



THE SCIENCE IS IN: LITERACY BEGINS AT BIRTH

Reading 0 yrs+

Children's Literacy Resource Guide

Talk, sing, read to your baby!



Newborn babies may look helpless but scientists are learning they come into the world hungry to communicate.

Stimulating your baby, with books and other loving activities, is very important in the first three years, because a baby's brain grows to 90% of its full adult weight during this period. Always hold your baby while reading to him or her; babies learn language best while being touched. And don't forget to balance activity with lots of rest and good nutrition.

- ◆ At birth, your baby's brain can already tune into the special rhythms of language; he or she communicates through coos and babbling;
- ◆ At 4-6 months your baby can hear the separate sound combinations or phonemes in the language spoken around him or her;
- ◆ At 8 months your baby starts to organize the world into categories and is more interested in an object if given the name for it. So if baby is wide-eyed at the sight of a spider, say "spider";
- ◆ On an average, at 1 year your baby will begin to say words;
- ◆ By 20 months your baby has learned lots of words, mostly words like ball, dog, baby.

What to do

- ◆ Speak, sing, recite nursery rhymes to your baby as often as possible right from the start;
- ◆ Be yourself: The sing-song rhythm adults instinctively use with babies is Mother Nature's language lesson. Babies love to learn with it;
- ◆ Start reading board books to your baby as early as six months. In baby's mind this connects the idea of 'books' with feelings of warmth and fun and makes future school success more likely.

Recommended: *Good Night Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, *Pat-a-Cake and Other Play Rhymes*, Beverly Collins.

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