

# Shared reading (0-6 years)

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## What is shared reading?

Shared reading is about children and parents reading books together and talking about the pictures and stories.

## Why is shared reading important?

When you read with your child at home, it sets the stage for successful learning at school. Shared reading teaches your child about the pleasures of learning through books. And it is important for your child's language development and reading skills.

You do not need to wait until you think your child is 'ready' to learn to read written words. Your young baby loves the sound of your voice and being held close. If you read to him from birth he will learn that story time is an enjoyable time to share with you.

From about nine months, your child can appreciate pictures in books and can begin to have 'conversations' about what he sees. This gives him lots of opportunities that will later help him learn to read. You can keep reading to your child even when he can read for himself.

## Tips for shared reading with your child

Try to make sharing a book a fun part of every day. Read or share stories at bedtime or on the bus. Here are some other suggestions:

- Be guided by your child's interest. Very young children can pay attention for only a few minutes. Over time, your child will be able to listen for longer periods and be interested in more complex stories.
- Show your child the words. Run your finger along the words as you read them.
- Create voices for the story characters and use body language to tell the story.
- Let your child choose the book and show her that you are looking forward to reading it by the tone of your voice. Younger children might choose the same book over and over (and that's OK!). Older children might choose something they are interested in, like space or animals.
- Follow your child's lead. If he is looking at the picture of the truck, say 'Wow, that's a big truck. Where have you seen one like that?'
- Young children love turning pages so let your child do this if he can. You could also take turns to turn them.
- Ask questions to get your child's ideas about the story. Use 'wh' questions (what, why, where, when, who) – for example, 'I wonder why the boy looked inside the box? What do you think he will find?'

- Ask for more information – for example, ‘That’s interesting. Have you seen one of those before?’
- Wait for your child to respond to questions and allow lots of time for him to express his ideas.
- Keep things relaxed and enjoyable – don’t push your child with too many questions and too many different ideas.
- Expand on what your child says. If your toddler points and says, ‘Truck’ you could say, ‘That’s right. It is a red fire truck. Can you say “fire truck”?’
- Introduce new words and ideas. If you are talking about a dog in a picture, you might say, ‘That dog is called a Dalmatian. He has lots of spots. Our dog is a poodle. Poodles look different.’
- Make connections between the events and characters in the story and your child’s experiences – for example, your family, pets, or neighbourhood. And let your child take the conversation from there.



For some suggestions on rhymes, click [here](#) to download a booklet on rhymes!

### Recommended Reads

- [Very short tall tales to read together](#)
- [A good trick](#)
- [Reading with babies, toddlers and twos](#)