

GROWING UP

# Reading

Grown-ups play a key role in their children's development at every stage.

Sharing books, playing games, singing songs, and having conversations are all great ways to give children the skills they'll need to become successful readers. The tips in this Reading Is Fundamental growth chart will help you turn everyday activities into enjoyable learning experiences.

## INFANTS

### TIME TOGETHER

- **Talk to your baby.** Babies learn words when they hear you speak, sing, and read.
- **Read aloud** every day. When you cuddle up with a book, your child learns to connect books with comforting feelings.
- **Make bath time reading time** and give your child waterproof books to hold or read to your baby as he plays in the tub.

### BOOKS TO SHARE

- Babies like books with contrasting colors and simple pictures. Black and white pictures are recommended for newborns.
- **Choose chunky board books** with sturdy pages that hold up to sucking and grabbing.
- Many books are also playthings. Some have textures to touch. Others squeak or make music. **Appeal to all of your baby's senses.**

### FUN TIPS

- **Check out** song and nursery rhyme books at the library.
- It's never too early to start a home library. Bookstores, yard sales, and flea markets sell books that children will treasure for years.
- **Record** your baby's favorite stories or songs and play at bedtime or on car trips.

## TODDLERS

### TIME TOGETHER

- **Let your child help** you "read" a book. The pictures will help her remember what happens next.
- Wherever you go, **point to things and say their names.** Help your toddler to connect the things she sees with the words she hears.
- **Use finger puppets or costumes** as you read aloud to make favorite characters come to life.

### BOOKS TO SHARE

- **Choose books** with simple plots that children can follow.
- **Read aloud** books about everyday experiences. Don't be surprised if your toddler wants to hear the same story over and over. Children learn through repetition.
- **Try books** with characters the same age or slightly older than your child. Playful animals will also hold their attention.

### FUN TIPS

- Take a fieldtrip to the zoo or park and talk about what you see. Find books about the places you visit.
- Make a photo album to help tell stories about your family or culture.
- Toddlers learn about lines and curves and how letters are formed when they scribble. Providing paper and crayons or chalk to write on the sidewalk is a great way to encourage your young writer.

## PRESCHOOLERS

### TIME TOGETHER

- **Don't worry** if your child can't sit still for an entire story. Some children listen better while drawing or playing with a toy.
- **Talk about the book** as you read. Ask your child to describe pictures, answer questions, repeat phrases, and predict what will happen next.
- **Take books everywhere** you go (the car, bus, doctor's office), and make the most of every minute.

### BOOKS TO SHARE

- ABC and counting books **help preschoolers** learn about letters and numbers.
- **Choose nonfiction books** about things your child likes, such as dinosaurs or insects.
- **Pick stories** with one or two sentences per page. As your child's skills increase, introduce longer stories.

### FUN TIPS

- **Tell a story.** This will help your child learn new words, use his imagination, and think about what comes next, all skills that your child will need for reading.
- **Have fun** introducing the letters of the alphabet, starting with the ones in your child's own name. Make letter-learning fun with markers, magnets, glue and glitter.

**Adventures in libraries.** There's a whole world out there to explore. All you need is a little imagination and a library card. Take a trip to your local library and discover books filled with new places to see, people to meet, and things to try. Borrow as many adventure-filled books as your child is interested in, for free! While you're at the library, don't forget to participate in story hours, puppet shows, and other fun, family activities offered all year long.

For more information about Reading Is Fundamental, visit [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org).



To keep track as your child grows, place this chart 12" above the floor.