

# Read to Your Newborn

The American Academy of Pediatrics states that 35% of American children start Kindergarten without good language skills. Reading to your baby helps develop these skills. Start reading to your baby as soon as you get home from the hospital. It calms him, starts a routine, and promotes bonding.

Reading together with your baby takes no special skills. However, if you read and talk to your child every day, he will hear 32 million more words by age 4 than a child whose parent has not done this.

Words are building blocks for learning and reading. Learning involves more than just hearing words. As you read, you and your baby respond to each other. You connect. **Books on tape and TV lack this bond that babies need to learn.**

When you read to your baby:


- You promote a bond between you and your baby. Your baby loves to hear your voice. He wants to feel you close to him.
- He hears many words. He learns how to make sounds for each word.
- She soon begins to learn the meaning for each word.


- He learns the feelings behind the words.
- You positively affect her IQ.
- You provide comfort. Reading soothes a fussy baby.
- She learns social skills.
- You help him imagine.
- She learns how to listen.
- You and your baby connect emotionally. You have fun together.
- He scores higher on 3rd grade standardized tests.



## Reading to Your Baby

- Make eye contact as you read and talk.
- Read for a few minutes at a time for at least 20 minutes total.
- Read children's nursery rhymes or songs. Babies like repetition.
- Cuddle. It makes her feel safe and secure.
- Read with feeling. Vary your tones. Talk with a high pitch and low pitch.
- Exaggerate sounds. For example, "This is a baaaalllllll."
- Point to pictures. Babies love faces and bright colors. They like contrasting patterns.
- Let him touch the book.

 Search for the Internet for the *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten*

 Find Dolly Parton's *Imagination Library* online for information on access to free books.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

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 **Children's**  
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