

How to Read Aloud to Your Baby

A Simple Guide for Caregivers • Ages 0 – 12 Months

Reading to your baby from day one is one of the most powerful things you can do. Babies cannot understand words yet — but they hear your voice, feel your warmth, and begin building the brain connections that will make them readers for life. Here is everything you need to know to get started today.

1. Start Anytime

You can start reading on day one. Even newborns benefit from hearing your voice. There is no age too early to begin.

2. Use Your Real Voice

Read slowly and expressively. Change your tone for different characters. Your baby loves the sound of you — not a perfect reading voice.

3. Point and Name Things

Point to pictures and say the names. 'Look — a dog! A big red ball!' This builds vocabulary long before they can speak.

4. Keep It Short

Babies have short attention spans. Even 3 to 5 minutes counts. Multiple short sessions throughout the day are perfect.

5. Let Them Touch the Book

Board books are made to be grabbed, chewed, and explored. Let your baby interact with the book — that is learning too.

6. Make It a Ritual

Read at the same time each day — after bath, before bed, during feeding. Routine helps your baby anticipate and look forward to reading time.

What Types of Books Are Best for Babies?

Board Books

Thick pages babies can handle — perfect for 0 to 24 months.

Rhyming Books

Rhythmic language builds early phonics and sound awareness.

Picture Books

Bold, simple images help babies focus and build visual recognition.

Texture Books

Touch-and-feel books engage multiple senses at once.

“You don’t need the perfect book. You just need your voice and five minutes.”

— Kindred Kids Literacy Project