

# Reading Together

*Helping Your Child  
to Enjoy and Progress  
in Reading*



## **What Is Reading Together?**

1. You read aloud to your child.
2. Your child reads aloud to you.
3. You talk about what you are reading.



## **When to Start Reading Together?**

You can start when your child:

1. Knows letter sounds
2. Is starting to sound out words or guess words from picture clues

# Why Read Together?

- 1. Transition to independent reading.**  
Reading with your child provides an excellent transition to independent reading.
- 2. Enjoyable experience, fostering a love of reading.**  
Reading with your child can provide an enjoyable, bonding experience, helping to foster a love of reading. Many children do not view reading as enjoyable; in fact, some find it unpleasant and frustrating. Others feel fearful or insecure about reading. You can change that and create a reading experience that is enjoyable and fun for your child.
- 3. Opportunity for practice and supportive feedback.**  
Reading with your child provides an opportunity for your child to practice and for you to provide helpful, supportive feedback.
- 4. Gives child a break and keeps the reading flowing and fun.**  
When it's your turn to read, it gives your child a break and keeps the reading flowing and fun. Your child will appreciate not having to do all the reading. When you read, your child can relax and enjoy the story—and since you are reading and helping your child, you will probably be able to read books that are more interesting to your child than the books she can read alone. Plus, hearing you read and talk about the text can be just as valuable as reading herself.
- 5. Accelerates development of vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.**  
As you read together, you will accelerate your child's development in three key areas of reading: vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.
  - **Vocabulary:** You have the opportunity to talk about new vocabulary words that you or your child reads.
  - **Comprehension:** When you read, you have the opportunity to help your child better comprehend the story or nonfiction material. This increase in comprehension helps your child, as he reads, to connect better with the meaning of what is being read.
  - **Fluency:** As you model reading fluently and with expression, your child will become a more fluent and expressive reader.

**The bottom line:** Reading together will help your child to read sooner and better—and help develop a love of reading.

## Choosing What to Read Together

1. Choose any book that has some text at your child's reading level.
2. Choose books that your child is interested in.
3. Let your child pick the book or offer a selection of books for your child to choose from.
4. Reread books read before.
5. Consider "read together" books that have been specifically designed for reading together.

## Before Reading Together

1. Sit together in a comfortable, well-lit place.
2. Hold the book so your child can easily see the words.
3. Talk about the topic and what the book might be about.
4. Page through the book together and discuss it. You might consider starting with a "picture walk," in which you page through the book together and discuss the pictures and some of the words.
5. Consider reading the entire book to your child first.
6. Decide on a read-together format: choral reading, echo reading, or shared reading.



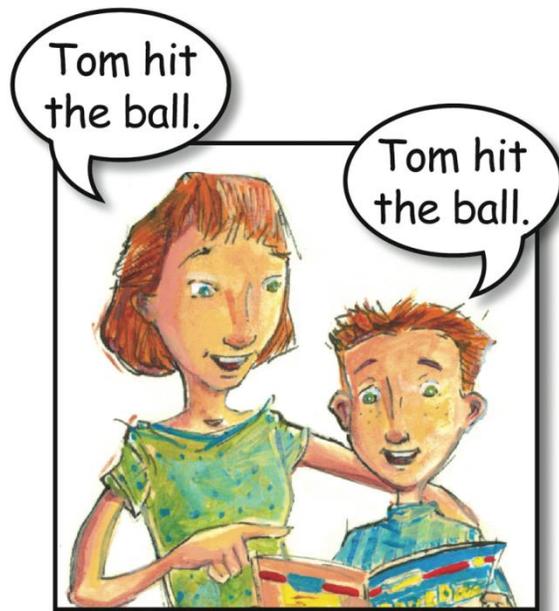
# Read-Together Formats

## Choral Reading

1. Ask your child to read aloud along with you (reading the same text at the same time).
2. Start louder and slightly faster than your child.
3. When your child gains confidence, become slower and quieter.
4. Read with expression and show attention to the phrasing and punctuation.
5. Maintain a comfortable pace by speeding up or slowing down when needed.

## Echo Reading

1. Take turns reading the same text.
2. Read a sentence, making your reading as fluent and expressive as possible.
3. Then ask your child to read the same sentence.
4. Run your finger under the text as each of you reads.
5. Continue until your child starts to read with expression and fluency.



## Shared Reading or Paired Reading

1. Take turns reading aloud, with each of you reading different parts of the text, switching back and forth as you read the book.
2. Agree on signals for switching. For example, say "Now it's your turn" or "Can you read now?" Another option is choosing a hand signal to communicate when it's time to switch, such as a gentle tap.
3. Start by reading some text, and then signal for your child to take over and read.
4. Watch for sentences, phrases, or words that are easy enough for your child to read.
5. Nudge your child to read the next word, sentence, or page. You can say things like "Can you read this word?" or "Would you like to read the next sentence?" or "Would you like to read the next page?"
6. Consider inviting your child to read one character's dialogue.
7. Allow your child to signal your turn to read again.



# While You Are Reading Together

## While You Are Reading

1. Read with expression—make the story come alive. Your reading should sound like you are talking or having a conversation about something quite interesting or exciting. Make sure your voice conveys the meaning and important points of emphasis in each sentence.
2. Try using different voices for different characters.
3. Point out rhyming words.
4. Stop and discuss new vocabulary words.
5. Talk about how you might understand a new word from looking at the surrounding context or from a picture on the page.
6. Talk about what is happening in the story and ask what might happen next.
7. Ask open-ended questions about the story and questions that do not have a right or wrong answer. For example, ask “Why do you think Jane wants to go to the zoo?” instead of “Where is Jane going?”
8. Decide how much to read and when to invite your child to begin reading.



## While Your Child Is Reading

1. Encourage your child to mimic the way you read to gain fluency.
2. Help your child use context and pictures to figure out unknown words.
3. If your child might be able to sound out a word or starts to sound one out, give some encouragement. Remember that not all words can be sounded out.
4. If your child struggles with a word for five seconds, provide the word.
5. Suggest rereading a difficult sentence.
6. See if it is helpful for your child to run her finger under the words as she reads.
7. Encourage your child to ask you about anything he doesn't understand.
8. If it sounds like your child does not understand what she is reading, stop and discuss it, and ask her to read it again. Reading is not just sounding out words. Readers must understand the meaning of what they are reading. Good readers can stop and self-correct.
9. Praise your child's efforts. Praise often.
10. Keep the reading fun. Some struggle is good. Too much frustration is not good.
11. Know when to take over reading or to end the session. If you see signs of stress, such as yawning or excessive fidgeting, invite your child to listen while you read. You may want to use easier books for a while.



## After Reading Together

1. Have a short discussion about the story.
2. Help your child to summarize the main idea. At first you might need to do the summarizing. Later you can do it together, and eventually your child will be able to summarize the story and the main idea by himself.
3. Discuss the problem and solution of the story.
4. Ask open-ended questions about the story or subject of the book. For example, rather than asking something like "Where did John go?" ask "Why do you think John wanted to go to the big city?" And rather than "Do you think John was excited to go to the big city?" ask "How do you think John felt about going to the big city?"
5. Help your child make connections to her world or another story or book. For example, "She didn't like it when the other kids made fun of her name. Has anything like that happened to you?" Or "Can you think of any other books we've read where some kids were teasing someone?"
6. On subsequent readings, consider having your child read the entire book to you.
7. Be willing to read the same book several times.

