

Top 10 Tips for Reading with Toddlers

1 Read little and often - At this age, children tend to have quite short attention spans and may struggle to sit still and concentrate for a long time. Choose books that are short and simple and don't be afraid to stop reading time early and pick it up again later on.

2 Sensory experiences - Toddlers are still learning to understand the world around them using their five senses. Whilst enjoying books already engages their vision and hearing, sensory books can help them with their overall sensory development. Choose books with different textures, flaps to open or even sound buttons. This means storytime can be even more interactive and engaging.

3 Embrace repetition - As parents, sometimes it feels like we know our children's favourite books off by heart! Although reading the same things over and over again may test our patience, children absolutely love repetition - they find it comforting and familiar. It also helps them to learn. Repeating the same text many times helps children learn new words and aids their comprehension skills.

4 Have fun! - Don't be afraid to get silly. There is no right way to enjoy a story. Make silly faces, do voices for characters, act out scenes together and wear costumes while you read! Reading is supposed to be fun - if you embrace that, so will your child.

5 Talk about it - Don't just read the words on the page - talk with your child about the story and ask questions. Ask your child to describe what is going on in the pictures. How is the main character feeling? What do they think will happen next? This is a great way to build understanding and language skills, as well as help bring the story to life.

6 Remove distractions - Most adults probably couldn't concentrate on a book if their environment was too noisy and distracting - toddlers are the same! Turn off the TV and radio, put away tablets and mobile devices. Take time to enjoy a book together without anything distracting or disturbing you.

7 Give choices - Children love to make their own decisions, as it makes them feel grown-up. Give your children a choice of the book you can enjoy together. Provide books on a variety of topics, based on their interests. Not only will they look forward to reading as an opportunity to choose for themselves, but they will also find the story more engaging.

8 Join in - Choose books that include repeated phrases, rhymes or refrains. After reading a few times, your child may be able to join in. This can help them grow in confidence with reading and can aid memory, language development and familiarity with rhyme and phrasing. Try getting the repeated phrase wrong - your child will enjoy correcting you!

9 Use props - A fun and engaging way to bring a story to life is by using different props. Toys and puppets can be used to represent the different characters and places in the story. Children can move the items themselves, helping them become more immersed in the story and understand the narrative better. Even simple stick puppets work great!

10 Get out of the house - One of the great things about reading is that it can be done anywhere! If you carry an [on-the-go bag](#), add in one or two small books. These are perfect for when you are on public transport or waiting at the dentist. As a treat, take your child to your local library and let them choose some books to read there and to take home.