

# Raising Readers Step by Step



## Prenatal

- Does the idea of reading to children before they're born sound crazy? In one study, researchers asked women in the last trimester of pregnancy to repeatedly read aloud Dr. Seuss's [The Cat in the Hat](#). After the babies in the study were born, they were able to distinguish rhyming passages by Dr. Seuss from another book without rhymes. Conclusion? It is never too early to read aloud to children.
- By the way, babies are naturally attached to their mothers because, among other reasons, they hear their mothers talking. Be an active parent and talk to your baby so she is familiar with you before she is born.

## Infants

- Share books that your infant can "manhandle." These include board books made of thick cardboard, vinyl books and books made out of cloth. Keep in mind that a lot of infants get their first taste of reading quite literally by putting books in their mouths.
- Whatever the time, read books that rhyme. Babies think it's neat when their parents repeat.

## Toddlers

- Toddlers can have a limited attention span, so it is a good idea to pick out short reading passages. Nursery rhymes, poems and fables are ideal.
- Share picture books with limited text and encourage toddlers to tell their own stories based on the pictures.

## Preschoolers

- Movement sells. For example: If you read a book that features a thunderstorm, encourage your child to pat his thighs to create the sound of the thunder.
- Ham it up! Don't be afraid to look foolish and laugh with your child by using different voices as you read stories together. They will love you for it.

## Kindergarteners

- Make reading a reward instead of movies, candy and video games. Treat your child to library visits, new books from the bookstore, etc.
- Whenever possible, connect stories that you and your child read with experiences from your own lives. For example: If you are going on a camping trip, read [Bailey Goes Camping](#).

## First-graders

- If television is an unavoidable part of your child's life, make a rule that your child must bring you a book to read aloud before watching any television programs. When the television is on, turn on the closed-captioning so your child sees print and equates spoken words with written words.
- Reading is not just about books. Supply children with newspapers, magazines, football cards, brochures, etc.

## Second-graders

- Talk about your favorite books with your child. Compare stories that you liked when you were his or her age and what you like to read now.
- Ask your child to dictate stories to you and create books together. Then "publish" your books. You can illustrate stories, laminate them and even create professional-quality books using free online software.

## Third-graders

- Create a balanced diet for your child by exposing him to different genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry and fantasy.
- Encourage your child to write to his or her favorite author. Many children's authors are good about responding to their young fans.

## Recommended Reading:

[A Family of Readers: The Book Lover's Guide to Children's and Young Adult Literature](#). (809.89282 SUT)

[The Read-Aloud Handbook](#) by Jim Trelease. (372.452 TRE 2006)

[Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs](#) by Ellen Galinsky (305.231 GAL)

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