

Help your child learn language: **READ TO YOUR BABY AND YOUNG TODDLER**

Family Literacy

The reading, writing, watching and talking that families do together

Lire/Imagine/Read – a literacy-promotion project at the Montreal Children’s Hospital (MCH) linking health and reading – is run through a partnership between the MCH and The Centre for Literacy. It is associated with the Social Pediatrics Program at the hospital.



For children 0-2 years old

Why read to a baby?

Studies show that reading to a baby helps the baby learn to listen and improves memory. Your baby will not understand the words you read at first, but there are lots of reasons to read to even the youngest baby.

Reading stimulates brain and language development by introducing the idea of pictures, shapes and words that tell a story. Reading is part of a healthy lifestyle. But just as important, your baby learns to connect books with the joy of being held and hearing your voice.

What can babies do with books?

- At 4-6 months, babies start to hold their heads up and understand more.
- At 6-12 months, babies can sit up and want to participate. Point to pictures in the book that are like the things baby sees around you.
- At 12-24 months, babies like to hear the same book and choose the book to read. They may want to lie on the floor or on the bed, or move around while reading books.

How to read with your baby

- Hold baby so he/she can see both the book and your face.
- Choose a book made of board or cloth, with not too many pages.
- When you read, use a sing-song voice with lots of expressions and different voices for different characters or animals, but do not use “baby talk”.
- Encourage baby to put the book in his/her mouth and mimic sounds, and help turn the pages.
- Babies like books with mirrors or materials they can touch.
- Make reading books part of your daily routine like bedtime or naptime.

Other ways to encourage language development

- Start a library of your baby’s books.
- Talk about what you are doing when you dress baby, prepare a meal, or drive to the store. Sing songs. Have fun!
- Join your public library. Many libraries have story time and other activities for -parents and babies.
- Show your baby that you like to read by reading books yourself.
- Limit TV and other media.

More information on reading to babies

Canadian Pediatric Society: www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Kids Health: kidshealth.org

Reach Out & Read: www.reachoutandread.org

More information on LIR

www.thechildren.com/en/patients/lire-imagine-read-project



L’Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children’s Hospital
Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

www.thechildren.com



The Centre for Literacy
Le centre d’alphabétisation
www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca