

Reading With Toddlers

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Toddlers can be voracious readers. They are also delightful reading companions as they are just starting to request favorites, remember rhymes and even catch your skipped words. Toddlers are interactive partners and when you read together you will get to know your child better and make wonderful memories.

While our toddlers may be small, don't forget that they are very capable little people. Here are some things that toddler "readers" can do:

Know How to Look Like A Reader: Toddlers are keen observers of your behavior, including what you do when you read. They know how to hold a book, turn pages, and place it facing upright. They'll pretend to read to you, and even read to their stuffed animals. Book knowledge starts very young.

Have Opinions: As in all aspects of life, toddlers can have strong opinions about books. Whether it is Curious George, train books or silly rhymes, they will give you cues about what they enjoy. Many toddlers will hook into a book and want you to read it over and over again. This is a great sign, as they actively seek out interests and become agents in their own learning. Honor their requests even after the fiftieth read—you'll validate and cultivate a lifelong learner.

Learn To Notice: Toddlers can point out details that catch their attention. Whether through gesture or words, they can select one thing from another. These skills of perception are crucial for later learning when they'll need to zero in visually in math, science or reading. Additionally, if you notice what they notice, you provoke conversation. "Oh, I see the red bird too." When you listen, observe and respond to your child you are a great teacher.

Great books to hold visual interest include:

- *Mother Mother I Feel Sick, Send for the Doctor Quick Quick Quick* by Remy Charlip
- *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai
- *Can You See What I See* by Walter Wick

Name Things—Toddlers are busy naming things. From simple to complex, children zero in on animals, foods, trucks, etc. Concept books—ABCs, numbers, colors—are perfect for stimulating a toddler's fascination with naming because the single clear images encourage naming.

Check out some of these books:

- *Over Under and Through* by Tana Hoban (and all of her books)
- *Growing Colors* by Bruce McMillan
- *Zoo-ology* by Joelle Jolivet



Begin to Remember Sequence: Toddlers can start to appreciate books with a beginning, middle and end. In the story of The Three Bears, for example, they might remember the incidents with chairs, beds and porridge and anticipate what's coming next. Sequencing is a crucial skill for later school learning and one that you should encourage. Offer stories that have memorable and predictable sequences to foster this type of learning.

Books that have clear sequences include:

- *The Gingerbread Boy, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Bears* and *The Three Little Pigs* all by Paul Galdone
- *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See* by Eric Carle

As your child's language skills grow, their relationship to literature changes. They understand more and can begin to have empathy with characters that get lost and found, make friends, are scared and exhibit joy. As you get caught up in feelings together you will share one of the most profound early childhood experiences. Treasure the time now, as children grow quickly and soon enough you will long for these treasured snuggly hours reading together.

This article was previously seen on [Kidzcentral Station](#).

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