

MILESTONES OF EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT



NEWBORN TO 6 MONTHS

TALK, READ, SING, PLAY Right from birth, babies are listening, looking, and learning. So find, and enjoy, those everyday moments when you can talk, read, sing, and play together with your baby.

6 TO 12 MONTHS

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

What your child is doing

holds head steady
sits in lap without support
grasps book, puts in mouth
drops, throws book

COMMUNICATION AND COGNITION

What your child is saying and learning

smiles, babbles, coos
likes and wants your voice
likes pictures of baby faces
begins to say “ma”, “ba”, “da”
responds to own name
pats picture to show interest

ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE

What parents can do

Ask questions and wait for your child to answer

Read and speak in your first language

talk back and forth with your baby; make eye contact
cuddle, sing, talk, play, read
point at and name things: nose, ball, baby, dog...
follow baby’s cues for “more” or “stop”
play games such as “peek-a-boo” or “pat-a-cake”

WHAT TO READ

board and cloth books;
books with baby faces;
nursery rhymes

12 TO 24 MONTHS

holds and walks with book
no longer puts book in mouth right away
turns board book pages

says single words, then 2- to 4-word phrases
gives book to adult to read
points at pictures
turns book right-side up
names pictures, follows simple stories

smile and answer when your child speaks or points

let your child help turn the pages; keep naming things
use books in family routines: naptime, playtime, bedtime; on the potty; in the car, bus
use books to calm or distract your child while waiting

board books; rhyming books;
picture books; books that name things

2 TO 3 YEARS

learns to turn paper pages, 2 to 3 pages at a time
starts to scribble

adds 2-4 new words per day
names familiar objects
likes the same book again and again
completes sentences and rhymes in familiar stories

ask “Where’s the dog?” or “What is that?”

be willing to read the same book again and again
as you read, talk about the pictures
keep using books in daily routines

rhyming books; picture books that tell stories;
search and find books

3 TO 4 YEARS

turns pages one at a time, and from left to right
sits still for longer stories
scribbles and draws

recites whole phrases from books
moves toward letter recognition
begins to detect rhyme
pretends to read to dolls and stuffed animals

ask “What happens next?” in familiar stories

point out letters, numbers
point out words and pictures that begin with the same sound
together, make up stories about the pictures

picture books that tell longer stories; counting and alphabet books

4 TO 5 YEARS

starts to copy letters and numbers
sits still for even longer stories

can listen longer
recognizes numbers, letters
can retell familiar stories
can make rhymes
learning letter names and sounds

relate the story to your child’s own experiences
let your child see *you* read
ask your child to tell the story
encourage writing, drawing
point out the letters in your child’s name

fairy tales and legends;
books with longer stories, fewer pictures

LET YOUR CHILD CHOOSE WHICH BOOK TO READ. FIND STORIES ABOUT THINGS YOUR CHILD LIKES.