

# YOUR GROWING READER

An invitation to the world of reading from your library.





# HELLO NEW PARENT,

Congratulations! You are embarking on one of life's most rewarding and challenging experiences – raising a child.

Although kindergarten seems a long way off, one day your child will grow up to become a reader. The things you do and say in the next five years can greatly impact how your child learns to read. Fortunately, it's fun and easy to give your baby a strong start.

When you form a secure, loving bond with your baby, you set the stage for learning. Talking, singing, and sharing books every day – in any language – are wonderful ways to strengthen that bond.

You don't even need to read the words printed in a children's book. It's the interaction between you and your baby that matters most.

Multnomah County Library would like to support you in this amazing journey. Please bring your baby to the library, where you will find books, music, storytimes and friendly librarians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vailey Oehlke', written in a cursive style.

Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries



## CREATE A LOVING BOND

Babies who form a strong bond with their parents grow up to become adults who have stronger social relationships and reading skills. When babies develop a sense of trust, they learn more easily in school.

Cuddle your baby and talk in friendly tones. Talking face-to-face in a loving, responsive way increases the language connections in your baby's brain. Soon, your baby will make sounds in return. Your baby's cries, gurgles and coos are their first conversations with you. When you respond, it helps your baby bond with you and build the confidence needed to learn.

## HAVE A CONVERSATION

Every friendly word babies hear will help them get ready to learn. Babies who hear a wider variety of words before their second birthday have an easier time learning to read. Have conversations, even before your baby can understand your words. Ask questions, echo their sounds, and sing songs and rhymes.

How you talk with your baby will determine how well they use language for years to come. Talking to your baby in any language is good for your baby.

When you use the language that you are most comfortable speaking, your baby hears the rhythms and tones of everyday conversations. These interactions build the foundation for talking, and later, reading.





little dog

# 5 WAYS TO RAISE A STRONG READER







## READ

It's never too early to start reading and looking at books with your baby. Sharing books every day – in any language – makes a difference in how easy it will be for your child to learn to read.



## TALK

Your baby recognizes and loves the sound of your voice. Talking with your baby can seem strange at first, but keep at it. Hearing a wide variety of words builds brain connections.



## SING

Babies learn to hear rhythm in songs and rhymes. Even if you don't think you have a good singing voice, sing to your baby. Recite rhymes you learned as a child or make up rhymes of your own.



## WRITE

True, babies are not the best writers. But from birth, babies are learning to move their arms and hands, and will eventually pick up objects and make marks. These are skills that lead to writing.



## PLAY

The give-and-take of playing together boosts your baby's confidence and curiosity for trying new things. Playing "peek-a-boo" or using simple blocks will delight your baby, and will set the stage for learning.

IT SOUNDS EASY, AND IT IS. THESE  
FIVE ACTIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

# BIRTH - 3 MONTHS



## TALK

The more you talk with your baby, the sooner your baby will talk to you. It's not too early to start having conversations. Making eye contact with babies and talking gently to them builds a deep emotional connection. It makes them feel safe and secure enough to explore the world around them.

Hold your baby and catch their gaze. Smile, and talk softly. When your baby makes sounds in return, keep the conversation going by echoing them. Research shows that babies who hear a wide variety of words in their first two years have an easier time learning to read.

## WRITE

From day one, babies begin learning how to move their arms and hands. Around 3 or 4 months, they will have the ability to reach for an object and promptly put it in their mouth. This activity builds gross motor and fine motor skills, and will someday lead to writing.

## SING, PLAY

When you sing and say silly rhymes, you boost your baby's brain power. Post nursery rhymes over the changing table and say them whenever you change your baby's diaper. Play music for your baby. You don't need to learn many songs or rhymes. Repetition is good. Before long, your baby's face will perk up as if to say, "I recognize that!"

## READ

When your baby is this young, you can read anything you wish — the newspaper, a novel, whatever — as long as your voice is friendly. Even though your baby does not understand the words, they love hearing your voice and being close to you. Cuddle them on your lap and consider this quality time to get to know your baby.

Babies love books that rhyme and books with simple, large pictures. Books can be propped up for their eyes to follow. Your baby may not look at the pictures at all. That's okay. If you keep reading to your baby and make it fun, they will be looking and listening soon.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

AS YOU READ THIS BOOK, REMEMBER THAT EVERY BABY GROWS AT A DIFFERENT PACE. WE HOPE YOU WILL HAVE FUN WITH THE IDEAS IN THIS BOOK FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

3 - 6

MONTHS



## TALK

As your baby grows, you will start to engage in playful “conversations.” They will look in your eyes, smile, babble, and coo. Smile in response. Treat every sound they make as an attempt to talk to you – even burps and sneezes.

Talk to your baby even before they can say their first words. Narrate your day, talking about what you are doing, while you are doing it. Talk about toes and fingers and eyes and tummies during feeding. Say your baby’s name often. Tell them what is going to happen next: “I’m going to change your diaper now!”

## WRITE

By 6 months, your baby will be grasping toys and banging them on the table or waving them in the air. Since they are starting to sit up, they will start using both hands to grab soft cloth books. This is normal exploration and will one day lead to writing.

## SING. PLAY

Sing songs and use your hands to play rhyming games like “Pat - A - Cake.” Fingerplays will quickly become favorites with your baby. Though your baby is too young to participate, they will watch your every move. Babies at this age discover and are delighted with their feet, so include rhymes that play with their toes.

## READ

Around 3 months, your baby is ready for board books – the durable, simple books that are made for babies. Cuddle with your baby and watch how they explore the pages with their eyes. Stop and wait until your baby looks away before you turn the page.

Talk about the brightly colored pictures. You may not read every word of a book, or even any at all. But you can point to animals in the book and make their sounds. Your baby may make sounds or bat at the book to show their excitement. Or they may not look at the pictures at all. That’s okay. Babies are always listening.

Read many times a day, even for just a few minutes. Be sure to make it relaxed and fun. The relationship you are developing with your baby is more important than reading an entire book.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

LIBRARIANS LOVE TO HELP PARENTS CHOOSE GREAT BOOKS TO READ WITH THEIR BABIES AND TODDLERS. COME SEE US! FIND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY ON THE MAP IN THE BACK OF THIS BOOK.

6 - 9  
MONTHS



## TALK

Babies try out the sounds of the language they hear, and the sounds of the language they will later read. This is called babbling. Babbling is an important step toward talking and reading. Soon, your baby will begin putting sounds together (“agoo”) and repeating sound patterns (“bababa”). Echo your baby’s sounds to encourage them to talk more.

Continue to narrate your day, telling your baby what you are doing. Say your baby’s name and other important names in your family.

## WRITE

By 9 months, your baby will transfer a book from one hand to the other, and may begin to turn the pages or even throw the book. They are learning what their hands can do.

## SING, PLAY

Soon your baby will reach an important milestone – bringing their hands together in the middle and trying to clap. Babies need to learn to coordinate the two sides of their body. Gently hold your baby’s hands and show them how to clap with a game like “Pat-a-Cake.”

Songs and rhymes – in any language – let babies hear basic language patterns and rhythm. Sing while you do caregiving activities, like bathing your baby. Dance to emphasize the tempo of music, and watch your baby’s joy grow as they learn to recognize favorite songs.

## READ

If your baby reaches for a book and promptly puts it in their mouth, that’s okay. That’s how babies learn about books! You can gently try to open the book and look at the pictures together.

Start in the middle if that is your baby’s favorite part. Books for babies usually have no story line, so you can start anywhere. Notice what your baby is looking at and talk about those objects. Point out something in a book and then show your baby the real life object, such as the teddy bear in a book and your baby’s teddy bear.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

COME TRY OUT *BOOK BABIES*—A FUN, FREE PROGRAM AT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY, WHERE YOU AND YOUR BABY CAN ENJOY SONGS, ACTION RHYMES, AND PLAYTIME WITH OTHER FAMILIES. EACH LIBRARY HAS ITS OWN SCHEDULE. IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH, SOME BRANCHES HOLD BLACK STORYTIMES, SENSORY STORYTIMES AND STORYTIMES IN SPANISH, RUSSIAN, CANTONESE, MANDARIN AND VIETNAMESE.

9 - 12  
MONTHS





## TALK

Your baby may be getting close to saying their first words. They are listening for cues from you, so use interesting words, speak clearly and slow down your speech. Notice what they are looking at and talk about it. Pay close attention to their attempts to “talk” with you – these attempts may be subtle and easy to miss. Respond as if you are having a real conversation, because you are!

Your baby’s language has grown so much. They can understand simple commands like “wave bye-bye” or “blow a kiss.” Play “Where’s sister?” Or “Where’s mommy?” If they respond by looking at the correct person, nod your head and exclaim, “Yes, there’s \_\_\_\_.”

## WRITE

By the end of their first year, babies are able to pick up small things with their thumb and index finger. Give your baby pieces of finger food to eat, and measuring cups to fill and dump. They may be ready to use large nontoxic crayons on paper. At first, your baby may put them in their mouth. Show them how to use the crayons to make marks on the paper.

## SING, PLAY

Holding, rocking and cuddling babies stimulates their brain to release hormones that promote learning and growth. Singing with babies enhances their memory and increases their attention span. Fill your home with a variety of music. Add songs and rhymes to your daily routines. Play games like “Eensy, Weensy Spider” so your baby can try to imitate your actions. Babies love to learn about animals and the sounds they make, so “Old MacDonald” is always a favorite. Add songs and rhymes to your daily routines.

## READ

Exploration takes center stage as your baby becomes more mobile and curious. Your baby is so busy, they may want to play with toys instead of sitting right beside you. That’s okay. Babies are always listening.

Some babies at this stage will point out pictures and make sounds. Listen carefully and respond as if you understand every word your baby says. Ask simple questions, such as “Where is the \_\_\_\_?” Your baby will probably point to the picture. If your baby does not respond, point to the object and answer your own question, “There is the \_\_\_\_!”

When babies get excited about books, they may tear the pages. Avoid scolding your baby if a page is ripped. It’s okay if books get chewed on or torn occasionally. Library staff know that those books have been read and explored by an interested baby. Let your baby control the book. If your baby wants to turn the pages, let them. If your baby is not interested in books, remember to keep it short, sweet and fun – and try again later.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

YOU MAY WONDER IF IT’S A GOOD IDEA TO PLACE YOUR BABY IN FRONT OF THE TV TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO TALK. NOT TRUE! BABIES WHO SPEND MORE TIME IN FRONT OF THE TV ACTUALLY HAVE LESS DEVELOPED LANGUAGE THAN BABIES WHO WATCH LITTLE OR NO TV. THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS ISSUES TIPS ABOUT CHILDREN AND MEDIA, VISIT THEIR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.AAP.ORG](http://WWW.AAP.ORG).

12 - 18  
MONTHS



## TALK

Babies all over the world typically say their first word around their first birthday, although the range is very wide — from 10 to 18 months. Even if your baby has not started talking yet, they understand more words than you might think.

Be supportive of your baby's attempts to talk to you. Listen carefully and respond positively. Soon your baby will begin saying words and may even put two words together.

Babies younger than 18 months do not need to learn shapes, letters or numbers. Instead, babies need to explore and discover their world. Give your baby fun learning experiences and talk about what they are seeing and doing. Tell them the names of things they point to and show interest in.

## WRITE

Scribbles are a baby's first attempts at writing. Once a baby sees the magic that appears with a crayon or marker, they will be fascinated with writing and enjoy doing it often.

## SING, PLAY

Babies at this age are just beginning to sing, though it may sound more like jabbering. This is a fun time to teach new songs and use hand movements to old favorites, like “Eensy, Weensy Spider.” Do not expect perfection. Any attempt is terrific. Talk and sing with your baby wherever you are — cleaning your house, going for a walk, or driving in the car. Introduce your baby to new songs, and continue singing all the songs they already know. Repetition is important.

## READ

Some babies at this stage will “book babble.” When your baby babbles, they are imitating you and “reading” the book. Rejoice! Your baby is on their way to becoming a reader.

As a baby's vocabulary grows, their interest in books will grow, too. Read books that are related to actions your baby is learning, such as feeding themselves with a spoon. Name objects in books and encourage your baby to repeat words. Ask your baby questions, and make connections between the pictures in the book and items in your home.

If your baby wants to hold the book and turn the pages, let them. Give them books that offer flaps and textures they can explore. Don't worry if your baby wants the same book read over and over. Repetition helps a baby hear the different sounds that make up words. Repeating a favorite story gives your baby a sense of mastery.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY HAS STORYTIMES FOR ONE YEAR OLDS, TOO! THIS ACTION PACKED PROGRAM ENGAGES LITTLE ONES IN SONGS, MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES, RHYMES, BOOKS AND PLAYTIME. EACH LIBRARY HAS ITS OWN SCHEDULE. SEE THE INFORMATION ABOUT VISITING YOUR LIBRARY IN THE BACK OF THIS BOOK.

18 - 24  
MONTHS



## TALK

Your baby is now a toddler and is working hard to put words together, such as “go out” or “more milk.” Encourage your toddler by asking questions. Sometimes their words don’t sound exactly right, but that’s okay. Rather than telling them they are wrong, just repeat the sentence and say the word correctly. They will hear the difference and begin to say it correctly.

## WRITE

Drawing and writing will likely capture your toddler’s attention and bring them joy for many months. Before long, your toddler will begin to understand that marks can have meaning. They’ll begin to see that those squiggles on a page are letters that “say” something. Encourage writing by providing lots of time and a variety of materials to do it.

## SING, PLAY

Rhyming leads to reading. Children who sing songs and recite rhymes learn to hear the different sounds in words. When children recognize that two words sound almost the same, such as “red” and “bed,” they are getting ready to read. Encourage your toddler by having fun with the sounds in silly words, like “wishy-washy” or “fuzzy-wuzzy.”

Your toddler may have favorite songs, action rhymes and fingerplays that they want to do repeatedly. That’s great! The repetition that your child enjoys may be tiresome for you, but it helps make brain connections and builds the confidence your child needs to learn.

## READ

Books feed your toddler’s desire for a rich variety of new words. Choose books that follow your child’s interests. Your child may point to and name familiar objects. If you pause while reading a favorite story, they may fill in the next word. Around 17 months, some children will pretend to read to their stuffed animals.

When sharing a book, ask questions and link the book to your toddler’s experiences. “This dog is very big, just like grandpa’s dog.” If your child says “grandpa’s dog big,” expand the sentence by adding, “Yes, grandpa’s dog is big and noisy. He barks and barks.”

Follow your toddler’s lead for how long they want to read together. Some days, your child may want to cuddle with you and read book after book. Other days, they may be too busy running around. If so, you can read while your child orbits the room – they are still listening! Stash their favorite books in the car or in your bag, so your toddler can read wherever you go.

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### A NOTE FROM YOUR LIBRARIAN

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ABOUT 2 YEARS OLD, THEY CAN GRADUATE TO STORYTIME FOR 2 YEAR OLDS AT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY. TOGETHER WITH A FAVORITE ADULT, YOUR TODDLER WILL ENJOY INTERACTIVE STORIES, SONGS AND GAMES THAT HELP STRENGTHEN AND GROW THEIR NEW LANGUAGE SKILLS.

# 1 MORE WAY

to raise a curious learner and strong reader...

## VISIT YOUR LIBRARY!

You may think your baby will make too much noise or damage the books, but that's not a problem at the library. Babies are welcome at all neighborhood libraries!

Library storytime is a wonderful way to introduce your baby to the joy of books. At every neighborhood library, enthusiastic librarians read age-appropriate books and share songs and rhymes with parents and babies.

Each branch has its own schedule. In addition to English, some branches hold Black storytimes, sensory storytimes and storytimes in Spanish, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese.

Check [www.multcolib.org/events/storytimes](http://www.multcolib.org/events/storytimes) for program dates and times. Parents and caregivers must stay and participate along with their children. All programs are free. We would love to see you there.



# LOCATIONS



ALL LIBRARIES:  
503.988.5123

1 ALBINA  
3605 NE 15TH AVE.

2 BELMONT  
1038 SE CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ

3 CAPITOL HILL  
10723 SW CAPITOL HWY

4 CENTRAL LIBRARY  
801 SW 10TH AVE.

5 FAIRVIEW-COLUMBIA  
1520 NE VILLAGE ST.

6 GREGORY HEIGHTS  
7921 NE SANDY BLVD.

7 GRESHAM  
385 NW MILLER AVE.

8 HILLSDALE  
1525 SW SUNSET BLVD.

9 HOLGATE  
7905 SE HOLGATE BLVD.

10 HOLLYWOOD  
4040 NE TILLAMOOK ST.

11 KENTON  
8226 N DENVER AVE.

12 MIDLAND  
805 SE 122ND AVE.

13 NORTH PORTLAND  
512 N KILLINGSWORTH ST.

14 NORTHWEST  
2300 NW THURMAN ST.

15 ROCKWOOD  
17917 SE STARK ST.

16 SELLWOOD-MORELAND  
7860 SE 13TH AVE.

17 ST. JOHNS  
7510 N CHARLESTON AVE.

18 TROUTDALE  
2451 SW CHERRY PARK RD.

19 WOODSTOCK  
6008 SE 49TH AVE.



WELCOME TO  
MIDLAND  
LIBRARY  
MULTNOMAH COUNTY  
LIBRARY

10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
10 a.m.-8 p.m.  
noon-8 p.m.  
noon-8 p.m.  
10 a.m.-6 a.m.

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