



Developmental Disabilities Literacy Promotion Guide

for Pediatric Healthcare Providers

GUIDANCE TO FAMILIES:

a menu of activities to encourage literacy

developmental differences	speech and language problems	autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	intellectual disabilities
	Books that rhyme and/or repeat are particularly important.	Have conversations to build oral language and reciprocity. Explore books about feelings.	Frequency of reading, rhyming, and word play will be very important.
cerebral palsy (CP)	low vision or blindness	hearing loss or deafness	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
Make sure books are accessible. Lap reading may be difficult.	Explore word window margins that track the line of print; create sufficient lighting. Tactile books are fun.	Signing and speaking the story may help the child understand books with and without words. Children can tap out rhythm in music books.	Reduce background noise and other distractions. Explore books that increase self-awareness.

Infants and Toddlers

- Respond to your baby’s babbles and coos—have back and forth conversations.

Play touching and singing games with your baby’s body parts.

Music builds memory and language skills—singing lullabies can calm.

Replace television and technology time with name games, reading, and outdoor activities.
- Play peek-a-boo, patty-cake, and puppet games.

Point to and name objects around your baby.

Explore infant/toddler programs at your library.

Cuddle your baby often. Smile and make eye contact.

Use books to help with transitions.
- Read daily to your toddler, re-reading his/her favorite books for at least 5–10 minutes.

Make sure the people who take care of your baby make reading and conversations important.

Make it easy for your toddler to reach his/her own books.

Reinforce the sounds of your home language with stories, songs, and poems.

Preschool and School-age

- Allow your child to build a personal library of books.

Have your child apply for his own public library card.

Talk about colors, numbers, letter names, and sounds on street signs, cereal boxes, T-shirts, and other things around your child.

Use the library for free audio books for long trips.

Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.
- Increase daily reading to 30 minutes.

Once your child is reading, take turns reading to one another.

Build your child’s listening skills by reading books with fewer pictures such as **Charlotte’s Web** or **The Trumpet of the Swan**.

Keep reading with, and to, your child even once he masters reading.

Bring books in the car, on the bus, to the doctor’s office, and anywhere your child is required to wait.
- Make sure your child sees and hears **you** reading.

Daily reading routines and reading practice are essential.

Write simple notes to your child using letters and pictures. Have him write back to you.

Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.

Deepen your partnership with your child’s teacher by agreeing on frequent and specific modes of communication.

INTRODUCTION

Developmental Disabilities Literacy Promotion Guide for Pediatric Healthcare Providers

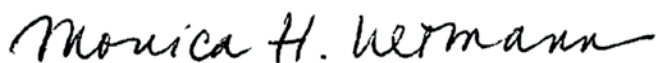
The Developmental Disabilities Literacy Promotion Guide was developed for pediatric primary care providers who care for infants and children with developmental challenges and provide support, advice, and helpful resources to their families. It was developed as part of Reach Out and Read's Special Initiatives program. The guide is designed to be used as a handout for families and a point of reference for pediatric healthcare providers already trained in the Reach Out and Read model of early literacy promotion, though new providers and trainees are also welcome to use the material.

The concept for this guide is based on the mandate of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Bright Futures to encourage pediatric healthcare practitioners to screen for and identify, at earlier ages, infants and children at risk for developmental disabilities, and to create Medical Homes for their ongoing primary care. The content provided within this resource supports the efforts of primary care providers who care for this complex group of children, as they provide anticipatory guidance and resources to parents and caretakers.

Each disorder-specific section provides a brief description of the condition, advice for parents about reading with their child, and internet resources and books they can turn to for reliable information and support. Seven developmental disabilities are included: Speech and Language Problems; Autism Spectrum Disorder; Intellectual Disabilities (mental retardation); Inattention and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Cerebral Palsy; and Vision and Hearing Impairments.

New information to share with parents concerning their complex children is always developing. We hope that you find this guide informative and helpful during your busy clinical day, as you introduce literacy promotion to some of the thousands of children with developmental disabilities (and their families) that Reach Out and Read serves. If you have ideas or suggestions to share, please **email info@reachoutandread.org**.

Sincerely,



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EMERGENT LITERACY

Concept, Challenges, and Implications for Infants and Children with Developmental Disabilities

Emergent literacy refers to the steps infants and children progress through as they master the complex requisites for reading and writing. In addition to being a cognitive process, literacy acquisition involves a fine-tuned balance of linguistic, psychological, and social factors depending heavily on the attachment formed with important people in a child's immediate environment. Acquiring language and literacy skills involves integrating literacy practices and routines into the everyday lives of families by:

- Early verbal and nonverbal interactions
- Opportunities to physically explore
- Daily exposure to reading aloud and/or oral stories
- Engaging toddlers in “playtalk” or imaginative, rich conversations that build oral language
- Word games (rhyming, singing, poetry)
- Scribbling and drawing
- Conversations about books and stories

For infants and children with suspected or diagnosed developmental disabilities, the process of acquiring early language and literacy skills may be difficult and slow because of:

- Atypical social/emotional development
- Attachment issues and parent/child interactions
- Limited sensory and/or cognitive skills
- Physical constraints
- Attentional challenges
- Motor planning/mobility issues
- Misunderstanding a child's abilities

UTILIZING BOOKS FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SURVEILLANCE

and Touchpoints for Anticipatory Guidance in Typically Functioning Infants and Children and those with Developmental Concerns

Giving a book to a child during a routine health maintenance visit allows the healthcare provider a unique opportunity to relate to the child and the family. When a child picks up a book, opens it, and begins to interact with its content, the healthcare provider can view the child through a different lens. Though not considered a screening tool because of its inherent lack of standardization, books can serve as a unique way to observe the child's developmental skills and his interaction with his parent or caretaker.

The following can be observed during an examination, dependent on the age and developmental level of the child:

- Assess eye contact: normal, brief, sustained
- Assess attention to task as well as joint attention and focus
- Observe the child bringing items for shared enjoyment
- Assess language development:
 - Expressive: verbal (babbling, words, phrases, rhyming, spontaneous conversation), nonverbal (gestures, pointing)
 - Receptive: understanding directions, pointing to pictures
 - Pragmatics: the social context of language
 - Atypical Language: echolalia (immediate and delayed)
- Observe fine motor skills: holding the book, turning pages, pointing, tactile abilities, and preferences
- Observe the presence of turn-taking between the adult and child

Pediatric Healthcare Providers are in a unique position to play an influential role in the lives of infants and children with developmental disabilities in their care. Viewed as knowledgeable and experienced, providers can help parents understand their child's developmental challenges, recognize their child's individual strengths, and identify crucial community resources.

When providing families with anticipatory guidance concerning literacy activities:

- Encourage families to balance the demands of educational goals, therapies, and medical needs of the child with time for activities of mutual pleasure—shared reading, story-telling, and playing games.
- Encourage communication, modeling of reading and writing, and literacy-rich home environments.
- Acknowledge what parents and caretakers are already doing to promote early literacy in their children.
- For infants and children identified with developmental concerns at less than 3 years of age, direct parents to early intervention programs and disability-specific resources where they can learn how to engage their child in language, literacy, and play activities at home.
- Encourage adaptive approaches and tools to meet a child's specific needs (e.g., story boxes, tactile experience books for children with visual impairments, specially-designed stories for children with autism, etc.).

GUIDANCE TO FAMILIES: a menu of activities to encourage literacy

DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES	speech and language problems	autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	intellectual disabilities
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Infants and Toddlers

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Cuddle your baby often. Smile and make eye contact.

Use books to help with transitions.
- Read daily to your toddler, re-reading his/her favorite books for at least 5–10 minutes.

Make sure the people who take care of your baby make reading and conversations important.

Make it easy for your toddler to reach his/her own books.

Reinforce the sounds of your home language with stories, songs, and poems.

Preschool and School-age

- Allow your child to build a personal library of books.

Have your child apply for his own public library card.

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Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.
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Build your child’s listening skills by reading books with fewer pictures such as ***Charlotte’s Web*** or ***The Trumpet of the Swan***.

Keep reading with, and to, your child even once he masters reading.

Bring books in the car, on the bus, to the doctor’s office, and anywhere your child is required to wait.
- Make sure your child sees and hears you reading.

Daily reading routines and reading practice are essential.

Write simple notes to your child using letters and pictures. Have him write back to you.

Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.

Deepen your partnership with your child’s teacher by agreeing on frequent and specific modes of communication.



Make book time fun and educational for children with speech and language problems

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Children with speech and language problems may have trouble sharing their thoughts with words or gestures. They may also have a hard time saying words clearly and understanding spoken or written language. Reading to your child and having her name objects in a book or read aloud to you can strengthen her speech and language skills.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. So read to your child every day. Choose books that you think your child will enjoy and will be fun for you to read.

Since younger children have short attention spans, try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. **Your child will soon see reading time as fun time!**

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Read the same story again and again. The repetition will help her learn language.
- ☐ Choose books with rhymes or songs. Clap along to the rhythm and help your child clap along. As your child develops, ask her to fill in words. ("Twinkle twinkle little star. How I wonder what you _____.")
- ☐ Point to pictures and talk about them. ("Look at the silly monkey!") You can also ask your child to point to certain pictures. ("Where's the cat?")
- ☐ Talk about events in your child's life that relate to the story. ("That bear has blue pajamas just like you do!")
- ☐ Ask your child questions about the story. ("Is that bunny hiding?") As your child develops, ask more complex questions. ("What do you think will happen next?")

Some suggested books for your infant or toddler

- **Mother Goose** Rhymes or **Dr. Seuss** books with their rhyming stories
- **Each Peach Pear Plum** by Allan and Janet Ahlberg
- **Chicka Chicka Boom Boom** by Bill Martin, Jr.

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

When you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together. So continue to read to your child every day. Choose books that are on your child's language level and that your child likes.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Discuss the story with your child. ("Why do you think the monkey stole the key?")
- ☐ Help your child become aware of letter sounds. (While pointing to a picture of a snake, ask: "What sound does a snake make?") As your child develops, ask more complex questions. (While pointing to a picture of a ball, ask: "What sound does 'ball' start with?")
- ☐ Play sound games with your child. List words that rhyme ("ball," "tall") or start with the same sound ("mommy," "mix").

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

Funny or silly books are a good choice for this age group. Some titles include:

- **Does a Chimp Wear Clothes?** by Fred Ehrlich, M.D.
- **Hippos Go Berserk!** by Sandra Boynton
- **Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?** by Dr. Seuss

How children can learn more about speech and language problems

Get these books:

- **Let's Talk About Stuttering** by Susan Kent (Ages 4–8)
- **Coping with Stuttering** by Melanie Ann Apel (Ages 9–12)

How parents can learn more about speech and language problems

Read these books:

- **Childhood Speech, Language, and Listening Problems** by Patricia Hamaguchi
- **Does My Child Have a Speech Problem?** by Katherine Martin
- **The New Language of Toys: Teaching Communication Skills to Children with Special Needs: A Guide for Parents and Teachers** by Sue Schwartz and Joan Miller
- **The Parent's Guide to Speech and Language Problems** by Debbie Feit and Heidi Feldman

Contact these groups for more information:

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association—(800) 638-8255 or www.asha.org
- Apraxia-KIDS (The Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association)—www.apraxia-kids.org
- Speechville Express—www.speechville.com



Make book time fun and educational for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together can be a good way to connect with your son or daughter. Reading also helps your child's language development and listening skills. As you know, having ASD impacts the way your child reacts to situations and people and how she looks at the world around her.

Children with ASD often have trouble making eye contact and sharing their thoughts with words or gestures. Some children have a very short attention span when being read to or when reading. Try reading for short periods of time, pointing and naming objects as you read. Other children with ASD may read very early and show intense interest in certain subjects and want to read everything they can on that topic. **Whether your child has mild or severe ASD, making reading a fun activity can help your child's learning and social skills.**

If your child likes routine in her day, try reading her favorite book to help move her from one task to another. For example, reading can set the stage for nap time and bedtime. Work with your child's behavior and/or occupational therapist to learn how reading can help with social skills, new activities, and transitions.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. Reading aloud to your child allows her to hear your voice and listen to spoken words. Your child is also more likely to ask questions and learn about the world around her. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout her life.**

Try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. Your child will see reading time as both fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Borrow books from the library that have photos and drawings of babies and people's faces. This can help your child recognize emotions.
- ☐ Read the same story again and again. The repetition will help her learn language.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- ☐ Find books that have lots of repetition of phrases. Also find books with rhymes. Softly clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm.
- ☐ Find books that have buttons your child can press that have sounds.

Some suggested books for your infant

- **Babies** by Susan Canizares
- **Global Babies** by Mara Ajmera
- **Smile!** by Roberta Grobel Intrater

Some suggested books for your toddler

- **Lots of Feeling** by Shelley Rotner
- Books by Susan Canizares such as **Babies on the Move** and **Feelings**

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Sit on the floor next to your child.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- ☐ Find books on topics that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- ☐ Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds. Borrow library audio books that your child can start or stop by pressing a button.

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- Books by Simms Taback such as ***There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*** and ***This is the House that Jack Built***
- ***Lyle Lyle Crocodile*** by Bernard Waber

How children can learn more about autism spectrum disorder

Get these books:

- ***My Friend Has Autism*** by Amanda Tourville (Ages 5–10)
- ***My Brother Charlie*** by Holly Robinson Peete (Ages 4–8)
- ***Autism and Me*** by Ouisie Shapiro (Ages 5–12)
- ***Ian's Walk*** by Laurie Lears (Ages 4–8)

How parents can learn more about autism spectrum disorder

Read these books:

- ***A Practical Guide to Autism: What Every Parent, Family Member, and Teacher Needs to Know*** by Fred Volkmar and Lisa Wiesner
- ***Does My Child Have Autism: A Parent's Guide to Early Detection and Intervention in Autism Spectrum Disorders*** by Wendy Stone
- ***Writing Social Stories with Carol Gray*** (Book and DVD)

Contact these groups for more information:

- Autism Society of America—(800) 328-8476 or **www.autism-society.org**
- Autism Speaks—**www.autismspeaks.org**. Ask for ***First 100 Days and the Newly Diagnosed Families/School Community*** toolkits.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—**www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly**. Look for the ***Learn the Signs. Act Early.*** program.
- Easter Seals: Act for Autism—**www.easterseals.com**
- First Signs—**www.firstsigns.org**
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Autism Fact Sheet—**www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism/detail_autism.htm**



Make book time fun and educational for children with intellectual disabilities

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Like all children, your child will learn and develop, yet she will likely develop more slowly than other children her age. Reading aloud and talking about the story and the pictures will help your child improve her vocabulary and help teach grammar. When your child reads to you or names objects on the page, she will get added practice to improve her memory and her spoken language skills. As your child grows, talk to her occupational therapist and teachers about ways reading and word-matching games can help improve her reading skills.

If your child is not yet sitting up by herself, prop her up and make sure her seat offers good support. Sit near her as you read. Your baby or young child may not always respond to you at first. As you read, talk to her about the pictures. It is important that you respond to your baby's gurgles and other sounds. This lets your child know that through reading together, you are communicating.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. Reading to your child helps her understand that there are words and pictures on the page. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout her life.**

Try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. Your child will soon see reading time as fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Buy books or borrow books from the library that have thick, sturdy pages.
- ☐ Find books that have rhymes. Clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm of the words.
- ☐ Find books that teach everyday things, such as colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text. Help your toddler point to objects you name in the book.

Some suggested books for your infant

- ***I Can, Can You?*** by Marjorie W. Pitzer
- Books by Laura Ronay, such as ***Kids Like Me...Learn ABC*** or ***Kids Like Me...Learn Colors***
- Books by Rena D. Grossman, such as ***Families*** or ***Eating the Rainbow***

Some suggested books for your toddler

- **Dr. Seuss's ABC**
- **Feelings** by Susan Canizares
- **The Feelings Book** by Todd Parr
- **Hugs and Kisses** by Roberta Grobel Intrater
- Books by Eric Carle, such as **My Very First Book of Colors**, **My Very First Book of Numbers**, **My Very First Book of Shapes**, or **Eric Carle's ABC**

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Borrow books from the library on topics that can strengthen your child's daily living skills, such as books about bedtime or going to the dentist. Also, pick books about things your child enjoys, such as animals.
- ☐ Read aloud and talk about the pictures. Ask your child to name objects or read aloud.
- ☐ **Praise your child's efforts at reading!**
- ☐ Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds, and buy audio books.

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **At the Seashore** by Ruth Koeppl
- **Poke-A-Dot Old MacDonald's Farm** by Travis King
- **Sounds on the Go!** By Gail Donovan

How children can learn more about intellectual disabilities

- **Hi, I'm Ben and...I've Got a Secret** by Julie A. Bouwkamp (Ages 3–8)
- **My Friend Isabelle** by Eliza Woloson (Ages 4–8)
- **Susan Laughs** by Jeanne Willis (Ages 4–8)

How parents can learn more about intellectual disabilities

Read these books:

- **Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parent's Guide** edited by Susan Skallerup
- **Children with Mental Retardation: A Parents' Guide** edited by Romaine Smith
- **Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals** by Libby Kumin, Ph.D.

Contact these groups for more information:

- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities—(800) 424-3688 or **www.aaidd.org**
- The ARC (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens)—(800) 433-5255 or **www.thearc.org**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- Easter Seals—(800) 221-6827 or **www.easterseals.com**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800)695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**
- National Down Syndrome Society—(800) 221-4602 or **www.ndss.org**



Make book time fun and educational for children with cerebral palsy (CP)

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

CP affects your child's brain. This may cause difficulty with muscle tone and control. Your child may have delays speaking or have speech that is hard to understand. Reading with your child and having your child name objects in the book or read aloud to you can strengthen his speech skills.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping his brain to develop. Reading to your child helps him understand that there are words and pictures on the page. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout his life.**

Since young children have short attention spans, try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. Your child will soon see reading time as fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Buy books or borrow books from the library that have thick, sturdy pages.
- ☐ Find books that have rhymes like a Mother Goose nursery rhymes book.
- ☐ Clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm of the words.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text. Help your toddler point to objects you name in the book.

Some suggested books for your infant

Fisher Price makes **Stroller Strap Books**. The straps make the books easy to handle and the sturdy pages stay open and are easy to turn. Some titles include:

- **Ears, Nose & Toes!**
- **Touch and Feel**
- **I Love My Family**

Some suggested books for your toddler

E-Z Page Turners is a series of books made by **Innovative Kids**. These books are specially designed to help little ones turn the pages. You can buy them online or ask your child's occupational therapist for help finding this brand. Some titles include:

- **Trucks**
- **Opposites**
- **Mommies and Babies**

Make book time fun and educational for children with cerebral palsy (CP)

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Find books on topics that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- ☐ Position your child next to you on the couch. If your child is in a wheelchair or special chair, sit close enough so he can see the book and hear you. Ask your child's occupational and/or physical therapist about special tools to help your child prop up the book.
- ☐ Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds. Buy audio books that your child can start or stop by pressing a button.
- ☐ Read aloud and talk about the pictures. Ask your child to name objects or read aloud.
- ☐ **Praise your child's efforts at reading!**

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **Harold and the Purple Crayon** by Crockett Johnson
- **We Are Going on a Bear Hunt** by Helen Oxenbury
- **The Napping House** by Audrey Wood

How children can learn more about cerebral palsy

Read these books:

- **Brothers and Sisters** by Laura Dwight
- **Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs** by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy (Ages 4–10)
- **Views from Our Shoes** by Donald Meyer (Ages 8–12)

How parents can learn more about cerebral palsy

Read these books:

- **Cerebral Palsy: A Complete Guide for Caregiving** by F. Miller and S.J. Bachrach
- **Children with Cerebral Palsy: A Parent's Guide** edited by Elaine Geralis
- **Reflections from a Different Journey** by Stanley Klein

Contact these groups for more information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- Easter Seals—(800) 221-6827 or **www.easter-seals.org**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800) 695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health—**www.ninds.nih.gov**
- United Cerebral Palsy Association—(800) 872-5827 or **www.ucp.org**
- Siblings Support—**www.siblingsupport.org**
- University of Michigan Health System—**www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/specneed.htm**



Make book time fun and educational for children with low vision or blindness

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter. Reading also helps your child's language development and listening skills when you talk about the story and ask questions. **Don't forget that sitting side-by-side listening to audio books together is another way to introduce stories to your child with vision challenges.**

Large print books can help a child with mild to moderate vision loss discover the world of books. These books have big print and offer high contrast between the words and the page to make tracking the words easier. Visit your library and ask for the large print book section. Children who have little or no sight may learn to read Braille. Braille books have raised "letters." Children in elementary school can get free Braille books up to 12 times a year. Call the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults at (410) 659-9315 ext. 2287 to learn more. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your baby, you are helping your child's brain to develop. Reading aloud to your child allows him to hear your voice and listen to spoken words. Your child is also more likely to ask questions and learn about the world around him. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout his life.**

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Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Sit your child next to you. If your child has low vision, make sure there is plenty of light to help him see the page.
- ☐ Buy books or borrow books from the library that have textures your child can touch.
- ☐ Help your toddler feel pop-up or raised objects you name in the book.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- ☐ Find books that have rhymes. Clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm.
- ☐ Find books that have buttons your child can press that have sounds.

Some suggested books for your infant

Look for books that have soft or textured shapes. Find books that have pop-out pieces and textures your child can feel and name. Some titles include:

- **Pat the Bunny** and other Touch and Feel books by Dorothy Kunhardt
- **Three Little Duckies** and other Float Along Books with toys to handle
- **Where Is Baby's Belly Button?** by Karen Katz

Some suggested books for your toddler

- **Are You Ticklish?** by Melanie Mitchell
- **Whose Back is Bumpy?** or **High Tide** by Kate Davis

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Sit your child next to you. If your child has low vision, make sure there is plenty of light to help your child see the page.
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- ☐ Find large print books on topics that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- ☐ Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds. Buy audio books that your child can start or stop by pressing a button.
- ☐ Find Braille books if your child reads Braille.
- ☐ **Praise your child's efforts at reading!**

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round** and other books with wheels that move
- **Children's Book of Nursery Rhymes** and other children's poetry books
- **Mr. Brown Can Moo. Can You?** (use with plastic or stuffed animals)

How children can learn more about vision loss

Get these books:

- **Anna & Natalie** by Barbara H. Cole (Ages 7–12)
- **Saltypie** by Tim Tingle (Ages 5–10)
- **Follow My Leader** by James Garfield (Ages 8–12)

How parents can learn more about vision loss

Read these books:

- **Braille for the Sighted: Beginning Braille** by S. Harold Collins, Jane Schneider, and Kathy Kifer
- **Children with Visual Impairments: A Guide for Parents** edited by M. Cay Holbrook
- **Experiencing Literacy: A Parents' Guide for Fostering Literacy Development of Children with Visual Impairment** by Alan Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook
- **Look at It This Way: Toys and Activities for Children with Visual Impairment** by Roma Lear

Contact these groups for more information:

- American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults—(410) 659-9315 or **www.actionfund.org**
- American Foundation for the Blind—(800) 232-3044 or **www.afb.org**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments—(800) 562-6265 or **www.spedex.com/napvi**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800) 695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**
- National Eye Institute/National Institutes of Health—**www.nei.nih.gov**



Make book time fun and educational for children with hearing loss or deafness

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Hearing loss ranges from partial to total deafness. Some children can hear better with a hearing aid, cochlear implant, or FM system. Others cannot. Hearing loss may last only a short time, or it may never go away. Some children are born with hearing loss. Others develop it later in life. These factors affect the challenges your child will face in learning to read.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. So read to your child every day. Choose books that you think your child will enjoy. Books that rhyme or repeat the same sound are good for helping your child learn the sounds letters and words make.

Since younger children have short attention spans, try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. **Your child will soon see reading time as fun time!**

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Read the same story again and again. This will help your child catch words he may have missed before. Explain the story as needed.
- ☐ Make sure your child can see your face and the pictures. This will help your child follow the story, even if he doesn't catch all the words.
- ☐ Have your child turn pages, touch the pictures, and lift the flaps. This will give your child practice using his hands, which gets him ready to sign.
- ☐ Use simple sign language as you read.

Some suggested books for your infant

Choose board books with simple signs. Some titles include:

- ***Baby Signs*** by Joy Allen
- ***My First Book of Sign Language*** by Joan Holub
- Books by Annie Kubler such as ***My First Signs*** and ***Sign and Sing Along***

Some suggested books for your toddler

- Books by Anthony Lewis such as ***Meal Time***, ***My First Book of Animal Signs***, and ***Play Time***

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

When you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together. So continue to read to your child every day. Choose books that you think your child will enjoy and look fun for you to read.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Read the same story again and again. This will help your child catch words he may have missed before. Explain the story as needed.
- ☐ Make sure your child can see your face and the pictures. This will help your child follow the story, even if he doesn't catch all the words.
- ☐ Use stuffed animals to act out the story.
- ☐ Continue to teach your child to sign.

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **Each Peach Pear Plum** by Allan and Janet Ahlberg
- **Jamberry** by Bruce Degen
- **Sheep in a Jeep** by Nancy Shaw

How children can learn more about hearing loss

Get these books:

- **Jordan Has A Hearing Loss** by Jillian Powell (Ages 4–8)
- **Taking Hearing Impairment to School** by Elaine Ernst Schneider (Ages 5–10)
- **A Button in Her Ear** by Ada B. Litchfield (Ages 5–10)
- **Can You Hear a Rainbow?** by Nicola Simmonds (Ages 4–8)
- **I Have a Sister—My Sister Is Deaf** by Jamie Riggio Heelan (Ages 4–8)

How parents can learn more about hearing loss

Read these books:

- **Choices in Deafness: A Parents' Guide to Communication Options** by Sue Schwartz
- **Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf** by Barbara Schirmer
- **Literacy and Your Deaf Child: What Every Parent Should Know** by David Stewart and Bryan Clarke
- **Literacy Learning for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing** by Lyn Robertson and Carol Flexer
- **When Your Child is Deaf: A Guide for Parents** by D. Luterman

Contact these groups for more information:

- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf—(202) 337-5220 or **www.agbell.org**
- American Society for Deaf Children—(866) 895-4206 or **www.deafchildren.org**
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association—(800) 638-8255 or **www.asha.org**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800) 695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**
- Raising Deaf Kids—(215) 590-7440 or **www.raisingdeafkids.org**



Make book time fun and educational for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Some parents suspect ADHD early on when their toddler is far more active than other children his age. Yet, the disorder often becomes more obvious when the child enters school. Often the child with ADHD may act on impulse and may have trouble following directions or sitting still. How do you know if your child is just very active or has ADHD? It is best to get an evaluation from a trained health professional.

If your child has ADHD, paying attention for long periods of time can be a challenge. So, meet the challenge head-on—make reading time fun time for you and your child. First, pick a quiet spot away from TV, radio, and video game noise. Read for short periods at a time and put the book away if your child loses interest. Pick up the book later and read for another short time period.

Although ADHD is diagnosed later in childhood, adding reading to your child's daily routine is very beneficial. Reading time can help your highly energetic child get ready for naps and bedtime. And remember—reading together for 10 minutes in the morning is a nice way to get the day started on a positive note.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. **Your child will soon see reading time as fun time!**

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Buy books or borrow books from the library. Sing along with the book to hold your baby's interest. Your baby doesn't care if you can sing on key!
- ☐ Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text. Help your toddler point to objects you name in the book. Ask questions about the story as a way to hold your child's interest.
- ☐ Break up short periods of reading time with play time to give your toddler a chance to move about.
- ☐ Continue to read for a few more minutes even if your child squirms off your lap. He may still be listening to the story even though he is playing near you.

Some suggested books for your infant

- **Goodnight Moon** by Margaret Wise Brown
- Books by Rosemary Wells such as **Itsy Bitsy Spider** or **Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star**

Some suggested books for your toddler

- Books by Annie Kubler such as ***If You're Happy and You Know It***, ***Ring Around the Rosie***, or ***Row, Row, Row Your Boat***

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- ☐ Turn off the TV and radio and find a quiet spot to read without distraction.
- ☐ Choose books that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- ☐ Read aloud and talk about the pictures. Allow your child to pick books too, and ask your child to read aloud.
- ☐ **Praise your child's efforts at reading!**

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- ***Adventures of Taxi Dog*** by Debra Barracca
- ***Maybe A Bear Ate It*** by Robie Harris
- ***The Day the Teacher Went Bananas*** by James Howe

How children can learn more about ADHD

Get these books:

- ***All Dogs Have ADHD*** by Kathy Hoopmann (Ages 4–9)
- ***My Friend Has ADHD*** by Kristin Sorra (Ages 4–10)
- ***Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*** by Jack Gantos (Ages 9–12)

How parents can learn more about ADHD

Read these books:

- ***Parent Therapy: A Relational Alternative to Working with Children*** by Linda Jacobs and Carol Wachs
- ***Parenting Children with ADHD: 10 Lessons that Medicine Cannot Teach*** by Vincent J. Monastra, PhD.
- ***The ADD & ADHD Answer Book: Professional Answers to 275 of the Top Questions Parents Ask*** by Susan Ashley

Contact these groups for more information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- CHADD National Resource Center—(800) 233-4050 or **www.help4adhd.org**
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)—(800) 233-4050 or **www.chadd.org**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800) 695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**

Some suggested books for your infant and toddler

speech and language problems

- ***Mother Goose Rhymes*** or ***Dr. Seuss*** books with their rhyming stories
- ***Each Peach Pear Plum*** by Allan and Janet Ahlberg
- ***Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*** by Bill Martin, Jr.

autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

- ***Babies*** by Susan Canizares
- ***Global Babies*** by Mara Ajmera
- ***Smile!*** by Roberta Grobel Intrater
- ***Lots of Feeling*** by Shelley Rotner
- Books by Susan Canizares such as ***Babies on the Move*** and ***Feelings***

intellectual disabilities

- ***I Can, Can You?*** by Marjorie W. Pitzer
- Books by Laura Ronay, such as: ***Kids Like Me...Learn ABC*** or ***Kids Like Me...Learn Colors***
- Books by Rena D. Grossman, such as ***Families*** or ***Eating the Rainbow***
- ***Dr. Seuss's ABC***
- ***Feelings*** by Susan Canizares
- ***The Feelings Book*** by Todd Parr
- ***Hugs and Kisses*** by Roberta Grobel Intrater
- Books by Eric Carle, such as: ***My Very First Book of Colors***, ***My Very First Book of Numbers***, ***My Very First Book of Shapes***, or ***Eric Carle's ABC***

cerebral palsy (CP)

low vision or blindness

hearing loss or deafness

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Fisher Price makes **Stroller Strap**

Books: The straps make the books easy to handle and the sturdy pages stay open and are easy to turn.

- Titles include ***Ears, Nose & Toes!***, ***Touch and Feel***, and ***I Love My Family***

E-Z Page Turners is a series of books made by Innovative Kids.

These books are specially designed to help little ones turn the pages. You can buy them online or ask your child's occupational therapist for help finding this brand.

- Titles include ***Trucks, Opposites***, and ***Mommies and Babies***

Look for books that have soft or textured shapes. Find books that have pop-out pieces and textures your child can feel and name.

- ***Pat the Bunny*** and other Touch and Feel books by Dorothy Kunhardt
- ***Three Little Duckies*** and other Float Along Books with toys to handle
- ***Where Is Baby's Belly Button?*** by Karen Katz
- ***Are You Ticklish?*** by Melanie Mitchell
- ***Whose Back is Bumpy?*** or ***High Tide*** by Kate Davis

Choose board books with simple signs. Some titles include:

- ***Baby Signs*** by Joy Allen
- ***My First Book of Sign Language*** by Joan Holub
- Books by Annie Kubler such as ***My First Signs*** and ***Sign and Sing Along***
- Books by Anthony Lewis such as ***Meal Time***, ***My First Book of Animal Signs***, and ***Play Time***

- ***Goodnight Moon*** by Margaret Wise Brown

- Books by Rosemary Wells such as ***Itsy Bitsy Spider*** or ***Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star***
- Books by Annie Kubler such as ***If You're Happy and You Know It***, ***Ring Around the Rosie***, or ***Row, Row, Row Your Boat***

some suggested books for your school-aged child

speech and language problems

Funny or silly books are a good choice for this age group. Some titles include:

- **Does a Chimp Wear Clothes?** by Fred Ehrlich, M.D.
- **Hippos Go Berserk!** by Sandra Boynton
- **Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?** by Dr. Seuss

autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

- Books by Simms Taback such as **There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly** and **This is the House that Jack Built**
- **Lyle Lyle Crocodile** by Bernard Weber

intellectual disabilities

- **At the Seashore** by Ruth Koepfel
- **Poke-A-Dot Old MacDonald's Farm** by Travis King
- **Sounds on the Go!** by Gail Donovan

cerebral palsy (CP)

- **Harold and the Purple Crayon** by Crockett Johnson
- **We Are Going on a Bear Hunt** by Helen Oxenbury
- **The Napping House** by Audrey Wood

low vision or blindness

- **The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round** and other books with wheels that move
- **Children's Book of Nursery Rhymes** and other children's poetry books
- **Mr. Brown Can Moo. Can You?** by Dr. Seuss (use with plastic or stuffed animals)

hearing loss or deafness

- **Each Peach Pear Plum** by Allan and Janet Ahlberg
- **Jamberry** by Bruce Degen
- **Sheep in a Jeep** by Nancy Shaw

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

- **Adventures of Taxi Dog** by Debra Barracca
- **Maybe A Bear Ate It** by Robie Harris
- **The Day the Teacher Went Bananas** by James Howe



GUIDANCE TO FAMILIES:

a menu of activities to encourage literacy

developmental differences

speech and language problems

Books that rhyme and/or repeat are particularly important.

autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Have conversations to build oral language and reciprocity. Explore books about feelings.

intellectual disabilities

Frequency of reading, rhyming, and word play will be very important.

cerebral palsy (CP)

Make sure books are accessible. Lap reading may be difficult.

low vision or blindness

Explore word window margins that track the line of print; create sufficient lighting. Tactile books are fun.

hearing loss or deafness

Signing and speaking the story may help the child understand books with and without words. Children can tap out rhythm in music books.

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Reduce background noise and other distractions. Explore books that increase self-awareness.

Infants and Toddlers

Respond to your baby's babbles and coos—have back and forth conversations.

Play touching and singing games with your baby's body parts.

Music builds memory and language skills—singing lullabies can calm.

Replace television and technology time with name games, reading, and outdoor activities.

Play peek-a-boo, patty-cake, and puppet games.

Point to and name objects around your baby.

Explore infant/toddler programs at your library.

Cuddle your baby often. Smile and make eye contact.

Use books to help with transitions.

Read daily to your toddler, re-reading his/her favorite books for at least 5–10 minutes.

Make sure the people who take care of your baby make reading and conversations important.

Make it easy for your toddler to reach his/her own books.

Reinforce the sounds of your home language with stories, songs, and poems.

Preschool and School-age

Allow your child to build a personal library of books.

Have your child apply for his own public library card.

Talk about colors, numbers, letter names, and sounds on street signs, cereal boxes, T-shirts, and other things around your child.

Use the library for free audio books for long trips.

Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.

Increase daily reading to 30 minutes.

Once your child is reading, take turns reading to one another.

Build your child's listening skills by reading books with fewer pictures such as ***Charlotte's Web*** or ***The Trumpet of the Swan***.

Keep reading with, and to, your child even once he masters reading.

Bring books in the car, on the bus, to the doctor's office, and anywhere your child is required to wait.

Make sure your child sees and hears **you** reading.

Daily reading routines and reading practice are essential.

Write simple notes to your child using letters and pictures. Have him write back to you.

Word play and rhyming are powerful ways to prepare your child to learn to read.

Deepen your partnership with your child's teacher by agreeing on frequent and specific modes of communication.

Reach Out and Read prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together.

Want to get more involved?



"Like" Reach Out and Read on Facebook www.facebook.com/reachoutandread



Follow us on Twitter www.twitter.com/reachoutandread

Become a volunteer www.reachoutandread.org/volunteer

For reading tips and doctor-recommended children's books, visit www.reachoutandread.org/parents

