

# Literacy Begins at Home

## A Letter for Parents

Dear Parents:

Reading aloud to your child can be one of your best parenting experiences! We hope that you and your child create many loving memories as you explore children's books together. Here are some tips from [www.LiteracyConnections.com](http://www.LiteracyConnections.com).

- ♥ Don't wait until you think your child is "old enough" to be read to. You both can enjoy this experience sooner than you think--well before your child's first birthday.
- ♥ Make reading aloud a daily habit! It's a wonderful routine to help your child prepare for bedtime. Like all habits, this one may take a while to get established, but hang in there until it's a daily (or nightly) routine.
- ♥ Try to select an enjoyable core of books from which your child can choose. Do they have bright, colorful pictures? Does the language flow in an enjoyable way as you read it, or does it sound unnatural and halting? Are the stories about topics in which your child might be interested?
- ♥ Remember to keep it fun! Try to allow your child to select the books to be read. Yes, it's hard to read a book for the umpteenth time (we've been there!) but your child will gain a lot from these repeated readings--both emotionally and in preparation for his or her own reading development.
- ♥ Previewing books with your children is part of the fun! Look at the pictures and talk about them. As you chat about the pictures, you prepare your children to enjoy the book, and you can explain some words or names they will hear when you begin reading.
- ♥ This is an experience that you can really "get into." Roar like a lion, squeak like a mouse, and read your stories with great feeling!
- ♥ You'll want to be physically close to your child as you share books together. One of the best parts about reading aloud is having your child sit on your lap, or snuggled up to you.
- ♥ An enjoyable alternative to reading aloud can be the stories that you tell yourself! Your children will enjoy the tall tales you make up, or the family stories that you remember. But be sure to read books or tell a story EVERY DAY!
- ♥ Your children will probably want you to continue reading to them long after they are capable of doing it independently--because reading aloud isn't just about reading. It's a warm, loving experience that we hope that you'll continue for as long as your child desires.

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