Booktrust's Top Tips
for Bedtime Reading with Babies

Sharing a story at bedtime is a chance for you and your baby to relax and enjoy a special moment together. As part of a bedtime routine they will love to cuddle and hear your voice and will know that it's time to wind down ready for sleep. Just ten minutes a day will help you bond and also greatly help their development.

Make it something to look forward to – and enjoy this time together!

What books should I choose?

• Choose bright and touchy-feely books with different textures and colours. Encourage your baby to touch the book as you read and talk about the pictures – they'll like the look and feel of it. At this stage babies enjoy playing with their books!

• Choose books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition – hearing rhyming words will help them later when they learn to read. Say the words a little more slowly than you usually talk to help your baby hear the sounds you are making.

Where should we read?

• Why not start at bathtime? Share bath books and rhymes together – try Row Row Your Boat, 5 Little Ducks or make one up about splashing.

• Snuggle up together, somewhere cosy. It doesn't have to be in bed and it's best to switch off the TV.

How do I go about it?

• Read your baby's favourite books over and over again. Try to use funny voices and make silly noises. Your child loves the sound of your voice so don't worry and enjoy it together.

• Singing or saying rhymes to your baby is another great way to end the day and will sooth your baby for a great night's sleep. Why not try Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – a great favourite.

What else could I do?

• You don't always have to 'read' a book. Pictures are also very important and help to tell the story. Ask questions about the pictures or the characters, like 'Can you see the cow?' 'Does the bear look tired?' At this age you'll be giving the answers yourself but you will be helping your baby to learn lots of new words.

Bookstart provides free packs of books for babies and children under four.
Ask your health visitor, early years setting or local library for more information.