



Tips for Reading with Children

Why it's important!

Children whose parents and caregivers read to them, tell them stories, and/or sing songs with them tend to develop larger vocabularies, become better readers and perform better in school.

If you read to your child for 30 minutes a day, every day from birth they will go to kindergarten with over 900 hours of literacy experiences! But if you reduce that to 30 minutes a week, they only have 130 hours of reading time before they start school.

MSU Extension recommends 30 minutes of literacy activities a day. Read more about how to make that an easy part of your daily routine.

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Read every day:

- Make story time a part of your daily routine
- Read many different kinds of materials with your children. Picture books, story books, magazines, newspapers, even catalogs or advertisements. Anything that has words!!
- Keep books within your children's reach so they can get one any time they want!
- Read the stories you child loves over and over again. Have a special way you read favorite stories, such as a silly voice for a character or sound effects that you repeat every time you read that book.

When reading aloud with children:

- Have fun while you read! Change your voice, read fast or slow, make up silly words. Make reading fun!
- Answer children's questions while you are reading. Don't make children wait until the end of the story if there is something they are wondering about.
- Involve children in the story. Ask them what they think will happen next or have them describe the story based on pictures.

Talk and listen—a lot!

- Talk to children while you are doing your everyday activities. Talk about what you are doing and why. Sing songs, say nursery rhymes or play games with letter sounds out loud.
- Point out words where you see them. On signs, in books, newspapers, on clothes, food packages and in the world around you!
- Let children see you read! Read books, magazines and newspapers in front of your child. Read for fun, with joy, and not as work. Let your children see that you enjoy and value reading.



30 minutes of literacy activities recommended each day

Literacy activities are more than just reading! Look for the opportunities to include reading, songs, word play and more games in your every day schedule! Literacy activities can take place anytime, anywhere! When you look for all the ways to “fit in” literacy activities in your daily routines it isn’t hard to fit in the critical 30 minutes of literacy activities that experts recommend for school readiness.

In the morning:

Wake your child up with a special song	1 minute
Sing “Head and shoulders” while getting dressed	1 minute
Read the cereal box and milk jug during breakfast	2 minutes
Listen to music in the car; sing along!	2 minutes
Read the signs on the way to school	3 minutes



During the day:

Ask your child’s caregiver to read to them	5 minutes
Listen to an audio book on the way home	3 minutes
Give your child time to practice writing	2 minutes

At home:

Have your child “read” to you	3 minutes
Write in the bathtub with bath crayons	4 minutes
Read a book as part of your bedtime routine	5 minutes
Sing a lullaby at bedtime	1 minute



Total of literacy activities 32 minutes

Literacy activities should be fun and never feel like work. Make reading and literacy fun for your child and instill a life long love of reading! *(adapted from “Feed Me a Story”, Connecticut Family Literacy Initiative)*

Additional Resources from MSU Extension:

Early Childhood website: http://msue.msu.edu/topic/info/early_childhood_development

Scan this QR code to receive [MSU Extension’s Family Book Sheets](#) for more ideas to extend your child’s learning beyond books!

