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A Great Reader

**Proven ways to help your infant, toddler, or
preschooler excel at reading**

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Introduction

“**B**abies know important things about language literally from the time they are born, and they learn a great deal about language before they ever say a word,” note the authors of [*The Scientist in the Crib*](#).

At birth, your child hears sounds and sees movements. And every time you speak, sing, and respond to the sounds she makes, you strengthen her interest in language. This, in turn, starts her on the road to becoming a reader.

Reading is an important part of language. In fact, you might think of language as a four-legged stool. The four legs are:

- talking
- listening
- reading
- and writing.

All four legs are important; each helps support and balance the others.

This book tells how you to use all your language skills to build those of your child. **It’s designed for helping children from infancy to age six—the most important years for learning the skills they’ll need to become life-long readers.**

This book offers suggestions on how to

- talk with your child
- read aloud with him
- help him learn about printed words and what they mean
- show him you value reading
- and do other activities at home that encourage reading

This book also tells you how to prepare your child for school—and gives lists of places you can contact for more reading help.

All the concepts described in this book are based upon expert knowledge from those in the U.S. Department of Education, National Institute for Literacy, or other specialists in the education field.

Age Matters

We all know that older children can do things younger ones can't. This is true for reading, too. To help you understand when children can take certain learning steps, this book ties much of the discussion to four age groups:

Baby: birth to 1 year

Toddler: 1 to 3 years

Preschooler: 3 to 4 years

Kindergartner/Early First-Grader: 5 to 6 years

Keep in mind that children don't all learn at the same pace. And even though they learn new things, they may have "old favorites"—books and activities from earlier years that they still enjoy.

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. And you don't need to be the best reader in the world to help her. Your time and interest—and the pleasure you share while reading together—are what counts.

Children become readers one step at a time. By the time they are seven, most have begun to read. Some take longer than others, and some need extra help. **But with the right kind of help in the early years of life, most of the reading difficulties that might arise later in life can be prevented.**

This book offers steps you can take to start your little one on her way to becoming a reader. It's an adventure you won't want to miss...and the benefits for your child will last a lifetime.