

FACT SHEET #7

THE BENEFITS OF READING

There are many advantages to introducing your baby to reading from an early age.

When you read a book with your baby, you will see how fascinating she finds this object. She looks at the book, focuses on the illustrations or words you point to with your finger, smiles when she hears your voice telling the story and reacts when she recognizes something from her daily life in the book.



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Reading stories on a regular basis also helps your child develop skills that will gradually prepare her for kindergarten. Sitting beside you, your child – without even realizing it – is discovering new words and the foundations of writing. As a result, when you read books to your little one, you're helping her to:

- Familiarize herself with **letters, colours, shapes and numbers**;
- Learn the basics of **vocabulary and language**;
- Gain a better understanding of the **concepts of space and time** (once-upon-a-time, day, night, yesterday, tomorrow, here, there);
- **Solve problems and form hypotheses** ("What might happen to this character now?");
- **Structure her thoughts** and narrative (**ability to tell a story**), which will help her in turn to be able to describe what's happening in her daily life;
- Develop her ability to **form relationships with others** in a more organized, structured manner;
- Better grasp the concept of the **permanent nature of writing**, by reading the same story to her regularly. This helps her understand that what is written down remains the same from one time to the next;
- develop her **attention span and listening skills**;
- Put **her memory** to work, for example, when you ask her if she remembers the name of the main character or the colour of an animal in the story;
- **Come to grips with her fears:** a wolf or a spider is much less scary when it's in a book! Your comforting presence during story time will help her **express her feelings** and find ways to overcome her fears;
- **Develop her imagination** by giving her an opportunity to discover a whole world of new and exciting things – some real, some made up – for her to have fun with!

When you read a book, follow each word with your finger. This simple action shows your child that the story is written down (and you're not making it up!), that each letter has a sound and that we read from left to right.

When introduced early on, books become a source of enjoyment and fun. Your child sees them as representing a time of contentment and sharing with you. If the initial contact with books does not take place until school, the context is very different, since the message given to your child is: "You must learn to read." Reading becomes a task for your child, because she does not instinctively associate reading with pleasure.
