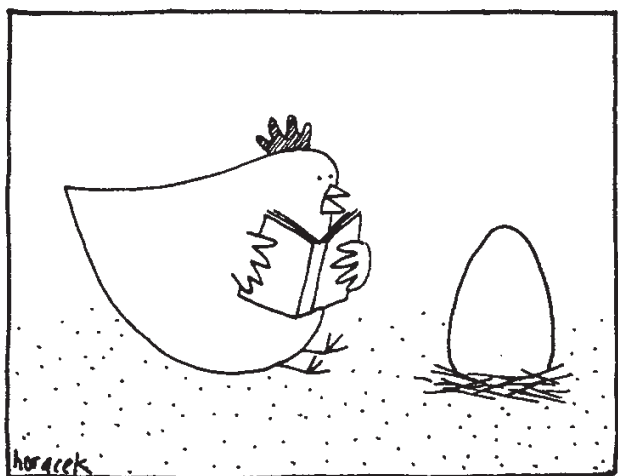


5 Great Reasons to read aloud to babies *before* birth!



1. Around week 25 or 26, babies in utero have been shown to respond to voices by turning their heads. In the third trimester, your baby can already recognize your voice and will respond with an increased heart rate. Even though your baby is still developing, they are listening!
2. When you read or sing, the sound of your voice is different from regular talking. Your baby will enjoy the different sounds you make and will become familiar with the rhythms of reading and singing.
3. Try picking one song to sing regularly and one book to read aloud regularly in your third trimester. After your baby is born, see how they respond to that familiar song and book! You may find they are comforted and soothed by it.
4. Setting up a cozy spot for reading aloud can help you bond with your baby and get familiar with a new routine as you wait for their arrival.
5. Invite a special family member or friend to sing or read aloud to your baby. That way your baby will get to know their voice, too!



**Family Reading
Partnership**

40 Catherwood Rd. Ste D01 Ithaca, NY 14850
607.277.8602 www.familyreading.org



Start reading now and keep reading!

- ♥ Read to your baby before they are born and they will be comforted by the sound of your voice after they're born.
- ♥ After birth, read to your baby snuggled up in your arms or stretched out on the floor together. Make sharing books part of your daily routine!

Soon you will receive more books for your home library through these programs from Family Reading Partnership.

—— Books to Grow On ——

Babies born at Cayuga Medical Center receive a **Welcome Baby Book** in a red book bag and a Talk, Sing, Read, Play with Me pamphlet.



At 8 **well-child visits** between the ages of 2 months and 4 years your family will receive a new book from your baby's doctor in Tompkins County.

Children receive a **Welcome to School Book** upon entering kindergarten.

—— Bright Red Bookshelf ——



Gently used children's books are available free for families to take home on over 50 **Bright Red Bookshelves** in the community. There's a map of bookshelf locations on our website: <http://www.familyreading.org/our-programs/bright-red-bookshelf/>

It's never too early to read to your baby, and the benefits last a lifetime!

PLAY!



Your baby is curious about everything! Play is the natural way that babies learn. When you play with your baby, you teach them that you value spending time together. Play helps babies develop social skills and language.

Your Face is a Toy! Your face and hands will be your baby's favorite and most important toys for many months. Be playful and try making different faces and hand motions- your baby may try to copy you!

Engage the Senses! Playing with your baby doesn't have to mean entertaining them. Just going about your everyday routines and encouraging your baby to explore with all their senses is a great way to play. Your baby can delight in the colors and textures in your closet when you get dressed, and the smells in the kitchen when you cook.

Watch and Wait. There is so much to see when you take time to quietly watch your baby as they play. Babies love to master new skills without interruption or assistance. Sometimes it might not look like they're doing much, but every little thing is brand new to them!

Learn to Respond to Your Baby's Cues. Just like adults, babies don't always like being social. When your baby has had enough, they will turn away or fuss a bit to let you know they need a break.

Ditch the Batteries! Their brain is growing so quickly, so instead of screens try offering to read baby books and give simple objects to play with. Talking and playing with them is how they learn best! When choosing toys for baby, look for those that do not light up or make noise. These toys can be overstimulating for infants and can actually limit their learning. When using phones or screens around baby, try to stick to video chats with friends and family or photographs of loved ones.

TALK!

Talking with babies from birth is the best way to help them learn language. Even though they can't talk yet, they're listening!

Use the Language of Love.

Babies begin learning to talk by taking turns. They coo, look at you, and wait. You coo and wait, and they coo back. These early "conversations" teach your baby about language and about being loved!

Have Changing Table Chats.

Diapering is a wonderful talking time. Your baby loves to gaze at you and will look at your face and listen to your words as you chat with them.

Respond Gently. Crying is your baby's first way of talking! Respond with a gentle tone and loving words so that they learn you are listening.

Be a Generous Word Giver.

Notice what your baby looks at and talk about it! Flowers and animals, toys and food—you can talk about their names, colors, shapes, smells, anything that comes to mind. Hearing words over and over again is how babies learn what they mean.



Talk About What You Do.

Before you change your baby's clothes, tell them "I'm going to change your shirt now." Soon they will understand your words and respond with their own sounds and actions. You can ask them questions, too. They can't respond with words yet, but it's important for babies to know they're part of the conversation!

Every Baby! Every Day!
Talk. Sing. Read. Play.

A Community Campaign led by the Family Reading Partnership



Family Reading Partnership

SING!

Music wakes up your baby's brain! Babies enjoy the rhythm and melody in a song, and it's a fun way for them to learn language.

Just Sing! Sing to your baby, even if you don't think you sound great, your voice is special and comforting to them.

Sing Songs From Your Childhood.

Do you remember songs from when you were young? Pass them on to your little one! Songs that rhyme are especially helpful for your baby's literacy development.



Move While You Sing. Music and movement naturally go together. Dancing with your baby and rocking and holding them as you sing supports your baby's physical development.

Change It Up. Sing or hum faster, slower, softer, slightly louder. All of these simple changes make the song a new and interesting experience for your baby.

Make It Personal. Use familiar tunes and change the words. Use your baby's name or just sing about whatever you are doing! When you help your baby calm down with songs, you are supporting their ability to soothe themselves.

Family Reading Partnership is here to help! Visit our website and social media to find out more about all of the programs we offer Tompkins County residents to get families reading, talking, singing, and playing together!

www.familyreading.org



Family Reading
Partnership

READ!

Sharing time enjoying books together helps your baby develop a lifelong love of reading. Even if baby is not quiet and still when you read, they are still practicing listening and the pictures are introducing them to art.

Snuggle Up and Read. Holding your baby in your lap and reading together helps your baby connect the things they love most: your voice and being with you, to books! It's a great way to bond and reading together every day can help your baby feel safe and secure.



Read the Pictures. Your baby may not be ready for the whole book, and might be

more interested in flipping the pages when they learn how! Talk about the pictures. Point to things your baby can see and name them. Make up your own story if you want!

Keep Books Handy. Keep books in your stroller, diaper bag, car, and at the changing table. Think of books when baby is fussy, when you have to wait for an appointment, or during playtime!

Again... and again! Babies love, and learn from, repetition. If your baby wants to read the same book over and over, just remember that it's because they are learning so much!

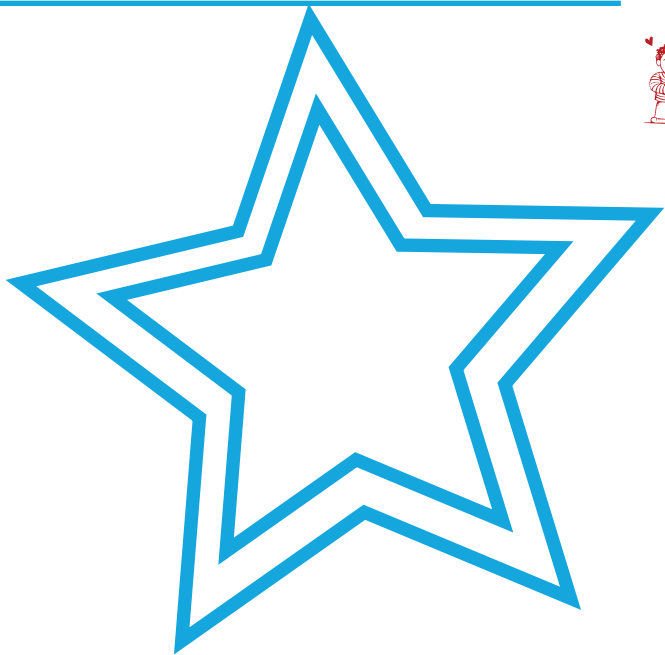
Visit the Library. All of our local libraries have great storytimes for babies. Pick up a book for yourself, too. Making time for things that you enjoy is even more important once you have a baby at home, and if baby sees you with a book, they will want one, too!



Every Baby! Every Day!
Talk. Sing. Read. Play.

A Community Campaign led by the Family Reading Partnership

Family Reading
Partnership



This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 2-Month-Old

- ♥ Likes to smile and coo- making sounds like ah and oh
- ♥ Likes to look at your face and high contrast images
- ♥ Can focus their eyes on objects that are close in front of them
- ♥ Turns their head towards sounds and can recognize the sound of your voice

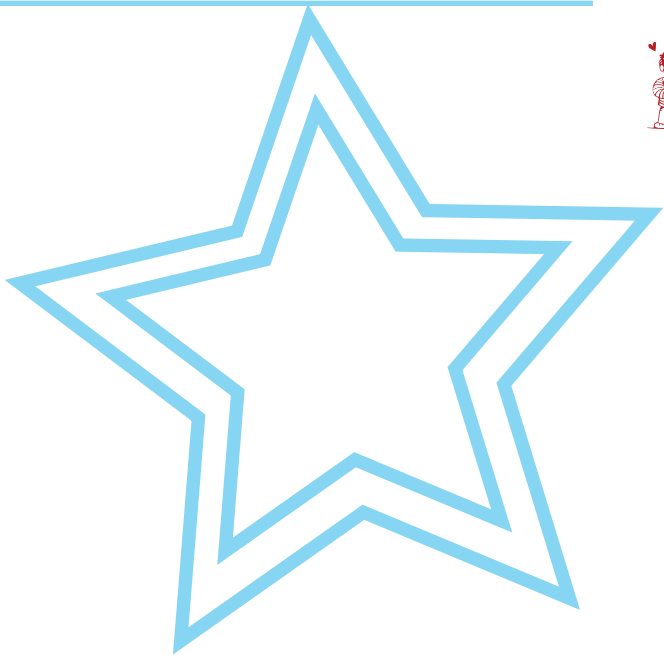
Growing Together: You and Your 2- Month-Old

- ★ When your baby coos, smile and coo back. Pause and give them a chance to respond. These loving back and forth interactions are your baby's very first conversations!
- ★ Give your baby plenty of face-to-face time. Look into their eyes and make different expressions for your baby to see. Your face is your baby's first and favorite toy and the best tool for their social and emotional learning.
- ★ Try holding a high contrast image in front of your baby, such as a black and white toy or illustration. Slowly move the object from side to side to help your baby practice following it with their eyes. This skill will come into play later on for reading and writing.
- ★ Talk to your baby in a sing-song voice. We often talk to babies this way without even thinking and it's for a reason: babies hear higher pitches more easily. Your voice is a source of comfort and the more you talk, the more you help your baby's language to develop.

Talk, Sing, Read, Play:

- ★ Play a song for your baby to hear and sing along or just listen together. The rhythm and rhymes in music help support your baby's language development.
- ★ Go for a walk outside and notice what grabs your baby's attention. Does your baby turn their head towards the sounds of birds or cars going by? Talk to your baby about what they see and hear!
- ★ 2-month- olds have a great sense of smell. Are there any flowers outside for your baby to smell? When your baby experiences the world with all of their senses, it helps their brain to grow!
- ★ When you read with your baby you don't need to read every word in the book or read all the way to the end. Just looking at the colorful pictures with your baby and talking about them is a great way for your baby to learn.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 4-Month-Old

- ♥ Is more alert and social
- ♥ Likes to see you smile and watch your face
- ♥ Likes to make noises and hear their own voice
- ♥ Explores objects with their mouth
- ♥ Reaches for objects with their hands

Growing Together: You and Your 4- Month-Old

- ★ Smile at your baby and make funny faces! Your 4-month-old loves to smile and is exploring their sense of humor. Have fun being silly together!
- ★ Explore sounds together. Cluck your tongue or blow kisses and see how your baby reacts! You might discover that your baby has become a little noisemaker. When your baby coos, repeat their sounds back to keep the conversation going.
- ★ Let your baby explore things with their mouth- soft toys, your hands, even books. Your baby learns through all their senses and touch is the most highly developed at birth, especially around the mouth. That's why babies put everything in their mouths! Mouthing and chewing on things also helps your baby's tongue, lips, cheeks, and jaw get ready for talking!
- ★ Your 4-month-old wants to reach for and touch the objects in front of them. Put out objects that make noises, such as a rattle. When they touch something and it makes a noise your baby learns that their actions have an impact on the world around them!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play:

- ★ Have fun with silly animal sounds and movements. The more exaggerated you are, the more you will capture your baby's attention.
- ★ Your 4-month-old might be more interested in grabbing a book and putting it in their mouth than they are in listening to you read, and that's okay! Board books are a great choice for babies because they are sturdy.
- ★ Sing with your baby! Your baby will love hearing you sing and songs with rhyme and repetition will help their language develop.
- ★ Bring a mirror along for some tummy time ! Try propping the mirror up in front of your baby's face so they can look at their reflection. You might just see your baby work extra hard to lift their head and chest! Always stay with your baby during tummy time.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org





This book provided by



**Family Reading
Partnership**

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 6-Month-Old

- ♥ Will turn toward you and watch your mouth while you speak
- ♥ Might be babbling— making new sounds like ma ma, da da, ba ba
- ♥ Likes to look in the mirror and at familiar faces
- ♥ Is developing object permanence— understanding that even when an object can't be seen, it still exists

Growing Together: You and Your 6- Month-Old

- ★ Repeat the sounds your baby makes when they babble and say simple words back to them with those sounds. For example, if your baby says “ba” you might say “book.” Babbling is how your baby practices talking before they can say real words!
- ★ Enjoy some hiding and finding games like peek-a-boo. If your baby spends time apart from you, peek-a-boo can help your baby feel more secure by reassuring them that even if they can’t see you, you’ll always come back. Plus, there is nothing like the sound of your baby’s laughter during a game of peek-a-boo!
- ★ Your baby learns through all of their senses. Offer your baby things to smell, textures to touch, colors to see, and sounds to hear. Describing what your baby experiences in the moment will help them build vocabulary. Let yourself slow down and enjoy paying attention to the world through your baby’s eyes!
- ★ Throughout your baby’s first year of life, they will continue to learn an enormous amount through looking at your face. All of the interactive face-to-face time that you share will have long-lasting impacts on their attention, perception, social-emotional development, and language development. So take time every day to get down on their eye-level and face-to-face!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play:

- ★ Reading is a wonderful way to explore emotions together! Real-life photographs of other babies are sure to capture your curious 6-month old’s and they will delight in watching you act out each emotion— especially if you get silly and exaggerate a bit!
- ★ More and more research in early childhood reveals that social-emotional learning is integral for all other areas of development and all future learning. You might begin to notice that your baby is expressing more complex feelings. Try reflecting and talking about what your baby might be feeling. For example, “You look worried. The blender made a loud sound and I don’t think you liked it!” This will help your baby learn to identify their own feelings and reflecting on your baby’s feelings will support your bond.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



This book provided by



**Family Reading
Partnership**

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 12-Month-Old

- ♥ Understands much more language now
- ♥ Is listening to what you say, even if they are not talking yet
- ♥ May begin turning pages or holding a book by themselves
- ♥ May want to hear the same story over and over

Growing Together: You and Your 12- Month-Old

★ Happy first birthday! You and your baby have grown so much. Remember, every baby's developmental path is unique. Watch for progress, not deadlines. If you are worried about your baby's development your pediatrician is a great resource. If needed, there is support available at no cost through early intervention.

★ Your baby learns language and literacy skills through everyday interactions— talking, singing, reading, and playing together. Try playing back-and-forth games. For example, you can hand your baby a toy and encourage them to hand it back to you. Try to pass the toy back and forth a few times. This is great practice for future conversations!

★ When your baby makes sounds they are communicating. Put words to their sounds. For example, if you are outside and your baby makes a noise, try to notice what they might be looking at. You could say "I see you looking at the bird. That's a noisy bird!"

★ Make sure to follow us on social media for local resources and more tips about early literacy engagement for your family!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play :

★ Encourage your baby to focus on different parts of their body. You can demonstrate pointing to all the parts of your own body and encourage your baby to do the same! Counting body parts is a great way for your baby to start learning about numbers.

★ Let books inspire you to get moving and shaking together! Music and dance with your twelve-month-old can be so much fun because they are moving more than they used to. Explore playing with bells, egg shakers, rhythm sticks or other basic instruments! Combining language with movement is a wonderful brain stimulation.

★ You'll know your baby loves a book when they want you to read it over and over again, and this is especially common with songs. It might make your head spin, but keep in mind that your baby is learning language through repetition! Whether you sing in English or (insert language of this translation), repeating a book over and over is great for your baby's language development.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 18-Month-Old

- ♥ Can choose a book to share
- ♥ Likes to move and may be on the go while you read
- ♥ Likes to look at pictures of familiar animals and make their sound
- ♥ May point to a picture they like and say a word or two about it

Growing Together: You and Your 18-Month-Old

★ By now you've seen that language and literacy learning starts right from birth! It isn't necessary to "teach" your 18-month-old through formal classes or activities. Simply continuing to talk, sing, read, and play together every day is the best recipe for literacy development.

★ Your 18-month-old is on the move and able to pick up objects and explore them independently. Give your child a chance to play with and explore books and other written materials like magazines, newspapers, take-out menus, cereal boxes, and crayons.

★ Your 18-month old is probably delighting in exploring all they can do with their body- walking, climbing, bouncing, sliding, and more. There's no wrong way to explore books at this age. Young children are often still listening even as they move around. Any interaction with books at this age is a good one, even reading upside down!

★ Singing songs and reading books that encourage motion can be great fun at this age!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play:

★ Encourage your child to take books all over the house- reading it to the cat, to the baby, and taking it on a wagon ride. Keeping books available throughout your home is a great way to help your 18-month-old feel more at home with books. Try placing books in baskets on the floor or on low shelves so your child can pick up a book anytime!

★ Pretend play is an important step towards literacy and your 18-month-old is starting to have some basic skills at pretending. Even something as simple as pretending to read to the stuffed animals before bedtime will encourage your 18-month-old's imagination and symbolic thinking.

★ When your 18-month-old points to a picture in a book or says a word or two about it, respond by talking more about it to expand your child's understanding and vocabulary. For example, if your child points to someone reading upside down, you could say "The book is upside down" then demonstrate it yourself!

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 2-Year-Old

- ♥ Is becoming more independent
- ♥ Likes to explore by themselves with the security of knowing you're close by
- ♥ May comment on the pictures in books
- ♥ Has favorite books

Growing Together: You and Your 2-Year-Old

★ Happy second birthday! This age often gets mischaracterized as the “terrible twos.” Instead, try to see all that is terrific about the twos! It is an exciting time to support your child’s budding confidence and talking goes a long way. Describe what you see your child doing in everyday moments to support their positive self-image and vocabulary.

★ You probably see why toddlers have a reputation for being opinionated. It can be challenging to navigate, but it’s a healthy way your child learns to assert himself. Try offering simple choices such as choosing between two shirts when getting dressed. This will help your child feel empowered and make daily routines better for everyone.

★ Continue to talk, sing, read, and play with your toddler every day! Your child may have big feelings about separating from you. Read a book or sing a song together as a comforting routine before saying goodnight or goodbye.

★ Your toddler’s brain is growing at a rapid pace and this age can be emotional. Toddlers have a hard time accessing language when experiencing big feelings and need empathetic adults to help them. Talking about what your child is experiencing supports their social-emotional and language development.

Talk, Sing, Read, Play :

★ Books are full of repetition, rhyme, and sound effects— all parts of language that two-year-olds love! Have fun and don’t be surprised if your toddler wants to hear it again and again!

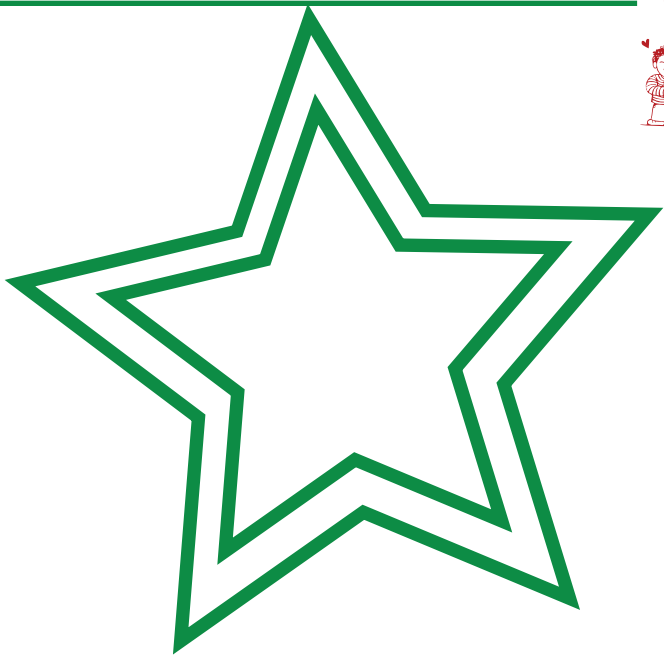
★ As you read, ask open-ended questions like “What do you think the characters are doing?” This helps your child engage with the book and develop their own ideas.

★ As your toddler comments on the book, help him to build sentences. If he talks about trucks in the book, you can respond with a full sentence like, “I see the trucks lifting wood.”

★ Pick up some new books to read at the library or stop by the Nook located near the food court inside The Shops at Ithaca Mall

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org





This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 3-Year-Old

- ♥ Has rapidly expanding vocabulary
- ♥ Is eager to explore and understand their world
- ♥ Loves to read books that make them laugh and involve imagination
- ♥ Might have a favorite book nearly memorized and enjoy reciting it to you

Growing Together: You and Your 3-Year-Old

★ Happy third birthday! You might notice your three-year-old asking a lot of “why” questions. This is a wonderful invitation to have a conversation. You don’t need to have all the answers- ask your child what they think and keep the conversation going!

★ Your three-year-old’s vocabulary is expanding quickly and they are starting to connect descriptive words with familiar objects. Try playing guessing games like “I Spy” at home. Pick an object that your child can see then give your child a clue about the shape or color of the object. If you are eating pancakes at breakfast, you can say “I spy something round and brown” and have your child guess what the object is.

★ Nursery rhymes are a wonderful way for your child to learn vocabulary. Once your child is familiar with a rhyme, try pausing when you get to the end and give them a chance to finish it.

★ Keep books and writing materials such as crayons and paper within easy reach for your child to use by themselves!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play :

★ There is magic in nature throughout the year. Get outside together! Visit an apple orchard, or take a walk at one of the Story Walks that Family Reading Partnership offers in Tompkins County!

★ Cooking projects are a great way to practice reading and following directions. Have fun following a recipe together- perhaps one for applesauce!

★ Reading brings the joy of imagination. Support your child in creating their own book. All you need is some paper and crayons or colored pencils. Your child can draw pictures and experiment with writing letters or you can write out what they say.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



This book provided by



Family Reading
Partnership

Thanks to sponsorship from



United Way of
Tompkins County
Impact Partner

Your Growing 4-Year-Old

- ♥ May try to read or write, especially words that are meaningful to them like their own name
- ♥ Likes to retell familiar stories that they have heard
- ♥ Can identify some letters and may make letter-sound matches
- ♥ Understands that print carries a message

Growing Together: You and Your 4-Year-Old

★ Happy fourth birthday! Your four-year-old has discovered that language is everywhere. Support their growing awareness of print by looking for words together wherever you go- on street signs, at the grocery store, etc.

★ Encourage your four-year-old to take the lead when reading together. You could ask them, "where do we start?" Pause while reading every so often and ask your child what they think will happen next.

★ Storytelling is a wonderful literacy activity for this age. You could try acting out familiar stories from books or incorporate storytelling into your daily routine by telling a story about your day before bedtime.

★ Continue to talk, sing, read, and play every day! Keep books and writing materials within easy reach for your child to play with. The best way you can continue to support your child as they develop their confidence as a reader and writer is to keep it fun!

Talk, Sing, Read, Play:

★ Reflect on all the ways your four-year-old has grown since they were a baby. Bring out old photos and share some stories! Tracing your child's body on a piece of paper can be a fun art activity to do while reflecting on how much your child has grown.

★ Adults often shy away from discussing differences with children, but four-year-olds are perceptive and aware. This is the perfect age to begin important conversations and lay the foundation for understanding and acceptance even across differences.

★ Playful rhymes will help your child develop the ability to notice sounds in language. Have some fun coming up with even more words that rhyme with the words in a book.

For more ideas and to see our other programs,
visit us at www.familyreading.org   



Family Reading Partnership

Dear Family,

Congratulations on your child beginning Kindergarten. Family Reading Partnership would like to celebrate this milestone with the gift of a book. As your family takes this big step, we encourage you to continue to use our services to promote playful engagement with books within your family and throughout our community!



Story Walks

Take a walk while finding pages of a story at one of our seven Story Walks throughout Tompkins County. Check out our website for all the locations.



Bright Red Bookshelves

Enjoy a free gently used children's book to take home from one of our bookshelves found throughout Tompkins County. Check out our website for a map to find locations near you!

Looking for more ideas to engage with your child?

Follow us!

www.familyreading.org



Connecting families with young children to the joy of books and read-aloud experiences to expand their horizons.

It's Not Just About Books!

Here are some ways that playing outdoors supports literacy learning!

- Did you know that outdoor play helps children build attention skills? Playing outside is not just fun; the sensory input actually improves brain development!
- When children engage in whole-body movements, like swinging from the monkey bars or climbing a tree, they use their large muscles that form the basis for the smaller muscles in their hands and wrists- the ones that are needed to hold a pen or pencil or use a keyboard. So when children play outdoors, they actually develop the muscles they will depend on for writing!
- Spending time outdoors provides endless opportunities for speech and language learning. When you're with your child outdoors you can support their language development by talking about what they are doing. For example, if they jump high or runs fast or touches a bug gently, all the language you use to describe their actions will become concrete vocabulary words that your child learns within the context of their experience. Learning in this way leads to long-lasting word comprehension because it is rooted in meaningful lived experience.
- When playing outside, you can also engage in dialogue about the natural world around you. For example, "The wind is blowing" or "The mud feels sticky and gooey." Ask your child what they notice and feel. Your child's experiences outdoors can lead to language development that would not happen indoors because the ever-changing outdoor environment provides vast potential for actions, observations, sensory perceptions, challenges, feelings, and imagination.
- Going to kindergarten is a big transition. Your child might have lots of emotions about it. You can help your child feel more relaxed by keeping routines consistent and listening to their feelings. Playing outside can be a great way for your child to relax and simply enjoy being a kid. Movement, exercise, and noticing bodily sensations are helpful activities for becoming calm and grounded when worried. We hope you will get outside to connect, move, talk, play, and enjoy the moment- knowing that you are supporting your child's learning at the same time!