



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Reading Tips for Parents of Toddlers

By: [Reading Rockets](#)



Being a toddler is all about **action**. Encourage continued language development and interest in books and reading by keeping things lively and engaging. Everyday experiences are full of opportunities to engage in conversation and develop language skills. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

These tips for parents of toddlers are also available as a one-page handout to download and print.

Our reading tip sheets, for parents of children in preschool to grade 3, are available in [9 other languages](#).

Don't expect your toddler to sit still for a book

Toddlers need to **move**, so don't worry if they act out stories or just skip, romp, or tumble as you read to them. They may be moving, but they are listening.

Recite rhymes, sing songs, and make mistakes!

Pause to let your toddler finish a phrase or chant a refrain. Once your toddler is familiar with the rhyme or pattern, make mistakes on purpose and get caught.

Choose engaging books

Books featuring animals or machines invite movement and making sounds. Books with flaps or different textures to touch keep hands busy. Books with detailed illustrations or recurring items hidden in the pictures are great for exploring and discussing.

Keep reading short, simple, and often

Toddlers frequently have shorter attention spans than babies. Look for text that is short and simple. Read a little bit, several times a day.

Encourage play that involves naming, describing, and communicating

Set up a zoo with all the stuffed animals. Stage a race with the toy cars. Put your toddler in charge and ask lots of questions.

Every day is an adventure when you're a toddler

Choose books about everyday experiences and feelings. Your child will identify with the characters as they dress, eat, visit, nap, and play.

Ask questions

Take time to listen to your toddler's answers. Toddlers have strong opinions and interesting ideas about the world. Encourage your toddler to tell you what he or she thinks. You'll build language skills and learn what makes your toddler tick at the same time.

Play to their favorites

Read favorite stories again and again. Seek out books about things your toddler especially likes — trains, animals, the moon. These books may extend a toddler's attention span and build enthusiasm for reading.

Not having fun?

Try a different story or a different time during the day. Reading with a very young child is primarily about building positive experiences with books, not finishing every book you start.

Reading tip sheets in other languages

A downloadable handout, for parents of children in preschool to grade 3, is also available below in the following languages:

- [Spanish](#) (471K PDF)*
- [Arabic](#) (964K PDF)*
- [Traditional Chinese](#) (959K PDF)*
- [Haitian Creole](#) (950K PDF)*
- [Hmong](#) (943K PDF)*
- [Korean](#) (446K PDF)*
- [Navajo](#) (578K PDF)*
- [Russian](#) (646K PDF)*
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"A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom" —

Robert Frost