

FACT SHEET #1

CUDDLING



Reading as a family gets the best results. Without your involvement, the benefits of this activity are far less significant.

Children have a natural tendency to sit on your lap and cuddle up close when you look at a book with them. These moments together **foster an emotional connection** between you and your child. When you explore a storybook with your child, **she feels special, cherished and valued**, because your attention is entirely focused on her and what you're sharing through the book.

Even if **your baby is still too young to fully understand the story, she experiences a feeling of well-being when being read to**, because you are in a relaxed frame of mind and have stepped back a bit from daily life to spend a special moment with her.

TURN THE PAGES SLOWLY SO YOUR CHILD HAS TIME TO OBSERVE THE PICTURES IN DETAIL.

FACT SHEET #2

EXPLORING



A book is a complete toy that can be looked at, touched, handled and therefore used to play with.

You can do simple activities with your child to explore books using all his senses! Give him a book that can go in the bath or **be chewed**. Watch your baby manipulate the book or put it in his mouth. Your baby will love making noise with the pages, scratching at the texture with his fingers and **looking at the colours and pictures**.

Gradually teach him how to look at a book: **how to turn the pages**, hold it open and so on. Your toddler will quickly figure out how a book works and enjoy turning the pages with you, several at a time at first, then, with some practise, he'll learn to turn them one by one.

BABIES AND TODDLERS OFTEN EXPLORE TOYS BY PUTTING THEM IN THEIR MOUTH.

FACT SHEET #3

NAMING



A book is an invaluable toy that enriches your little one's knowledge and vocabulary. It allows your baby to see her world in pictures.

Looking at books is **the best way to learn new words**. What's more, books will help your child understand more complex notions such as colours, shapes and emotions. Your baby loves listening to your voice. She associates words with pictures to learn how to talk.

The images she sees in books help her understand what you're saying. You'll probably notice that her favourite books talk about routines (bathtime, meals) and familiar things (toys, animals, the park).

YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF NEW WORDS JUST BY LOOKING AT BOOKS WITH YOU.

FACT SHEET #4

POINTING



Draw your child's attention to the pictures by pointing at them. This will help him to direct his attention and learn where to look.

When reading to your child, point to the pictures. **With time, he'll start pointing to what interests him himself.** Take the opportunity to put words to what he's pointing out: "That's a flower." Add details too: "It's pink and it smells good!" – and you can mime the action of smelling. Babies love showing what interests them and what they like.

Your baby communicates first by pointing to a picture and then by using words associated with that picture: "Cat eat." You can then respond by correctly restructuring his sentence: "Yes, the cat is eating."

YOU'LL NOTICE THAT YOUR BABY EXPRESSES HIS INTERESTS AND PERSONALITY THROUGH HIS FAVOURITE BOOKS.

FACT SHEET #5

PLAYING



There are several ways to make the most of reading with your child.

Reading is one of the most enjoyable activities you can do with your child. When you read to her regularly, you foster your child's development. **Reading helps with language acquisition,** teaches your child to listen and prepares her to recognize written words.

It's also an opportunity for you to spend time together in a relaxed, fun and emotionally satisfying way. Playing with your child and a book, **even just for five minutes,** is giving her a gift that will last a lifetime.

BOOKS ARE THE NUMBER ONE TOY TO HELP YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT.

FACT SHEET #6

BOOKS ACCORDING TO AGE

When introduced early on, books become a source of fun and enjoyment. In addition to being fascinating toys, they are also a source of comfort that strengthens the parent-child bond.

**0-12
MONTHS
OLD**

- Babies discover books through their senses. Let them touch, smell and even chew on them.
- Choose cardboard, texture or picture books.
- Show your baby pictures, especially of other babies, and describe them.

**1-3
YEARS
OLD**

- Initiate your child to the actions associated with reading, such as how to hold a book and turn the pages.
- Re-read your child's favourite stories often so that she learns words and remembers them.
- Stop your reading from time to time to ask your child questions. This will teach her how to listen and understand better.

**3-5
YEARS
OLD**

- Ask your child to imagine the continuation of the story you just read.
- Highlight the baby-friendly images so that your baby starts to "photograph" the simple words that are part of his daily routine. This is the first step to learning how to read.
- The pictures and stories let your child imagine himself there: this will help him tell you about what he's experiencing through what he sees happening in the book.

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.

FACT SHEET #8

A BOOK IS MORE THAN JUST A STORY!

You don't need to have great acting skills to make a book come alive!

All you need to do is **let yourself get carried away by the fun** that you and your child are having with the book and **let your imagination run free**. By naming the objects shown in the book and answering your child's questions, you'll create a dialogue with him.



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HERE ARE SOME ACTIVITIES THAT WILL SPARK YOUR CHILD'S INTEREST:

- **Touching.** Your baby learns with her senses. Touching, chewing and throwing a book are just part of the game of exploring this new object!
- **Using a book for play.** Hiding behind a book and playing peek-a-boo with your child will definitely get her laughing, as well as help her understand that you're always there, even when she can't see you.
- **Imitating sounds.** Try making animal noises, or the sound of a train, or the sound of running water. Another example: knocking on the book as on a door will help maintain or refocus your child's attention.
- **Playing "hunt and seek".** Play guessing games or look for specific objects as you go through the pages of a book (e.g., "Where's the cow?", "Show me the blue car."). This type of game is perfect for stimulating and maintaining the attention of your little one at times when she has to wait (doctor's office, restaurant, while a younger sibling is being fed, etc.).
- **Observing.** Show your child the pictures and make connections with things she's familiar with (e.g.: "This is a cat, like Smokey, the cat next door!", "Look, it's white, like snow!").
- **Putting the child in the story.** Ask her to "feed" the animals in the book with her fingers, or to "brush" the characters' hair. You can also stop reading and ask her to tell you the rest; this will make her feel she has some influence over the story.
- **Storytelling without reading.** Make up your own story based on some of the pictures in the book, or tell the story in your own words. This is guaranteed to stimulate a younger child's curiosity and encourage an older child to participate.

Don't worry if your child starts to flip through the pages quickly, moves around constantly or sometimes grabs the book out of your hands. This doesn't mean she's not interested in the book; it's just that she has plenty of energy and it's hard for her to sit still! The important thing is to focus on what seems to capture her interest most (e.g., the colours, shapes and objects shown in the book, the shape of the book, its textures and so on).

FACT SHEET #9

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BOOK

Since your baby's attention span is limited and he cannot sit still for long, the books he'll find most interesting are those with simple, recognizable pictures and not much text. These kinds of books let you sit with your child and look through them, naming the objects, animals and people. You'll have fun making connections with similar people and things in your child's life: "Look at the bird, he's in a tree, just like the one in front of our house!", "Oh look, here's a grandmother rocking a little baby just like you!"



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As your child grows and starts walking and exploring more of his world, the books he'll enjoy most are **picture books**. You can look at the pictures with him and **name the objects** in the book to expand his vocabulary. Since he's at an age where he's becoming increasingly aware of others around him, he'll be fascinated by **books that have photographs**, especially photos of children.

He's also starting to learn the names of some of the parts of his body. You can show him picture books on that topic and ask him to point to them with his finger or **name a part of the body**: "Look, the little boy is washing his hair", "Show me the baby's nose".

"Hunt and seek" books and books with flaps that your child can lift are also a great way for the two of

you to interact. Your child will have fun looking and discovering new things. He'll feel proud when he guesses what's under the flaps or when he locates objects you ask him to find.

Gradually, **short stories**, especially stories about **topics that reflect your child's own experiences** (e.g., bedtime, going to the park, sharing toys, the arrival of a baby brother or sister, using the potty) will start to take on greater interest. Since you know what he likes and what happens in his daily life, you can go beyond the words of the story and **ask your child questions**. If he isn't talking much yet, it can be fun to ask questions and answer them at the same time: "Where's the little boy? On the swing at the park. Wheel! He's having fun with his friends!"

Later, **simple stories that have a beginning, a main action and an ending** will start to appeal more to your child. Since his imagination is growing fast, he'll enjoy listening to stories and making up his own endings. In this case it can be fun to stop reading for a moment and **ask your child to imagine what will happen next** (e.g., "What do you think will happen to Little Red Riding Hood when she gets to her grandmother's house?").

The older your child gets, the more he'll identify with the characters in the stories. He'll enjoy **series of books featuring the same character or characters** (such as *Caillou* or *Toopy and Binoo*). Your child will enjoy seeing his "hero" in a new adventure and **talking about it with you at the end of the story**.

One fun activity to do together is to make up a story with your child in which the main character is the hero of one of his favourite books.

This is a great way for you to enjoy being creative together!

FACT SHEET #10

“MOMMY, DADDY, READ ME THE STORY AGAIN!”

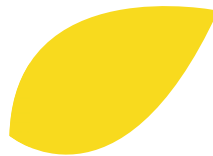
Whatever your child’s age, she’s sure to have one or more favourite books. She’ll ask you to read the same story over and over again and never seem to get tired of it.

Why? Because she experienced a feeling of well-being when the book was read to her before, and wants to feel that way again. Also, because your little one needs to look at a book and hear a story several times before she is able to absorb everything it contains (words, pictures, characters and story).

It’s rewarding and reassuring for your child to be familiar with the elements of the story and be able to anticipate them.

Through repetition of the same story, your child feels as if she has **some control over what happens next and the emotions it evokes in her**. By observing your child’s reactions while you read, you might

notice, for example, that she hides under the blankets when she knows the ogre is going to show up on the next page, or show delight as you approach the story’s happy ending. She experiences the same pleasures each time the story is read. And since she does not yet have much capacity for generalizing what she is learning, it may take a while before she discovers that another book can give her just as much enjoyment.



FACT SHEET #11

THE LIMITATIONS OF ELECTRONIC BOOKS

**Technology is playing an
ever-greater role in family life today.**

But for your child, nothing can beat a printed book,
which he can touch, handle and explore any way he wants to.

Printed books provide more scope for interaction and sensory stimulation than their electronic versions. And even though children are strongly attracted to electronic tablets, it's important to keep in mind that these are basically screens, just like a TV or computer. The amount of time children are exposed to these devices should therefore be limited.

