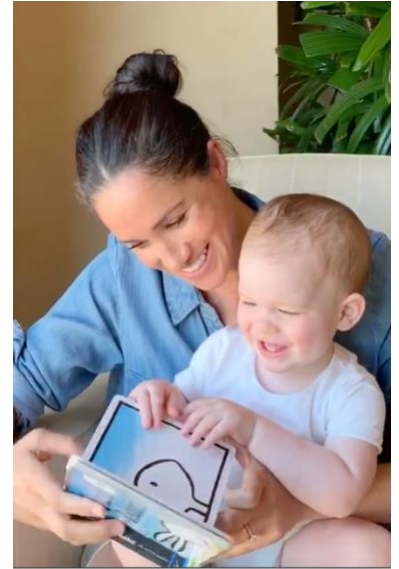


To celebrate our 20th workshop, we are covering a very important topic. We know the importance of reading with young children from birth, but these practices look different when you are reading with an infant compared to when you are reading with a four-year-old. Today, we go through different reading practices you can share with your child as they grow during their first five years.

Reading with children Birth through 1 year old

- **Book Choices:** Choose baby friendly books. Books with bright and bold, black and white, or high-contrast illustrations are easier for young babies to see, will grab their attention, and helps their vision develop. Babies also love looking at other babies! Choose books that show real photographs of babies. Baby Faces books are also great to talk about emotions.
 - Books made of cloth or soft plastic (for the bathtub) or "board books" with sturdy cardboard pages are easier for a baby to handle. Books with mirrors and different textures (crinkly, soft, scratchy) are also great for this age group. We also love the line of indestructible books which can be chewed on, spit up on, and put in the bath and they will not rip! **Keep books where your baby can reach them:** Make sure books are as easy to reach, hold, and look at as toys. Remember, a baby will do with a book what they do with everything else — put it in their mouth. And that's exactly what they're supposed to do, so you may only want to put chewable books within reach.
- **A Few Minutes at a Time is OK. Don't Worry if You Don't Finish the Story:** Young children can only sit for a few minutes for a story, but as they grow, they will be able to sit longer. Let your child decide how much (or how little) time you spend reading. And you don't need to read every page. You may find that your child has a favorite page or even a favorite picture. They may want to linger there for a while, and then switch books or activities. When you let your child explore books in the ways that interest them, the reading experience will be more meaningful, and will help create a love of books that will follow them throughout life.
- **Talk or Sing About the Pictures:** You do not have to read the words to tell a story. Try "reading" the pictures in a book for your child sometime. When your child is old enough, ask them to read the pictures to you!
- **Let Children Turn the Pages:** Babies cannot yet turn pages on their own, but an 18-month-old will want to give it a try, and a 3-year-old can certainly do it alone. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!



[Watch Meghan Markle Read with her son.](#)

Reading with Children 1 year old to 3 years old

- **Book Choices:** Choose books about everyday experiences and feelings. Your child will identify with the characters as they dress, eat, visit, nap, and play. Read books with big and silly words in them! This will teach your child new vocabulary.



- **Don't expect your toddler to sit still for a book:** Toddlers need to **move**, so don't worry if they act out stories or just skip, romp, or tumble as you read to them. They may be moving, but they are listening. Another great way to sneak in some reading time is to read to your toddler on the floor while they are playing. They might just walk over and sit down next to you! If not, that's okay too. You're exposing them to vocabulary and new sounds!
- **Recite rhymes, sing songs, and make mistakes:** Pause to let your toddler finish a phrase or chant a refrain. Once your toddler is familiar with the rhyme or pattern, make mistakes on purpose and get caught. If a picture reminds your child of a song, pause the story to sing together!
- **Choose engaging stories:** Books featuring animals or machines invite movement and making sounds. Books with flaps or different textures to touch keep hands busy. Books with detailed illustrations or recurring items hidden in the pictures are great for exploring and discussing.
- **Ask questions:** Take time to listen to your toddler's answers. As your toddler grows, they develop strong opinions and interesting ideas about the world. Encourage your toddler to tell you what they think. You'll build language skills and learn what makes your toddler tick at the same time.
- **Play to their favorites:** Read favorite stories again and again. Seek out books about things your toddler especially likes — trains, animals, the moon, anything they choose! These books may extend a toddler's attention span and build enthusiasm for reading.

[Watch Reach Out and Read in Philadelphia offer tips for reading with toddlers.](#)

Reading with Children 3 years old to 5 years old

- **Book Choices:** As your child is growing, so is their attention span and their ability to comprehend. You can now start to read books that have more words and have more back and forth conversations about the plot. Let your child choose books that interest them! Allowing your child to choose books that they want will help foster a joy and love of reading that will follow them as they grow!
- **Read together every day:** Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close. Set a reading routine, like reading at least one story before bed every night!
- **Give everything a name:** Build your child's vocabulary by talking about interesting words and objects. For example, "Look at that airplane! Those are the wings. Why do you think they are called wings?"
- **Say how much you enjoy reading:** Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Talk about "story time" as the favorite part of your day.
- **Connect what you're reading with your child's real-life experiences:** For example, if you're reading a book about going to the zoo or to the beach, talk about the times you went to the zoo or the beach!

- **Be interactive:** Discuss what's happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions, especially open-ended questions, like “What do you think will happen next? What would you do in this situation? How does this make you feel?” Open-ended questions are questions that require more than one-word answers.
- **Talk about writing:** Mention to your child how we read from left to right and how words are separated by spaces. Books like *The Book with No Pictures* are the perfect books to talk all about words and have some fun!
- **Point out print everywhere:** Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to find a new word on each outing.



[Watch Scholastic’s video on tips for reading with preschoolers.](#)



Additional Resources for New Yorkers

- [Reading Rockets](#)
- [New York Public Library](#)
 - [NYPL Sings!](#)
- [Brooklyn Public Library](#)
 - [Ready Set Kindergarten:](#)
- [Queens Public Library](#)
- [Literacy Inc \(LINC\)](#)
- [City’s First Readers](#)
- [Indestructible Books](#)
- [NAEYC](#)

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.