

The Importance of Reading Aloud



© Ilona75 → Dreamstime.com - Reading Time With Father Photo

Did you know one of the best ways you can support your child's language development is to read aloud to them--every day! Start as soon as your child can sit on your lap and attend for a minute or two and continue through their elementary school years.

Among other things it:

- Builds joint attention
- Build vocabulary
- Creates expectations for sequences and typical story structure
- Teaches inference skills
- Creates awareness of advanced grammatical structures and length of utterance
- Is fun bonding time!

While many families find that reading before bedtime is a great way to end the day, it may not be the best time for you. Your child might find it easier to attend while they eat snack, when they wake from a nap or when a parent gets home from work.

Think about your child's interests as well as their attention span when making selections. Some picture books have too much text on each page to keep a little one engaged. While non-fiction, "fact" based books are fun for many children (ex. books about trains, ABCs or counting), try to have at least one fiction, "story" book at each sitting. Fiction allows for more opportunities to guess what might come next and understand sequencing of events. Plus, it reinforces social skills. Think about how many stories are really an untangling of a bungled social situation!

For really little ones, try simple, predictable stories and short re-tellings of the classics. As kiddos get older, try adding a chapter book that takes a few nights to finish. Having the story told over several days means the child needs to hold on to previously heard info and continue to build on it--an important classroom skill.

You might consider books like:

When reading, comment on the actions ("I wonder what will happen next?") or feelings ("That would make me feel sad.") For young ones, you might point to characters or objects to clarify what is happening. Don't feel the need to quiz ("What's that?")!

Thank you for supporting your child!