

Developmental Milestones of Early Literacy

Help for Parents

When loving parents share books with them, children will develop an early positive attachment to books. The following information from Reach Out and Read, a national children's literacy program that seeks to make early literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care, can help you in developing your child's lifelong love of reading.

MOTOR	COGNITIVE	WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:
6 - 12 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reaches for book book to mouth sits in lap, head steady turns pages with adult help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks at pictures vocalizes, pats pictures prefers pictures of faces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hold child comfortably, face-to-face gaze follow baby's cues for "more" and "stop" point and name pictures
12 - 18 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sits without support may carry book holds book without help turns board pages, several at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no longer mouths right away points at pictures with one finger may make same sound for particular picture (labels) points when asked, "where's...?" turns book right side up gives book to adult to read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond to child's prompting to read let the child control the book be comfortable with toddler's short attention span ask "where's the...?" and let child point
18 - 24 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turns board book pages easily, one at a time carries book around the house may use book as transitional object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> names familiar pictures fills in words in familiar stories "reads" to dolls or stuffed toys recites parts of well-known stories attention span highly variable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate books to child's experiences use books in routines, bed-times ask "what's that?" and give child time to answer pause and let child complete the sentence
24 - 36 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learns to handle paper pages goes back and forth in books to find favorite pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recites whole phrases, sometimes whole stories coordinates text with picture protests when adult gets a word wrong in a familiar story reads familiar books to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep using books in routines read at bedtime be willing to read the same story over and over ask "what's that?" relate books to child's experiences provide crayons and paper
3 YEARS AND UP		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competent book handling turns paper pages one at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listens to longer stories can retell familiar story understands what text is moves finger along text "writes" name moves toward letter recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask "what's happening?" encourage writing and drawing let child tell the story

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Reach Out and Read National Center 29 Mystic Avenue; Somerville, MA 02145
Phone: 617-629-8042 Fax: 617-629-8842 Email: info@reachoutandread.org www.reachoutandread.org

This information is made available by NEA's Read Across America campaign and Reach Out and Read so that educators, parents, caregivers, and volunteers have the resources and activities they need to motivate young readers to become lifelong learners.

