

Sharing Books with Your Preschooler



Even before 3- to 5-year-olds recognize letters, they can learn a lot about reading and writing when adults share books with them. So read aloud to your preschooler—for enjoyment and for long-term benefits!

What books would my preschooler like?

- Preschoolers often like books with detailed illustrations. They also enjoy stories or poems with humor or adventure. Some preschoolers like children's magazines that feature poetry, stories, and nonfiction.
- Your child may enjoy stories and poems about animals, toys or vehicles, friendships, children, and families. He may have a favorite topic, author, or illustrator.

How do I read aloud to my child?

- Sit so you both are comfortable and can see the pages easily. Let your child hold the book and turn the pages.
- Talk with your child about what you both see on the cover. She may want to look through the book before you read it aloud. Welcome her comments about the illustrations. Invite her to predict what might happen in the book.
- Speak clearly when you read. Some parents point to words as they read them aloud.
- If your child is restless, change your voice or use puppets or props to hold her attention. Invite her to recite parts of favorite books with you. Or let her fill in words at the ends of sentences.
- Remember that if your child wants to hear a book over and over, she is still learning from it.
- Try inviting your child to act out or retell a story with you.

When and how long should I read to my preschooler?

- Read for as long as your child is interested: perhaps 5 to 10 minutes, or more. He might want to hear a stack of books! Or he may be ready for illustrated chapter books to be read over several days.
- Make reading aloud a regular part of your preschooler's day. After lunch and before bed are popular times for reading. Try reading aloud in place of screen time. Reading can make waiting time fun when you are at the doctor's office, riding the bus, or running family errands.
- Keep in mind that older siblings can read to your preschooler when you are too busy.

What if my child is not interested in books?

- Keep telling stories, singing, and talking with your child. Offer to help him make his own storybook. He can dictate a story while you write or type his words.
- Take her to the library or bookstore. Show her books that you think she will like.
- Let your child see you reading for enjoyment. Keep inviting her to read with you, but don't force her to listen. She may be busy learning other things.

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

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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