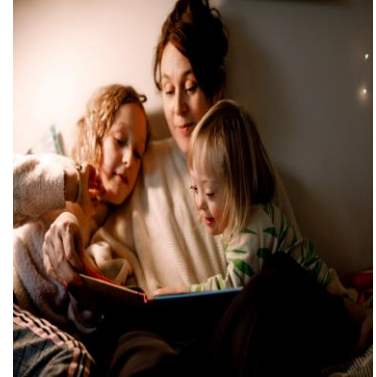


# Benefits of Reading to Children

Let's start by acknowledging the inherent magic within children themselves. Research reveals that babies' brains begin preparing for speech long before their first words emerge. It's essential for them to constantly hear words so they can learn which ones to use. Here's where reading comes in.

According to the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, reading with your child:



- **Expands their vocabulary:** Books introduce words not commonly used in everyday conversation. One study estimated that children regularly read to before kindergarten hear 1.4 million more words than those who aren't read to.
- **Supports word learning and preliteracy skills:** The interaction during book reading enhances their foundational vocabulary, which is crucial for language development.
- **Increases the quality of language:** Books provide a richer vocabulary compared to everyday talk. Frequent reading and conversations correlate with higher language skills in children.
- **Helps with sound recognition:** The rhythmic, melodic nature of children's books aids in sound recognition and phonemic awareness.

## Additional Reading Benefits

Still skeptical about the magic of reading? Here are more benefits that reinforce the power of reading with your children:

- **Preparation for Academic Success:** The University of Michigan highlights five early reading skills pivotal for child development, all nurtured through reading.
- **Enhancement of Listening Skills:** Listening is a skill preceding reading. Understanding a story read aloud develops comprehension and benefits your child in various ways.
- **Stimulation of Creativity:** Reading introduces children to both the real world (nonfiction) and imaginary realms (fiction), expanding creativity beyond their innate capacity.
- **Establishment of Connections to the World:** Particularly for infants and toddlers, moments spent examining pictures, asking questions, and sharing insights help kids bridge reading with their surroundings.
  - "Hey, that dad takes his kids to the park, too!"
  - "Look, their mom works in a big office like yours."
  - "That person seems grumpy. Why do you think they feel that way?"



- "There's a wolf in this story! Did you know wolves are similar to dogs?"

### Bilingual Endeavors

In today's diverse world, children encounter multiple languages, at home, in school, or through media. If you're wondering which language to use while reading, go with the one you're most comfortable with. Storytime is more enjoyable when you're at ease.

Moreover, libraries offer dual-language books that help both you and your child learn a second language, be it Spanish, Mandarin, or any other. Being bilingual enhances their language acquisition in school.

### Savor the Experience

As you embrace this newfound enthusiasm, remember to gauge your child's feelings about the reading routine. Mary Leonhardt, author of "Keeping Children Reading," advises against making reading a chore. Instead, find a balance that encourages enjoyment.

Adapting to your child's preferences is crucial. If your toddler is active, let them move while you read. If your child prefers an unconventional reading spot, honor their choice. And if your infant is more interested in page-turning than reading, let them explore.

Especially in their early years, reading should be joyful for your child. If it turns into a chore, find ways to rekindle the fun.

### Involve Librarians

One of the joys of reading with your children is that the hard work of book selection is made easier. A trip to the local library can initiate your reading journey. Watch the librarian's face light up when you ask, "Can you help me find books to read with my kids?" They'll gladly assist.

Reading, like math, is omnipresent. Yet, children need intentional guidance to truly harness its power. Fortunately, reading, with its accompanying stories, creates magical memories that you and your children can cherish together.

