

Tips for Reading with Children as They Grow

INFANTS

Birth to 18 months old

- Use hardboard or cloth books
- Interact with your little ones as you read together by showing them the book, talking about the images, making eye contact and responding to their babbles and gestures
- Encourage your child to touch and hold the book
- Point to pictures of animals or vehicles and make sounds as you read
- Repeat the stories over and over again

TODDLERS

18 to 36 months old

- Introduce longer hardboard and paperback picture books with familiar images and some words or short sentences
- Ask your little ones to point to what they see as you read
- Ask “what” and “who” questions and respond to their answers with excitement
- Talk about who the characters are and how they might be feeling

PRESCHOOLERS

3 to 4 years old

- Add longer books with more words and sentences
- Focus on key concepts
- Discuss how to turn the pages and follow the words from left to right
- Ask your child to choose the book you will read together
- Point out beginning letters and make the letter-sound connections together

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN

4 to 5 years old

- Select early reader books to add to your child’s library
- Read rhyming stories and repeat the rhyming words together
- Point out words that begin or end with the same letters
- Explain new words to your child
- Ask your child to use predictability and picture cues to complete words and sentences

EARLY ELEMENTARY YEARS

6 to 7 years old

- Encourage your child to select the books
- Show your child the book cover and ask them what they think it will be about
- Use open-ended prompts to give children more space to talk about the story
- Ask your child what happened in the book or what the key details were about
- Practice guided reading by having your child read recognized words and sound out new words

