

# Booktrust's Top Tips for Bedtime Reading with Toddlers



Sharing a story at bedtime is a chance for you and your child 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 get ready for sleep. Just ten minutes a day will also greatly help their development.

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

## What books should I choose?

- Books with rhyme and repetition are great as they encourage your toddler to join in - this will help them later when they are learning to read.
  - Let your child choose the books they want you to share with them - it will make them feel involved.
  - Share books about things that excite your child like trains, football or fairies.
  - You could sometimes limit the choice to ones you know that you will enjoy too so its fun for you both.
  - Read your child's favourite books over and over again.
- Poetry books are fun too - there are great books offering a poem for every day of the year. Ask at your local library or bookshop for details.



## Where should we read?

- Sit close together, somewhere cosy. It doesn't have to be in bed and it's best to switch off the TV.
- Why not start at bath time? Share bath books and rhymes together – try Row Row Your Boat or make one up about splashing.

## How do I go about it?

- Try using funny voices and make silly noises. Your child loves the sound of your voice so try not to be embarrassed or shy. Just remember to make it fun and laugh a lot!
- Let your child join in and tell you what's happening. Ask questions like 'What do you think will happen next?' and 'How do you think she feels about that?' - Give your toddler plenty of time to answer.
- Encourage young children to hold a book and turn the pages as you read. Books with flaps are great for getting children involved.
- You don't always have to 'read' a book. Point to the pictures and talk about them.
- Try to relate a story to you child's own world and experiences e.g. 'That dog looks like the one next door.'

## What else could I do?

- Trytelling your own story. Children love old classics like fairy tales or you could make one up together.

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. Ask your health visitor or your local library for more information.



For more tips and advice on great rhymes and books to share with your child visit our website at [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

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