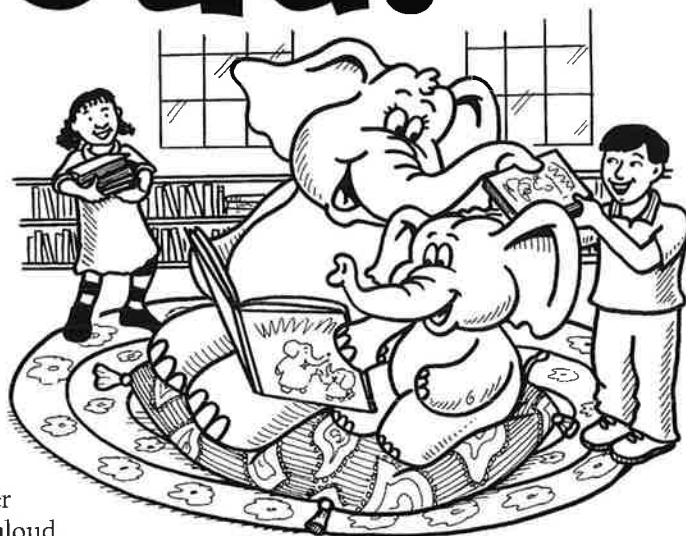


Read Aloud!

It's a gift every parent can give: reading aloud to a child before he can read on his own. And once a youngster can read alone, continuing to read aloud can build his vocabulary and keep him excited about books.

Here are ideas for helping your child get the most from story time. We've also included titles that are especially good for reading out loud.



Three parts of reading aloud

From choosing a book to talking about what you've read, you can fit learning and fun into every minute of story time.

1. Before. Let your youngster pick a story, even if she always reaches for the same one. Familiar stories are comforting, and she'll recognize more words each time she hears a story. To introduce her to new titles, you can choose the next story.



Read the title and author before you open a book. Look at the cover picture, and predict what the story might be about. ("This is *Corduroy*, by Don Freeman. Look—that bear is missing a button. I wonder what happened to it.")

2. During. Allow your child to set the tone. She may want to point out rhyming words, ask questions, tell you something the story reminds her of, or turn

back to an earlier page to look at a picture again. This lets her participate in reading aloud.

You can draw her attention to pictures of objects by pointing out things mentioned in the story: "See—he thinks that's his button on the bed." Talking about a book builds comprehension and makes reading aloud more fun. *Tip:* Relax while you're reading. Laugh and let your child see how much you enjoy books.

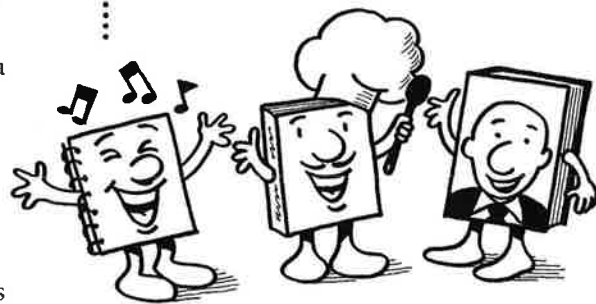
3. After. Have your youngster show you her favorite page and explain why she likes it. Compare the book with another story you have read to help her make connections between books. ("*Corduroy* reminds me of *Home for a Bunny* because they both have a character that needs a home.") Ask your child questions about the characters' feelings so she can learn to read between the lines. ("How do you think Corduroy felt when the girl came back?")

You might also help her start a read-aloud journal. Your youngster can draw a picture of her favorite part, write words describing how it made her feel, or write sentences telling the plot. She'll pay closer attention as you read when she knows she'll be drawing and writing in her journal.

Books and more

Use read-aloud time to introduce your child to a wide variety of book types. For example, he can learn about a person, a place, or an animal when you read biographies or nonfiction books. Or read a choose-your-own-adventure story and take turns picking paths for the characters to follow.

Think outside the book, too. Ask your child to read a recipe as you cook or to read directions for playing a board game or putting a toy together. Poems, song lyrics, and plays are fun to read out loud and are great for showing expression. You can also read stories that your youngster has written!



continued

Read everywhere

Experts recommend that you read to your youngster for at least 20 minutes each day. Many parents do this at bedtime, but you can also surprise your child with books at unexpected times and places.

For example, pack books and a picnic lunch, and head to a park or out to the backyard. On a hike, take a break to read a chapter while sitting under a tree together. Carry along a magazine to the swimming pool and read articles or jokes aloud. If you're going out to eat, tuck a book into your bag and pull it out while you wait for your food. Reading aloud is also a good way to pass time on an airplane, a bus, or a train.

Sharing read-alouds

Build a bridge to independent reading by asking your youngster to help you read. You might have her read the words along with you, or you can take turns reading every other page. Try passing a story around the table and having each family member read one page.

It's also fun to read with a friend. Suggest that your child invite a friend to bring a book over. They can read aloud



to each other. Or they might arrange to meet at the library, where they can select books to share.

Guest readers

Hearing other adults read aloud exposes your child to various reading styles and many new books. Attend story hours at libraries and bookstores. Leave books for babysitters and ask them to read to your youngster. See if relatives will call your child for long-distance read-alouds.

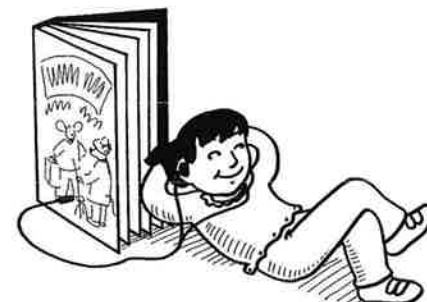
You can be a guest reader, too. Ask your youngster's teacher if you can read to the whole class, a small group, or individual children. In addition to helping out the teacher, you'll help your youngster make the connection between reading at school and reading at home.

Recorded books

Any time is story time with a book on tape, CD, or MP3 player. By listening to a recording and following along in a book, your youngster will learn to read new words and practice reading at a good pace.

You can borrow audio books from the library or find low-cost options in book club catalogs sent home from school. Or download audio books from an online bookstore.

Another great option is to record yourself reading your child's favorite books—she will love hearing your voice! Use a tape recorder, or put a recordable CD in your computer and read a story aloud into the microphone. Label the recordings, and store them with your youngster's book collection.



Book Picks

Click, Clack Moo: Cows That Type If cows could communicate, what would they ask for? The ones in Doreen Cronin's



story can type, and they leave Farmer Brown a note requesting electric blankets. When he doesn't bring any, they go on strike! (Available in Spanish.)

Koala Lou Everyone loves adorable Koala Lou, especially her mother. But when her siblings are born, she's no longer the center of attention. Of course, the little koala soon discovers she's loved, no matter what. A sweet story by Mem Fox.

A Seed Is Sleepy This nonfiction book explains how seeds turn into plants. Dianna Hutts Aston uses science vocabulary in simple rhymes that encourage children to listen. The illustrations identify seeds, and charts show the steps they go through to become plants.

Honey, I Love Eloise Greenfield's poems are about things the little girl narrator

loves, like riding down a country road with her family or jumping into a swimming pool. A lively look at family life.

Humphrey the Lost Whale This true story by Wendy Tokuda and Richard Hall tells of a humpback whale that accidentally ended up in the Sacramento River. Humphrey was lost for nearly a month before he was rescued and led back to the Pacific Ocean.

The Teddy Bears' Picnic In Jimmy Kennedy's picture-book version of this classic song, teddy bears plan a special picnic in the woods. There are games, balloons—and honey. The story's rhythm and repeated lines make it a nice read-aloud.