



How to build language skills while reading to your child: 10 Helpful Tips

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#1 Read at a slow and steady pace: We can often start reading very fast without even realizing it. Make sure you are reading at a pace at which your child can hear each word being said to allow enough processing time.

#2 Have your child point to various items in the pictures: Having the child point to pictures encourages the child to look over the entire page, supports vocabulary development, and builds awareness of items related to the story: Example: “Show me the house.”, “Where is the rabbit?”, “Point to the baby”.

#3 Expand on what your child says relating to the book: Expanding a child’s utterance helps the child learn how to produce longer utterances and provide models of sentence structures. Example: (Child says: “bird fly”) (Adult would say: “The bird is flying in the sky”).

#4 Use descriptors to talk about pictures: Descriptors aid in building vocabulary and understanding basic concepts: Example: name objects/items (house, car), actions (wave, leap, skip), locations (above, next to, under), functions (A stove is used for cooking), emotion (“She looks angry.”), and time (early/late).

#5 Re-read books: Children will continue to learn new things or gain further understanding from reading the same book multiple times. Some children get to a point of memorization of books that they will pretend to be reading while saying the story from memory. This supports pre-reading skills!

#6 Trace under the words with your figure: Tracing under the words builds awareness that there is a word for everything you are saying. This also builds understanding that text is read left to right and top to bottom.

#7 Ask questions while reading: Asking questions will help engage the child in the text and aid in comprehension of the story: yes/no, who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, which?, and how?

#8 Make predictions: Ask your child what they think is going to happen next, this builds reasoning skills and awareness of story sequences (beginning, middle, end).

#9 Talk about the story after you are done reading: Have child share opinion (like/dislike/etc.), talk about the characters/setting/problem/solution to build understanding of story structures.

#10 Reference the book in daily life: Help your child make personal connections to the story.