

# Benefits of reading to infants & children

## Should I really read to an infant?

Yes! – The earlier you can start the better. Even though your newborn cannot hold a book or doesn't know the letters of the alphabet, it's never too early to introduce them to the wonder of books. In fact, reading to your newborn provides the building blocks they need for language development as well as equips them with the tools they require to develop social and emotional skills. Even though newborns will not understand what you are reading, they can recognize the tones and rhythms. Your voice is also soothing to them.

*Reading aloud is like depositing money into your child's word bank account. The earlier you start and the more you deposit, the "richer" your child will be.*

## Benefits of reading to a baby include:

- Helps them **learn language and develop speech**. The number of words babies hear in their earliest years **impacts literacy, vocabulary and reading comprehension**.
- **Bonding** – snuggling up to read a book together signals safety, love and emotional connection.
- **Establishing routines** – Kids of all ages thrive on a routine. Reading can be a great addition to the daily schedule. If you get in the habit of reading at bedtime or naptime, a book can signal to a baby that it's time to slow down and get ready for sleep.
- Provides your baby with information about the world around them, and **introduces them to things like numbers, letters, colours and shapes**.

## Reading ideas & tips:

- It is never too late to start reading to your little one.
- Silence your phone and turn off any other screens when reading.
- Print books (as opposed to e-books) are meant to be explored, held and even chewed (board books of course!)
- Leave books in locations you (or your child) will easily see them – this can help remind you to incorporate reading time.
- Don't be afraid to read the same story over and over again.
- Take advantage of your local library or trade books with friends!
- Books that feature babies, nursery rhymes and animals are nice books for this age group.



**Try to read aloud to your baby daily to establish the habit of reading. Try to make it part of a routine, such as before naptime or bedtime or both!**

*Adapted from: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/why-reading-to-babies-is-important-5189827>*