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www.childcareinfo.org



Forming Reading Habits

One habit that contributes to a life of learning and success is reading. How do you help children become interested in reading?

The best way to encourage a love of reading is to read yourself and read to children every day, beginning when they are infants. Children tend to repeat the behaviors they see. By encouraging children to read, you can help increase the value they place on this activity.

When reading to infants and toddlers, keep in mind the following:

- Infants and toddlers have short attention spans. It's ok if reading time only lasts a few minutes.
- Talk about what you see in the pictures, point out some words while you read, and keep your voice lively and dramatic.
- Young children especially like to be involved in the reading process. Allow your child to choose the book, allow him/her to turn the pages, and ask lots of questions.
- Keep in mind that it is very common for young children to want to hear the same story time and time again. While this may be boring for you, young children benefit from hearing the same story over and over again.



For preschool age children, you can:

- Ask them to predict what the book will be about just by looking at the cover.
- Ask them to retell a story they have heard before.
- Let them create their own books: they draw the pictures and you write down the words for them.
- Encourage them to watch you read and write for many everyday purposes: read the paper to see what TV show are on that night, read a recipe when cooking dinner, write a list of things needed from the grocery store, etc.

Another way to encourage reading is to make sure that you have plenty of reading materials around the house. Age appropriate books, newspapers, and magazines are great learning resources. Getting a library card is also helpful. Do not rely only on computers. Although they are a great resource, people read 25% more slowly on screen and retain about 50% less information.

Keep in mind that all types of reading materials have value: sports magazines, science fiction stories, etc. Try not to limit older children's reading selections. Many times children will increase their reading skills by reading magazines, for example, which leads them to try reading more challenging materials.

To connect reading to the world, talk with the child about what you have read. Reading can open new worlds for a child. Make sure to read instructions and labels, and use reading to solve problems. Reading is valuable when a child feels this skill helps them solve practical problems.

To learn of programs in your community that support grandparents raising grandchildren, contact 2-1-1.