









Tips to Get Your Child Off To a Good Reading Start...

-  **Read To Your Baby** - It's never too early to introduce your child to books. "Read" board books to your infant, put cloth books in the crib, and float plastic books in the tub. Your kids will grow up with the idea that books are an integral part of their lives.
-  **Make Time For Books** - Set aside a specific time to read to your child everyday. Naptime and bedtime are obvious opportunities, but some busy families find that a story over breakfast or while lounging in the tub works best for them.
-  **Keep Books Available** - Make it easy to read. Keep a sack of books in the car to divert kids while you're running errands and on the nightstand to amuse early risers. Pack a variety of books when traveling.
-  **Be A Reading Role Model** - Show your kids that you value reading. Let them see that you are reading for pleasure, and tell them how much you enjoy reading with them. Take them along on trips to the library and bookstore.
-  **Make Your Own Books** - Preschoolers can dictate their own stories and then add illustrations. Other ideas? Make a holiday book that shows your family traditions, a birthday book recording party memories, or a travel diary about the family vacation.
-  **Read Anything and Everything** - On the road, encourage your child to read the Stop, Yield, and Walk signs. In the grocery store, ask the kids to find the juice or cereal they want. Learning to differentiate among packages and to recognize common road signs is a great beginning step in learning to read.
-  **Play With Letters** - Magnetic letters allow children to spell their name on the refrigerator. Letter blocks combine stacking and spelling for double the fun.
-  **Read it Again and Again** - Parents may get tired of reading the same favorite book over, but repetition is an important developmental step in learning to read. As they repeat the familiar refrains with you, children begin to associate the words they say with the words on the page. Soon they will be recognizing and reading the words on their own.

*The above information is excerpts from a Guide For Grown-ups by Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse Magazine.

A Guide to Selecting Books for an At-Home Library

By surrounding your child with books, you are planting a love of reading in them and teaching them to turn to books for pleasure and knowledge. We want our kids to grow up with the idea that books are an integral part of their lives. With millions of books at a caregiver's fingertips, how's a caregiver to choose the right "investments" for their child's library? Below is a list of questions and suggestions to help you choose just the right books for your child.

Choosing Books

- **Look for books based on your child's interests.**
What are your child's favorite things or activities? What does he/she talk about?
- **Choose books that relate to what's happening in your family.**
Are you going to the beach this summer? Visiting the mountains? Visiting Grandma?
- **Use books to learn about and "celebrate" special events.**
Is it the first day of school? Are you having a new baby? Or celebrating a special holiday - Birthday, Easter, Passover, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's Day, or Fourth of July?
- **Is the book appropriate to your child's physical development?**
Can he/she easily handle it, touch it, and mouth it? Are the pictures bright and attractive? Can he/she relate the "stories" to his/her own life?
- **Look for books that initiate independent reading.**
Wordless picture books, where the child can "read" the pictures and follow the story. Also, simple stories, with engaging characters and illustrations that they can memorize and then later "read" on their own.
- **If your child is reading:**
Can they easily read the book by themselves? Is the book one that a sibling can read to a younger child? Look for series of books. Children love to read about favorite characters in new and exciting situations.

Every child's developmental timeline is unique. As children grow, so do their attention spans and their bedtime reading ritual and reading habits need to grow with them. While you can't push a child to learn to read, you can help your children love what comes out of books and provide lots of opportunities for them to explore them.

*Taken from an article by The National Center for Family Literacy

Creating a Child's Very Own Reading Oasis

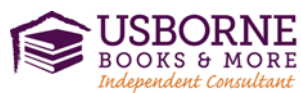
Once you have selected the books for your child's library, make sure the books are easily accessible within an inviting environment. Here are some tips for creating a cozy nook and maximizing your child's exposure.

- 1) Set up a cozy space designated for reading.** Ideally, this space should be a quiet corner or area, away from the television. Add a comfortable chair or bean bag so that your child can settle in and read. Place a child-friendly bookshelf or book basket so that your child can easily select books near the space.
- 2) Make books accessible in every area of the house.** For example, place a basket of books in the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen. Rotate a set of books in the backseat of the car.
- 3) Create a book display with each new season or holiday.** This will get your child excited about the season and about reading new books!

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