

Reading Tips for Parents

- **Make Time to Read Together Each Day**

Try to read with your child every day at a regularly scheduled time. If possible, choose a time when you can be relaxed, not rushed. If you have more than one child, spend time reading with each child separately, especially if they're more than two years apart. On days that are particularly hectic, bring a few books when you take children on errands. Taking time to read to children on a regular basis sends the message that reading is worthwhile.

- **Read it Again... and Again**

As every parent knows, they often ask to hear the same story again and again. They delight in knowing what comes next and often learn a favorite book so well that they can "read" it on their own. That favorite story may speak to your child's current interests and emotional needs, so it's important for parents to be patient during this phase. Young children are eventually ready for different stories if they are continuously exposed to a variety of books.

- **Slow Down**

It's not just *what* you read to children, but *how* you read that matters. If adults rush through stories or read without enthusiasm, children quickly lose interest. Try to read with expression and use different voices for characters. Pause occasionally while you are reading to give children time to take in the story and imagine the people, places, and events. Pose a question or make a remark that will prompt the child to think, express him/herself, or relate the story to his/her own experiences. It's also a good idea to follow children's cues. Sometimes they are caught up in a story and don't want stops and detours along the way.

- **Choose Books with Care**

Reading together often, you learn a lot about the kinds of books your child likes and understands. Visit the local library and involve your child in deciding what to bring home. Selecting books that relate to what's happening in the child's life at that time is a good way to ease transitions as well as fears about upcoming events. Topics such as potty training, new siblings, adoptions, or moving to a new home are covered in a variety of books that are written specifically for young children.