



Read- Aloud *Guide*

TRIDENT UNITED WAY

Sharing a book is a great way to show your children that you love them.

One of the most important jobs you have as a parent



Dear Parents,

As a parent, you have many jobs. Cooking, cleaning, and taking care of your family can take a lot of your time. But it is also important to find time to have fun together!

One great way to have fun **and** spend time with your family is by reading aloud. Sharing a book is a great way to show your children that you love them. It is also one of the best things you can do to help them learn to read for themselves.

For a child, learning to read well is the key to doing well in school. It is also the first step in developing a life-long habit of reading.

is to be your children's first and best teacher.

You don't have to be an expert reader to read aloud with your children. You just have to make the time and keep it fun.

This Read-Aloud Guide is filled with ideas and strategies for making reading aloud with your family easy and fun. We hope you will use these ideas to read aloud with your family often.

Christopher Kerrigan
President
Trident United Way

Dr. Bonnie Bella
Vice President, Children & Youth Services
Trident United Way



Reading Aloud with Children

Why? Read aloud...

- for relaxation and enjoyment.
- to expand children's language skills and knowledge.
- to show your child good reading skills.

What? Choose books that...

- are appealing (colorful, fun stories).
- you can read in one sitting.
- are not all the same (different lengths, rhyming/not rhyming, different characters, etc.).

How? When you read aloud...

- sit beside your child.
- be sure he or she can see the pictures and the words.
- share conversation (ask about what the child sees in pictures, what they think will happen next, etc.).

When you read aloud to your children...

- they learn to listen, remember, understand, and explain.
- their imaginations grow.
- they learn new words and where to use them.
- they learn how to think and how to learn.
- they discover whole new worlds and ways to be.

Make it Fun!

Some ideas for keeping read-aloud time fun:

- If there are animals in the story, make the noises they would make. Don't be afraid to moo, oink, or even baa!
- Read fast-moving nursery rhymes and use finger games like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" to help tell the story with younger children.
- Act up! Use funny voices for characters in the story to help develop your child's imagination. Let them help you decide whether a voice should be loud or soft, friendly or scary, squeaky or normal.
- Have a "House Hunt!" Make word signs like BED, TABLE, and TUB. Tape them to the things they spell, then find them and read the words together.
- With older children, read newspapers, comic books, or joke books. Solve riddles, or do crossword puzzles together.
- Keep paper, pencils, and crayons handy. Ask your children to draw pictures about the stories you've read.
- When reading stops being fun, take a time out! Snuggle, cuddle, or even tickle for a few minutes. Don't make reading seem like a chore that has to be finished.



Make Connections

Help build a life-long habit of reading for children of all ages by remembering:



- Babies love to hear the sound of your voice. Even before they understand what you're saying, they feel safe hearing you speak, sing, or make funny noises.
- Children under 18 months like to look at books with simple, colorful pictures of objects they know.
- Preschool children like silly songs, stories, and short poems that rhyme. They also like stories with happy endings.
- Small children like stories with words that sound like music and words that repeat.
- Young children love to listen to their favorite stories over and over again. Don't be discouraged if your child prefers one "favorite" story all the time.
- Children quickly learn their favorite stories and "read" them to you from memory.
- When your child begins to learn letters and words, ask him or her to point them out and say them aloud. Encourage and praise them as they do.
- Read aloud with older children, too. They are never too old to learn from you!

Make it Happen

Build a family reading time using these ideas:

- Pick a regular time to read together. It could be every day or a couple of times a week, after breakfast or at bedtime. Try to be consistent with this time.
- Understand that some days family reading time may be only ten minutes. Other days it may be half an hour or more.
- Choose a cozy and comfortable spot for the family reading corner. Make it some place where the whole family can be together.
- If your younger children don't want to sit down and read at first, keep trying, but don't force them. Remember, little children can't sit still for too long. Let them move around while you keep reading, and they will come back again.
- Take turns! Children who are too young can pretend to read, and older children can share stories that interest them.
- Talk with your older children about books they have read on their own or at school.
- Adults and children who can't read well can still tell funny or exciting stories. Children are often interested in stories about their grandparents and older relatives.



Make Good Book Choices

When choosing a book, remember:

- A good book is exciting. A bad book can be a bore. If you or your children start reading a book and don't enjoy it, put it down and start another.
- Many books for young children are based on lullabies and children's songs. They often have pictures that show the different parts of the song. You and your child can sing together as you look at the pictures.
- If your older child is looking for easy-to-read books, there are many books about famous people (actors, sports stars, singers, etc.) and people who live in other places. Your local library has these and other books that your older children may find interesting.
- Ask your children about their interests. What people, places, or things do they want to know more about? Help them find books that go along with these interests.
- You can ask the Children's Librarian at your local library for ideas on good books for children. He or she can make helpful suggestions based on the ages and interests of your children.
- Choose books for older children that challenge their reading and thinking skills. Encourage them to read many different types of books.

Make Conversation

When you read aloud, you get a chance to talk with your children.

Just like your children, children in books have families, adventures, and emotions. Remember these tips:

- Talking about how children in a story feel can help your children understand and handle their own feelings.
- When you read aloud to your children, they can ask you questions about why events in the story happened. You can ask them their thoughts about the story.
- If your children get scared reading a story, you can talk about the difference between real life and make-believe.
- You can talk to your children about the choices that characters in a story make. This can help children build their own skills in making decisions. It can also help them think more about the kind of people they want to grow up to be.
- Children may find it hard to talk about things that upset them. Stories can help you talk with them about things that may not be easy to talk about.
- There are many books that talk about difficult subjects, such as going to the doctor or dentist, moving to a new home, divorce, drug and alcohol use, the first day of school, and the death of a loved one or pet. These books can help you talk with your children about tough topics.



Make Adjustments

Sometimes life gets busy and there doesn't seem to be enough time to read.

On those days when finding the time to read together is hard, try:

- Asking your children to read the words on the milk carton.
- Helping them sound out or write the words for a shopping list.
- Reading the comics or a fun article in the newspaper together.
- Finding the letters in your names on street signs, billboards, or business signs.
- Making up songs and rhymes to describe what you are doing (for example, cooking dinner).
- Playing "I Spy" while you are doing a chore together.



Make a Plan

When you get ready to read a book aloud with your children, pay special attention to:

- The cover and title of the book.
- The names of the author (the person who wrote the book) and the illustrator (the person who drew the pictures for the book).
- The size and shape of the book.
- Any interesting language or unfamiliar words in the story.
- Special characters in the story.
- The pictures in the book. (They can be used to help your children “tell” the story.)
- The important facts about the story.

Make sure that your children know the right way to read printed words.

Show them that the words in a book should be read:

- From the front of the book to the back of the book.
- From the left page to the right page.
- From the top of the page to the bottom of the page.



Early Literacy

Early literacy simply means what your child knows about reading and writing before he or she learns to read and write.

The ideas and tips in this guide are designed to help you build your children's early literacy skills.

There are six pre-reading skills that children must learn in order to learn to read:

Vocabulary—Knowing the names of things.

Print Motivation—Being interested in and enjoying books.

Print Awareness—Noticing print, knowing how to handle a book, and knowing how to follow the words on a page.

Narrative Skills—Being able to describe things and events and tell stories.

Phonological Awareness—Being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.

Letter Knowledge—Knowing that letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds, and recognizing letters everywhere.

To build these skills, you should use different activities for children of different ages. On the next few pages, we will look at ideas for each age group: Early Talkers (birth - age 2), Talkers (ages 2-3), and Pre-Readers (ages 4-5).

Early Talkers (birth-age 2)



Vocabulary

- Talk with your baby or toddler about what is going on around you.
- Ask your baby or toddler lots of questions. This helps him or her learn that questions are chances to use words.
- Speak clearly. Use short sentences. Repeat yourself when your child shows interest.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- Read together every day. Name pictures as you point to them.

By the time a child is two years old he or she understands 300-500 words. You help him or her learn new words by talking and reading together.

Print Motivation

- Begin reading books early - even when your child is a newborn.
- Make book sharing time special by including just yourself and your baby or toddler.
- Let your baby or toddler see you reading.

Print Awareness

- Use board books or cloth books. Let your child hold them.
- Point to words as you say them.
- Take time to read aloud every day.



Early Talkers (continued)

Narrative Skills

- Talk to your child about what you are doing.
- Tell your child stories.
- Encourage your toddler to tell you about things. Listen patiently and ask questions.
- Read favorite books again and again.

Phonological Awareness

- Say nursery rhymes so that your child hears words that rhyme. Emphasize the rhyming words.
- Add actions as you sing a song or recite a poem. This helps your child break down language into separate words.
- Singing songs is a great way to help your child hear syllables in words. In most songs, each syllable in a word gets a different note.
- Make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.

Letter Knowledge

- Help your baby or toddler see and feel different shapes as you play. (“The ball is round.”)
- Read alphabet books.
- Point out letters on toys, food boxes, and other objects around the house.
- Talk with your toddler about what is the same and what is different about two objects.

Talkers (2-3 years of age)

Vocabulary

- Talk with your child about what is going on around you. Try to add new words to the conversation.
- Label more than just things. Label feelings, both yours and your child's. This will help your child learn how to express himself or herself more clearly.
- Explain unfamiliar words instead of replacing them with more familiar ones.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.

Print Motivation

- Read often and make it fun.
- Make sure that you and your child are in good moods so the experience is positive. When an experience with books is negative, your child will enjoy reading less and less.
- Stop reading when your child becomes tired or loses interest.

Print Awareness

- Point to signs and other words around you and read what they say.
- Point to words from time to time as you read so that your child learns you are reading text, not pictures.
- Let your child turn the pages as you read.
- If a book has a repeating word or phrase, point to it and let your child say it.



Talkers (continued)

Narrative Skills

- Name things (real objects and pictures) as you go through the day.
- Give your child the chance to talk, not just listen to you. Ask him or her to share something that happened to them during the day. Follow up with open-ended questions (questions that can't be answered "yes" or "no" only).
- Really listen as your child tries to talk. Be patient.

Phonological Awareness

- Sing nursery rhymes and songs so that your child hears words that rhyme.
- Singing songs is a great way to help your child hear syllables in words. In most songs, each syllable in a word gets a different note.
- Make up songs about your daily routine - bathing, dressing, putting toys away, etc.

Letter Knowledge

- Point out the shapes of toys and other objects.
- Talk about how things are alike and different.
- Use simple puzzles to help children see differences in shapes.
- Talk about letters that are most interesting to your child. For example, find words that begin with the first letter of his or her name.

P re-Readers (4-5 years of age)

Vocabulary

- Talk about what is going on around you. Talk about how things work, your feelings, and ideas.
- Learn together by reading non-fiction (true) books on subjects that your child likes.
- When your child speaks with you, add detail to what he or she says.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.

Most children start school knowing between 3,000 and 5,000 words.

Print Motivation

- Make book sharing time a special time for closeness between you and your child.
- Let your child see you reading.
- Visit your public library often.

Print Awareness

- Read aloud everyday print (labels, signs, lists, menus, etc.).
- Point to some of the words as you say them, especially words that are repeated.
- Let your child turn the pages in a book you are reading.
- Let your child hold the book and read/tell the story.
- Hold a book upside down and see if your child turns the book around.



P re-Readers (continued)

Narrative Skills

- Listen carefully when your child talks.
- Talk about how things happen in order in a book (what happens first, what happens next, what happens last).
- Read a book that your child already knows. Switch roles and become the listener; let your child tell the story.
- Ask open-ended questions (questions that require more than “yes” or “no” answers).
- Point to pictures and ask your child what is happening.
- Relate what happens in a story to a personal experience.

Phonological Awareness

- Ask your child whether certain words rhyme.
- Say words with chunks left out (“What would happen if we took the ‘hot’ away from ‘hotdog?’”).
- Put word chunks together to form new words (“What if we put ‘cow’ and ‘boy’ together?”).
- Say words with sounds left out (“What word would we have if we took the ‘buh’ sound out of ‘bat?’”).

Letter Knowledge

- Write your child’s name.
- Make letters from clay or use magnetic letters.
- Point out and name letters when reading signs and labels.
- Show your child that the same letter can look different (for example, capital and lower case letters).

Talking and Reading: Use the CAR

When you talk and read with your child, you can use a strategy called CAR to help him or her learn how to respond.

C Comment and wait so the child has time to respond

Examples:

Your infant is looking tired. You say, "I think you are sleepy." Wait 5 seconds for a response before saying anything else.

You are reading a book with your toddler. You say, "The dog is wearing a funny hat!" Wait 5 seconds for a response.

A Ask questions and wait so the child has time to respond

Your infant reaches for a bottle. You say, "Do you want your bottle?" Wait 5 seconds for a response.

You are reading a book with your toddler. You point to a picture and ask, "What happened here?" Wait 5 seconds for a response.

R Respond by adding a little more and wait

Your infant sees a picture of himself and says "ba-ba." You say, "Ba-ba, you see baby Pat." Wait 5 seconds for a response.

Your toddler says, "Boy eating!" You say, "The boy is eating toast." Wait 5 seconds for a response.



The 3S Model

The 3S Model is a way to help your child learn how to respond to your questions and comments. The three S's stand for See, Show, and Say. This strategy works well with children who are just learning about books and reading. It can also be used with children who are advanced readers.

See

These are the simplest responses. They can be used with children who have the least language skills. You can help your child learn to respond by pointing at pictures or words. When you point to the picture or word, name it and talk about what it is or what it does. After repeating this process many times, stop pointing to the object. Instead, call it by name and see if your child looks at it.

Show

Once your child begins looking at pictures or words when you name them, ask him or her to point to or touch the picture or word. As your child builds his or her skill in this, challenge her or him with harder words, or look for familiar words in books that are not familiar to them.

Say

When your child has mastered the vocabulary for words and pictures in a book, start asking questions that make him or her think about what they are seeing in the book. ("What did the little boy find? Where did the puppy go?")

Story Sharing Tips for Parents

- One good children's book can stand alone. When your child brings you a pile of books and asks you to read him or her a story, choose one to read together. Read slowly and dramatically. Look closely at the pictures and ask questions about the story.



- Before you read the story, tell your child the name of the book and a little about what it is about. (“This is a story about a boy named Max who goes to live where the wild things are. He becomes their king.”)
- To help your child understand the meaning of the story, choose a word that is related to it (for example, imagination). Explain what the word means and talk about times you both may have felt that way.
- Keep your child close to the book as you read. Encourage him or her to touch the book.
- As you read, move your finger from left to right from time to time. This will help your child get a sense of how words are laid out on a page. Point to a character who is speaking to help your child understand the details of the story.
- Try to observe how your child is reacting to the story (fear, laughter, etc.) and add that to your reading. Be patient! Reading aloud and being read to are skills that take practice.



Story Sharing Tips (cont.)

- Use your voice to hold your child's attention. Make up voices for different characters in a story. It may feel funny at first, but children love it.
- Don't read too fast or too slowly. Keep your pace steady. If you read too quickly, your child may feel that you're bored or that you don't find the story interesting. They may also feel that you don't enjoy reading with them or that it is a chore for you.
- When you can, let your child say important words or phrases. This helps to include them in the reading experience and helps them to remember the story better.
- Act out parts of the story if you can. For example, if a character is flying, you and your child can flap your arms and pretend to fly as well.
- Take a minute to talk about the story after you finish reading it. What was your child's favorite part? Did it end the way they thought it would?
- When you can, connect different books by things they have in common. For example, you might say, "The wolf in this story reminds me of the wolf in 'The Three Little Pigs'."
- Don't forget - reading aloud takes practice. Don't give up if it doesn't go as well as you would like on the first try!

Tips from the National Association for the Education of Young Children

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, which promotes high standards for early education, offers the following tips for raising a child who reads and writes well:

- Talk, sing, and play with your child.
- Make time to read together each day.
- Choose books with care. Let your child help you decide which books to read, if possible.
- Surround your child with reading material.
- Slow down and have fun!
- Read it again...and again.
- Help your child understand what print is, and how we use it every day.
- Give your child a variety of writing tools and materials.
- Don't push or pressure your child about what or when to read.
- Show your child that you value his or her efforts.

If your child is in a child care program, talk with his or her teacher about how you can work with your child at home to support what he or she is learning in the program.



Things to Remember

Talking about books, instead of reading the words, usually works best with babies and younger toddlers.

Slowly change as your child gets closer to age 4:

- Talk a lot and read little or none
- Talk a lot and read some
- Talk and read some
- Read more than you talk
- Read mostly and talk some

Expose children to books when they are infants if possible.



Routines, transitions, calming down, and waking up times can be smoothed when you “read” with your child.

There is no specific amount of time to spend with books. Let your child’s interest determine the amount of time.



It's okay if your child wants to skip pages or start at the back of the book. Talk about the pictures on whatever page the book is turned to.

It's okay when your toddler wants to read the same book over and over. They enjoy the repetition and learn best from familiar objects.

Reading time
should be FUN for
both the child and
the adult.



Acknowledgements

The material contained in this Read Aloud Guide has been adapted from the following sources:

McAllister, C. (1994). *You make it happen for your family: A read aloud guide*. Vancouver, BC, Canada: Pacific Coast Public Television Association.

Charleston County School District. (n.d.) *Readers are leaders: District 4 & 10 volunteers*. Charleston, SC: Author.

American Library Association. (2004). *Parent guide to early literacy for early talkers: Birth to two-year-olds*. Chicago, IL: Author.

American Library Association. (2004). *Parent guide to early literacy for talkers: Two- and three-year-olds*. Chicago, IL: Author.

American Library Association. (2004). *Parent guide to early literacy for pre-readers: Four- and five-year-olds*. Chicago, IL: Author.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1998). *Raising a reader, raising a writer*. Washington, DC: Author.

Instructional strategies: Interactive book reading/3S strategy. The FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina. Retrieved electronically on December 10, 2007, from <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~literacy/parentpartnerships.cfm>.



Sharing
a book is a
great way to
show your
children that
you love them.

