



SHARING BOOKS WITH YOUR BABY UP TO AGE 11 MONTHS

BOOKS BUILD
CONNECTIONS
TOOLKIT



TALK



READ



SING



What's the best way to share books with your baby up to age 11 months? Use the following tips, which cover 4 stages in your baby's life:

- Birth to 3 months
- 4 to 5 months
- 6 to 8 months
- 9 to 11 months

Babies are born ready to interact with their parents and caregivers. Their eyes open widely to watch parents' faces and movements and to listen to their voices. Over the first year of life, babies learn to sit, to stand, and to explore objects with their eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and hands. They also learn to understand and respond to your words and your emotions. Most important, they learn to trust. Looking at and talking about books with babies in the first year of their life strengthens all of these abilities.

For each age range, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you share and enjoy books with babies in their first year of life.

Sharing Books With Your Baby From Birth Up To Age 3 Months

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- This may become the best time of your day!





Newborn babies to age 3 months can:

- Look at the book you are holding for them and talking about.
- Watch the looks on your face and begin to copy them.
- Listen to the sounds you make and begin to copy some of them.
- Start to smile, coo, or move their arms and legs to let you know that they want to keep playing.
- Pay attention for a minute or 2 at a time.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby is looking at.
- Turn the pages following your baby's interest and your own.
- Act out pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Copy the sounds your baby makes and the looks on his face. This kind of back-and-forth *conversation* lets your baby know you care about what he likes and how he feels.

Sharing Books With Your 4- To 5-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

4- to 5-month-olds can:

- Reach toward a book and pat the pictures in it.
- Copy some of the sounds you say and the looks on your face.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time.





- Begin to have favorite books they get more excited about when they see.
- Smile, laugh, squeal, coo, babble, or reach for you or the book to let you know that they want to keep talking, reading, and playing.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby shows interest in.
- Turn the pages, following her interest.
- Act out pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Copy the sounds your baby makes and the looks on her face.
- This kind of back-and-forth *conversation* lets her know you care about what she likes and how she feels.

Sharing Books With Your 6- To 8-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby and builds his self-esteem.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting him in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

6- to 8-month-olds can:

- Hold onto a book and pat the pictures.
- Explore a book by feeling it, turning it upside down, putting it into their mouth, or dropping it.
- Copy some of the sounds you say, the looks on your face, and the gestures you make.
- Smile, laugh, squeal, babble, or reach for you or the book to let you know that they want to keep talking, reading, and playing.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.





You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby shows interest in.
- Help your baby turn pages, following his interest.
- Act out the story or pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Talk about how your baby is enjoying the book. You can say: *It is a doggie. Doggie says woof woof. Or: You like putting that book into your mouth. Mmmmm. How does it taste?*
- Make a game of copying your baby while he is playing with books.
- This kind of back-and-forth play lets him know you care about what he likes and how he feels.

Sharing Books With Your 9- To 11-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

9- to 11-month-olds can:

- Reach for their favorite of 2 books you offer.
- Hold onto a book and pat the pictures they like.
- Explore a book by putting it in their mouth, turning it upside down, opening and closing it, or dropping it and listening for the sound this makes.
- Copy some of the sounds you make, the looks on your face, and the gestures you make.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.





You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby is looking at, touching, or talking to. You can say: *Yes, a kitty. Nice kitty. The kitty is purring.*
- Follow your baby's interest by helping her turn pages.
- Act out the story or pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Talk about how your baby is enjoying the book. You can say: *You like that car you are patting. The car goes beep beep!*
- Make a game of copying your baby while she is playing with books.
- This kind of back-and-forth play lets her know you care about what she likes and how she feels.

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP, Marita Hopmann, PhD, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

Other family resources related to early literacy and early learning include the following:

- Helping Your Child Learn to Read
- Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your Preschooler
- Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child
- The Secret to a Smarter Baby
- Why It Is Never Too Early to Start Reading With Your Baby

Pediatric Professional ePubs in this AAP series include the following:

- Evidence Supporting Early Literacy and Early Learning
- Finding the Right Book for Every Child
- Selecting Books for Your Program
- What Every Pediatric Professional Can Do to Promote Early Literacy and Early Learning

Please visit aap.org/literacy for further information about resources mentioned within this publication and additional resources on early literacy.

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