

Sharing Books with Your Toddler



Can you really share books with an active, independent, and busy toddler?

Yes! These tips have worked for many parents and care providers.

How do I get started?

Pick a book or let your toddler choose one. Point to a picture and read the words clearly. Encourage your child to notice details in the pictures. Talk with him about what happens in the story. Let him say the words to favorite stories along with you, if that is what he likes.

What books will my toddler like?

Toddlers like picture books about people, animals, familiar objects, and favorite characters, with simple stories and rhymes. Your child may ask for the same book over and over, or for books about a particular topic. Board books are good for toddlers who are still learning to care for books.

When should I read with my toddler?

After a nap, after lunch, and before bed are popular times. Make reading part of your family's routines. Take books along when you go out with your toddler. Sharing books can be part of waiting at the doctor's office or the bus stop. Read a story instead of watching TV. Take your toddler along to the library or bookstore to find new books to read.

Where should I read to my toddler?

Find a comfortable place where you both can see the pages. If your child enjoys turning pages, be sure she can reach the book. Lying in her crib, sitting on your lap, or sitting next to you on the couch or in her car seat: any of these places can work for a read-aloud.

How long should I read to my toddler?

A few minutes—only as long as your toddler is interested. Some toddlers will listen for 10 minutes or more to a favorite book. Some will even insist on going through a stack of books with you! Others may be too active to sit still for long. Vary your voice or use a puppet or other prop to help hold your child's attention.

Who should read to toddlers?

Parents, grandparents, librarians, child care providers—even older brothers and sisters—can help a toddler learn to love reading.

What if my toddler isn't interested in books?

Keep trying, but don't force it. Toddlers are busy finding out about their world. Talk with your child, tell stories, sing, or recite poems. Let her see *you* reading. Take her to the library and the bookstore with you. Such invitations help many children develop an interest in reading.

For related Web resources, see "Sharing Books with Your Toddler" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.



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For more tip sheets on other topics, please go to <http://illinoisearlylearning.org>