about listening, language and the world around them while becoming excited about books and reading.

Starting at Birth:

Read regularly. Share books in the morning, at bath time, before bed, waiting for the doctor or on the bus. Have books in your diaper bag and bring them with you wherever you go.

Start now. It's never too early to share books with your baby.

Talk about the pictures. You do not have to read the words to share a book. Just talk about what you see. Name things, or describe what is happening on each page.

Go with the flow. Your baby might grab the book, chew the book, put the book on his head or toss the book. That's ok. Just talk about the pictures and stop when your baby loses interest and try again another time

Have fun. Read with enthusiasm. Use silly voices and make sounds.

Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Build reading routines. Continue with short sessions and eventually lengthen the story time. Don't worry if your child doesn't sit still while you read. He is still listening even if he is moving around.

Talk and share. Read slowly and make sure your child has enough time to look at each page. Comment on what interests your child and wait and listen for your child to respond.

Let your child hold the book. Children like to handle board books and can help turn the pages.

Share favourite books again and again. Be prepared to read the same book over and over again. Encourage your child to pretend to "read" aloud from the books he is familiar with.

Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

Talk about the cover. Point out the title, author and illustrator. Talk about what the story might be about.

Make it personal. Help your child relate what is happening in the story to his own experience. "What happened when we went to the beach?"

Predict. Encourage your child to guess what will happen in the story—even if they already know the story well.

Point out print. Point to words from time to time as you say them, especially words that are repeated. Talk about new words.

Be a role model. Let your child see the reading you do every day for pleasure and for information (magazines, internet, newspapers, recipes, instructions).