

# What to Read to Your Toddler

## **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**

*by Eric Carle*

A beautifully illustrated book about a caterpillar that eats and counts his way through a week's worth of colorful food and is transformed into a butterfly.

## **Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present**

*by Charlotte Zolotow*

*Illustrated by Maurice Sendak*

A little girl gets help from a kindly rabbit in finding the perfect birthday present for her mother.

## **So Much**

*by Trish Cooke*

*Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury*

A large and loving extended family greets baby with hugs and squeezes – because they love him so much.



**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 Toddler



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



# Why Read to Your Baby

**R**eadng to your toddler is FUN! The very best reason to read to your toddler is for the fun of it!

**R**eadng to your toddler can strengthen a positive bond. When you cuddle up with your child and a favorite book, you are creating a special time that can enrich your relationship.

This may be especially important during the toddler years, when your child's behavior is more likely to challenge your patience. Difficult times are predictable. Ensure that calm and cheerful times together are predictable as well.

**R**eadng to your toddler promotes language development. The toddler years are crucial for your child's language development. During these years, young children are "programmed" to learn vocabulary and grammar rapidly – if they are spoken and read to often. Regular read-aloud experiences enhance this natural learning process.

By developing this "give-and-take" method of reading with your toddler, you are improving her attention span AND increasing her language development and her learning.

# How to Read to Your Toddler

## Keep it short.

Your toddler is a busy person, with many important things to do, explore and learn. she may not want to sit still for long. Try reading to her for a few minutes several times a day, gradually increasing reading time as her interest in books and attention span grow.

## Develop a storytime routine.

Because toddlers are "on the go," you may need to read or talk about books "on the go." Your toddler may want to stand rather than sit down for a story. He may listen to you read a few pages or talk about a picture and then run off before the end. He may want to hold or play with a toy while you read. Be patient. Your toddler will gradually learn the storytime routine and his attention span will grow.



## Pick a time that works for both of you.

Storytime should be fun, not a chore. Choose a time when your toddler is "winding down" from an active time, but is still alert. Avoid times when your toddler is tired and crabby or when you are tired and frazzled.

## Allow storytime to be an interaction time.

Storytime is more than reading to your child; it is an opportunity to share a book and interact with your child.

Toddlers will frequently ask about the pictures in a book or about the action in a story. Rather than seeing your child's questions as interruptions, see them as signs of interest and involvement. In fact, if your toddler doesn't ask questions about a story, you should encourage her to do so by asking questions of your own.

Don't worry about following a story exactly. With a toddler, you will read a little, talk a little. For example, you might open a book and exclaim, "Look! A kitty. what is the kitty doing?" After reading part of the story, stop to ask, "What do you think will happen next?" As you turn each page, make a comment about the picture, or ask your toddler a question. Your questions help draw your toddler into the story; the answers your child gives help create the story itself.

