

# Sharing books with toddlers and young children

Children who look at lots of books and enjoy stories can come to love books and will develop skills and confidence in handling them. The more time that children spend with books and other sorts of writing, the easier it will be for them to learn to read and write.

**Children who enjoy books have a whole world opened up to them.**

**The magic of sharing books and stories**

**Cuddling up together with a story can be a very special time** – a time where:



- you and your child can enter into a shared world, where they can explore and learn safely
- your child can ask questions about things that puzzle or worry them – this helps them to understand and deal with their fears
- their imagination can run free
- new language and meanings can be explored
- you can laugh and have fun together.

**The magic of sharing stories, books and illustrations can stay with children all their lives.**

**Books, books and more books!**



Books come in many different shapes, sizes and types – from board books with flaps and bright pictures – to storybooks with magical illustrations – to information books with photographs and facts.

Children love:

- bright, colourful pictures where they can find and count things
- funny stories, exciting stories and stories about things they are fascinated by
- the suspense of what might be under the flap or guessing what will happen next
- stories about familiar situations, characters and events exploring the world and finding out about new things – discovering what is real and what is pretend
- listening to stories, songs and rhymes with a good rhythm and/or repeated words so they can join in
- the closeness of sharing a book with you and listening to the familiar sound of your voice.



## Choosing books

Your child will enjoy choosing books for themselves – perhaps from a bookshelf that they can reach, their own special book box, or from a selection of e-books on a phone or tablet. Try joining the library with your child – you’ll both be able to choose and explore lots of different types of books and stories.



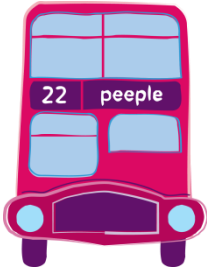
Choosing books gives children the opportunity to make choices and gain confidence at a time in their lives when adults often make many other decisions for them.

## Time to share books

You can share books with your child anytime and anywhere. **Books and stories are too good to keep just for bedtime!**



At home, it can be helpful to turn off any background noise such as the television or music so that your child can focus on sharing a book with you. Choose somewhere comfortable and cosy where you can snuggle up together, perhaps after breakfast or before bedtime.



When you are going out and about, try popping a book in your bag to share with your child on the bus, or a park bench, or while waiting in a queue. As well as a fun and enjoyable activity, books can provide a useful distraction and also be a great comforter.

Other family members and close friends will often enjoy the special time of cuddling up to share books and stories with your child too.

## Books to hold

Children love to hold books and turn the pages themselves. This helps them to find out how books work and develop the skills to handle books carefully. They learn that books and stories can have:

- a right way up - a front and a back
- a beginning, a middle and an end
- pictures and words
- pages which can be turned to find out what happens next.



## Encouraging a love of books and stories

If children are interested in books they are more likely to want to look at them and this helps them to become readers and writers.

There are lots of simple ways that you can help. Try these:

- have a special shelf or box for their books within easy reach
- have a comfortable place to curl up and look at books
- encourage your child to choose books for themselves
- let your child hold the book, turn the pages and lift flaps
- make a special place and time to share books with your child every day
- try sharing books on your phone or tablet etc.
- let your child see you reading or using books, e.g. a cookery book
- join the library with your child
- try lots of different books about lots of different things such as picture books, flap books, songbooks, funny books, storybooks, information books etc.
- encourage your child to join in the with familiar stories



**Young children who have lots of opportunities to handle books and listen to stories are likely to love books and become confident readers.**