



Using Books with Babies:

A. General Techniques of Language Stimulation

1. Converse with babies, as soon as cooing and babbling begins.
2. Use and demonstrate simplified, useful language, e.g., “More milk?”, “Shake the rattle,” “The car goes.”
3. Vary your voice – loud to soft, high to low, natural to song-like, etc. Try this:
 - Bow-wow, says the dog;
 - Mew-mew, says the cat;
 - Grunt-grunt, goes the hog;
 - And squeak, goes the rat.
4. Use words to accompany baby’s actions, e.g. “Bang, Bang.” “See the baby.”
Play action games:
 - Shake, shake, shake
 - Bang, bang
 - Up, down
 - Peek-a-boo
 - Round and round
5. Play with sounds, homemade instruments, music boxes, etc.

B. Choose books carefully

1. Young infants enjoy large, bright, simple pictures.
2. Even newborns recognize large pictures of the human face.
3. Infants enjoy the lilt of Mother Goose and other poems.
4. Older infants enjoy books depicting familiar actions.
5. Don’t overlook these selections of your library: crafts, folktales, music, language, poetry.



C. Techniques for Introducing Books to Babies

1. Restrict beginning readings to viewing together and labeling.
2. Observe baby's reactions, show enthusiasm for responses such as attempting to turn pages of cardboard books, pointing to pictures, "talking" at pictures.
3. Make personal books for babies, e.g. pictures of family, of toys.
4. Create interest in books and characters by playing with "literary" toys: stuffed animals, puzzles, etc.

D. Guidelines for Using Books with Infants

1. Share books in an easy, pleasant and social manner.
2. Keep sessions short, 5-20 minutes, choosing a setting or time of day when infant is typically attentive and relaxed, e.g. after bath.
3. Hold infant on your lap or sit him/her in an infant seat where book is easily seen.
4. Allow sufficient time for infant to scan and focus on pictures: Hold picture at about 12-18 inches (8-12 inches for youngest infants.)
5. Point to pictures and actions as you read words.



Resources for Developmental Tips

- Parenting Counts Center gives a timeline of what children can do at different ages: <http://www.parentingcounts.org/overview.html>
- Talaris Institute is committed to supporting parents and caregivers by sharing the latest findings and most current research in early childhood development. <http://www.talaris.org/our-research/>
- Zero To Three has a list of other resources that provide developmental tips on “Early Literacy and Language Tips and Tools”:
<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/tips-tools-early-lit-and-lang.html>
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has a useful website with a “Books Build Connections Toolkit.” Scroll down the page to “Resources for Talking About Reading With Families With Low Literacy Levels.” Tips listed by ages start with babies from birth to 3 months, continue with 4-5 months, 6-8 months, etc. and continue up to 6 – 10 years.
<https://littoolkit.aap.org/earlyliteraryresources/Pages/home.aspx>
- Saroj Ghoting’s earlylit.net has many wonderful resources. Learn how to take a picture walk with your child using dialogic reading through “Sharing Books with Young Children.” <http://www.earlylit.net/s/sharbksflyr-3sq3.doc>
- Ready at Five - (Scroll down to “Language and Literacy Development”
[http://www.readyatfive.org/for-parents/parent-tips.html#Language & Litaracy \(ParentTips\)](http://www.readyatfive.org/for-parents/parent-tips.html#Language & Litaracy (ParentTips))