

Reading with your child

Sharing a book with a child is fun - it's a time for closeness, laughing and talking together. It can also give children a flying start in life and help them become lifelong readers.

But not everyone is confident with books and reading aloud, so the BookTrust has produced some handy tips and advice to help you get the most out of reading together. And remember, there's no right or wrong way to do it - and it's never too early to start.

Tips for reading with children of any age

- **Set aside some time-** Find somewhere quiet without any distractions - turn off the TV/radio/computer.
- **Ask your child to choose a book-** Sharing books they have chosen shows you care what they think and that their opinion matters. This means they are more likely to engage with the book.
- **Sit close together-** Encourage your child to hold the book themselves and/or turn the pages.
- **Point to the pictures-** If there are illustrations, relate them to something your child knows. Ask them to describe the characters or situation or what will happen next. Encourage them to tell you the story by looking at the pictures.
- **Encourage your child to talk about the book-** Talking about the characters and their dilemmas helps children understand relationships and is an excellent way for you to get to know each other or discuss difficult issues. Give your child plenty of time to respond. Ask them what will happen next, how a character might be feeling or how the book makes them feel.
- **And lastly, above all - make it fun!** -It doesn't matter how you read with a child, as long as you both enjoy the time together. Don't be afraid to use funny voices - children love this!

It's never too early to start reading with your baby

Here are some ways you can try to share stories and rhymes with your child every day.

- **Sing rhymes and tell stories to your unborn baby-** They can hear you from around 18 weeks, and will recognise your voice before they are born.
- **It's good to start sharing stories, books and rhymes with your child from as early an age as possible-** Babies don't need to understand all the words, they will just love to listen to your voice, look at the pictures and hold the books.
- **Reading books, talking about the pictures and cuddling up close together will help you build a strong and loving relationship with your child-** Everyone in the family can join in: dads, mums, care givers, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles.
- **Having a baby is tiring and demanding-** Taking time out every day to enjoy a story, book or rhyme will give you and your child time to escape the everyday, enjoy each other's company and get to know each other better.
- **Join your library as soon as you can-** Librarians give great book advice and recommendations. And libraries have more books than you could ever own!
- **It's important to have books in the home-** If you really enjoy a library book, try to get hold of a copy to keep. You can also ask family and friends to mark every birthday or special occasion with the gift of a book for your child.
- **Get other family members involved-** Reading with grandparents, for example, can be a lovely way to bond, connect and snuggle.