

# What to Read to Your Baby

**Y**ou can read anything to a very young infant. Concentrate mainly on creating a storytime routine, cuddling with your baby and bathing her in language.

Pictures should be simple and uncluttered. Very young babies prefer looking at simple black and white line drawings and geometric patterns.

“Mother Goose” and similar rhyming books are a wonderful choice for older babies. The rhythm and rhyme patterns in these simple verses organize words for young ears and promote learning.

Board books with strong pages are good for infants. Your baby can safely hold the books and turn the pages. This develops fine motor skills and lets your baby play an active part in storytime.



**Reading Rx** is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.

Our vision is to ensure that every child grows up literate.

**Our mission is to:**

- empower medical providers to
- partner with community organizations to
- prescribe family literacy and
- promote children as informed consumers of media.

To request more information about Reading Rx, purchase brochures or video tapes, obtain a speaker, or make a tax-deductible contribution, please contact:

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# Reading to Your Baby



The **Why**, **What**, and **How** of  
reading to your very  
young child



# Why Read to Your Baby

**Reading to your baby promotes bonding.** When you hold your baby on your lap to read a story, you are creating a cozy, cuddly time for both of you. The soft, rhythmic sound of your voice will be comforting and calming. It will promote security and strengthen the bond between you.

**Reading to your baby promotes language development.** Infants learn language from the time they are born. Long before your child speaks a word, she is absorbing language like a sponge. Reading to your baby is one more way to speak and interact with her, enhancing this natural learning process.

**Reading to your baby develops an important sense of ritual and routine.** As you read to your baby, you are establishing a storytime routine. Your child will look forward to and benefit from a regular, daily, cozy time with mom or dad and a book, a time that includes turning pages, looking at pictures and hearing words that make a story or a rhyme. You are establishing a routine that is likely to become one of the most treasured times of the day for both of you!

# How to Read to Your Baby

**Keep it short.**  
**Keep it simple.**  
**Pick a time that works for both of you.**

Storytime should be fun and relaxing. Choose a time when your baby is starting to “wind down” from an active time, but while he is still alert. Avoid time when your baby is tired or when you feel frazzled.



**Allow storytime to be an interaction time.**

Storytime is more than reading **to** your child; it is a time to read and interact **with** your child.

As your baby discovers her hands, she will want to grab the book, hold it, and turn the pages. Allow this kind of exploration, while at the same time letting her know that a book is different from an ordinary toy.

As your child begins to repeat words that he hears, encourage language development by getting him actively involved in telling the story. Ask simple questions that invite your child to use words he has learned or is just learning. For example, point to a picture and ask “What is this?” or “What is the kitty doing?”

