



Reading Summary

Why Reading?

Your infant's experiences including singing, rhyming, and playing with you are essential to developing a healthy brain, growing creativity skills, learning about language and emotions, and strengthening their relationship with you. These experiences will also help them learn to read when they are older.

Step 1. Getting to Know and Understand Your Infant's **Input**

- Simple interactions can engage your infant. Your infant may not be able to respond with words, but they can respond with their eye contact, their facial expression, and their body movements.
- Copy your infant's sounds.
- Make sounds together: *"I see you smiling when I make the 'M' sound. Do you want to try making it too?"*

Tip If your infant seems unengaged when you are singing or reading together, don't worry. Infants have very short attention spans, and it is ok for them to look away and then re-engage again later.

Step 2. **Teach** New Skills by Interactive Modeling¹

- Read together.
- Read or chant rhymes or poetry to your child -- particularly ones with repetitive words and sounds.
- Make your thinking and emotions explicit: *"I have so much fun singing songs with you. La La La La La!"*
- Grow a love of playing with language and stories. Diaper changing time is a perfect time for silly faces and rhymes.

Tip Don't expect your infant to have a long attention span with any one activity. Follow your infant's lead. They likely will signal with a short cry or simply change their attention when they need to shift their focus.

Step 3. **Practice** to Grow Skills, Confidence, and Develop Habits

- Keep age-appropriate books within reach so your infant can enjoy them when they choose.
- Use your infant's dolls or stuffed animals to act out moments of enjoying language and reading: *"Let's bring teddy over here so he can hear the story too."*

- Provide opportunities for your infant to use language and words in a way that is just a bit more challenging than what they have done before. If they have already made the “M” sound with you for quite some time, add new sounds. Or add a new sound next to the “M”: *“Mmmmmm-bop.”*
- Practice making music together. Softly clapping your hands together is a fun activity to engage your infant.

Step 4. **Support** Your Infant’s Development and Success

- Learn about your infant’s development. Each new age presents different challenges.
- Recognize effort by using “I notice...” statements like: *“I notice you are making a singing sound. Hooray!”*
- Build reading and songs into your daily routines and comment on how important those parts of your routines are. *“It’s time to change your diaper; that means it’s time to sing our favorite song.”*

Step 5. **Recognize** and Celebrate

- Smile at your infant.
- Make eye contact.
- Use caring facial expressions.
- Be physically gentle and caring with your infant.
- Use words to celebrate and encourage: *“You are moving your arms and legs when you hear the clapping sound -- Love seeing that!”*
- Recognize small steps along the way: *“I see you trying to play peek-a-book with me. Yay!”*
- Build celebrations into your everyday routines. Promote joy and happiness by laughing, singing, dancing, hugging, and snuggling to appreciate one another.

Tip The first year is filled with amazing changes -- and not just for your infant. Don’t forget to recognize and celebrate your own development and milestones as a parent.

References

1. Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh. *Reading 1: Preparing for reading*. Retrieved on April 20, 2020 at https://www.ocd.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Parent_Guides/Updated-Parenting-Guides/Reading%20%20Parent%20Guide.pdf.

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