

Tips for Reading to Young Children

Learning begins at birth. Sing songs, tell nursery rhymes and read to your child. Read and sing in any language. Begin as soon as your baby is born.

Set aside special times each day to read to your child, such as naptime, bedtime, or after meals.

Select a place that is cozy, quiet and away from distractions. Then cuddle up together, laugh, be silly, relax and enjoy! Read with expression and enthusiasm. What children need most is a feeling of comfort about books and reading.

Read children's favourites as often as they want to hear them! Children are comforted by and learn best from repetition.

Choose books that interest your child or relate to what's happening in the child's life at the time, whether it's a family trip or a new experience such as starting school.

Allow your child to touch books, point to words and pictures and turn the pages.

Read in any language.

Read to and with children...don't expect them to read. If they want to chime in on a word now and then, it's a bonus, but don't create any pressure around the time you spend reading together. Read at a leisurely pace with pauses here and there. This gives children time to take in what they hear.

Model all kinds of reading with your children. Let them see you read the newspaper, the TV guide, recipes etc. Comment on what you are reading so that they see that reading has many purposes.

Children treasure books they own. Affordable books can be found at yard sales, thrift shops, second-hand bookstores, as well as at the public library book sales. Provide your child with a bookshelf or drawer for his or her own books. A subscription to a children's magazine would make a wonderful present for a child.

Take advantage of the local library. Find out when story hours are for young children. Build a regular trip to the library into your schedule. A library card is a free way of investing in your child's future.

Literacy Tips prepared by the Halton Literacy Advisory Committee.

