



Booktrust's Top Tips for Bedtime Reading with Toddlers

Sharing a story at bedtime is a chance for you and your child to relax and enjoy a special moment together. As part of a bedtime routine they will love to cuddle and hear your voice and will know that it's time to get ready for sleep. Make it something to look forward to – and enjoy this time together!

Spending 10 minutes a day reading aloud to your child will help their development and be great fun too!

- Why not start at bathtime? Share bath books and rhymes together – try Row Row Your Boat or make one up about splashing.
- Sit close together, somewhere cosy. It doesn't have to be in bed and it's best to switch off the TV.
- Try telling a story. Children love old classics like fairy tales or you could make one up together.
- Children also love poems, they're like songs and nursery rhymes and fun to share.
- Encourage young children to hold a book and turn the pages as you read the story. Books with flaps are great for getting children involved.
- Choose books with rhyme and repetition – this will encourage your toddler to join in and will help them later when they are learning to read.
- Let your child join in and tell you what's happening. Ask questions like 'What do you think will happen next?' and give your toddler plenty of time to answer.
- You don't always have to "read" a book. Talking about the pictures helps to tell the story.
- Share books about things that excite your child like trains or fairies.
- Try to relate a story to your child's own world and experiences: 'That dog looks like the one next door.'
- Read children's favourite books over and over again. Try to use funny voices and make silly noises. Your child loves the sound of your voice so don't worry and enjoy it together.
- Let your child choose the books they want you to share with them, it will make them feel involved. You could sometimes limit the choice to ones you know that you will enjoy too.
- If a child keeps asking you to read the same book, **celebrate!** You have a child who loves books and who is well on the way to becoming an enthusiastic reader.

Bookstart provides free packs of books for babies and children under 4. Ask your health visitor or your local library for more information.

For more tips and advice on great rhymes and books to share with your child visit our websites at www.bedtimereading.org.uk and www.bookstart.co.uk