

# Sharing Books With Your Toddler



*Can you really share books with an active, independent, and busy toddler? Yes! Parents, caregivers, grandparents, aunts, uncles—even older brothers and sisters—can help toddlers learn to love reading. These tips have worked for many families and caregivers.*

## How do I get started?

- Pick a book or let your toddler choose one.
- 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 down, sitting on your lap or next to you, or in her car seat—any of these places can work for a read-aloud.
- Point to a picture and read the words clearly. Encourage your child to notice details in the pictures.
- Talk with your toddler about what happens in the story. Let him say the words to favorite stories along with you, if he wants to.

## 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?

- Try reading after a nap, after lunch, or before bed. 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 a video.

## How long should I read to my toddler?

- Read for 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.

## 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 experiences help many children develop an interest in reading.

## For related Web resources, see “Sharing Books with Your Toddler” at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/>

---

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.



13 Children's Research Center  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Telephone: 217-333-1386  
Toll-free: 877-275-3227  
E-mail: [iel@illinois.edu](mailto:iel@illinois.edu)  
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org>



**Illinois**  
State Board of  
Education