



First Pages

Literacy Skills With Babies

Babies are learning skills that lay the foundation for literacy. Try these strategies to help your child build a strong foundation for reading and writing.

Cuddle up and share a book.

Cuddle time is a great time to hear new words, sounds, and look at pictures in a book. It is ok to skip reading every word and talk about the pictures you see or make comments to your baby about the book.

Choose books wisely.

Grabbing, chewing, banging, and flipping pages are some of the many ways babies learn from books. Choose sturdy books made of cloth, soft plastic, or cardboard.

Talk to your baby.

Your baby is learning words, ideas, and how language works every time you talk to them, even when they can't talk back to you. Talk about what you are doing, what your baby is doing, and what you see outside to help your child build strong language skills.

Give free time.

All children need time to interact with books on their own so it is a good idea to keep books that are safe for your baby to chew and handle, and in places where your baby can easily get to them.

Use those hands.

Picking up puffs, pointing to body parts or pictures, and learning to grab or handle toys help your baby build strong little hands and fingers for when your baby is ready for crayons, pencils, or keyboards.

Keep routines the same.

Predictable routines can be soothing to babies and help them learn what will happen next. Keep routines like bedtime, dressing, and diaper changes the same. Babies will learn the skill of predicting what comes next: a skill they will later need as a young reader.

Sing and read again.

Singing your baby's favorite song or reading their favorite book again and again helps your baby say them on their own, helping them practice the skills they will need to become readers.

Read your baby.

Your baby is sending you cues, all the time. Notice how your baby reacts to how you are talking to them, holding them, and moving them. If you notice your baby isn't enjoying book time, stop and try another book or try again later. Read and respond to your baby's cues so they develop an early love for literacy learning.