



LET'S READ!

EARLY YEARS LITERACY TOOLKIT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Contents

Raising Literacy Australia 4

Module 1: Planning your early childhood

Where to begin	5
Evaluation	6
Know your material	7
Organise your props	8
Have everything ready, close at hand and in the order you will need it	9
Be prepared!	9
Share an activity	10
Enjoy what you do	10
Have realistic expectations	10
Supporting positive behaviour	11
Planning with themes	14
STEAM inspiration for sessions and programs	15
Sessions for different ages and stages	17

Module 2: Tools, tips and templates 22

Storytime book recommendations from library staff across Victoria	23
Storytime book recommendations by theme	26
Storytime session plan	31
Supporting positive behaviour: Preparation checklist	34
Tip sheet: Sharing information with families	35
Tip sheet: Milestones in child development	36
Tip sheet: Conversation starters	39
Tip sheet: Sing a song	40
Welcome songs and chants	41

If you're happy and you know it	41
Five little speckled frogs	42
Old MacDonald had a farm	43
The grand old Duke of York	44
Open shut them	45
Twinkle, twinkle little star	46
Galumph, went the little green frog	47
Teddy bear, teddy bear	47
Row, row, row your boat	48
Incy Wincy Spider	49
Baby Read every day	50
Baby Sing every day	50
Baby Talk every day	51
Baby Play every day	52
Toddler Read every day	53
Toddler Sing every day	53
Toddler Talk every day	54
Toddler Play every day	55
Preschooler Read every day	56
Preschooler Sing every day	56
Preschooler Talk every day	57
Preschooler Play every day	58
Reading with school-age children	59
Speak to your child in your home language	60
Screen time for young children	61
The benefits of Storytime at the library	62
Online resources	63

We now know that the first years of a child's life are vital to their development. 80 per cent of a child's brain development takes place by age three, and 90 per cent by age five. One of the most important activities anyone can do with a baby or young child is to share stories, and it's never too early to start!

Public libraries are uniquely placed to support literacy development from birth, offering free early years learning programs and free access to library resources in English and in community languages. Libraries play a crucial role in families' lives by providing them with a safe and welcoming environment to connect and engage with their community. Storytime, Baby Bounce, Rhyme Time and Toddler Time are just some of the early childhood programs that libraries offer. Quality early years programs are fun, engaging and support families to recognise themselves as their child's first teacher; through role-modelling these programs equip parents and carers to support their child's early brain and literacy development at home.

This toolkit is designed to aid public libraries in delivery of their early years programs. It contains information and resources that can be adapted to suit individual library's needs. The toolkit has been created by Raising Literacy Australia for State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network (PLVN) and is part of READ (www.slv.vic.gov.au/read-program), a broad program undertaken by the State Library and PLVN to support public library work in the early years domain. It builds on Reading and literacy for all: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries (2015); Reading and literacy for all: Quality indicators for early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries (2016); and a large-scale early years literacy professional development program for Victorian public library staff, which was delivered by Raising Literacy Australia.

Raising Literacy Australia

The vision of Raising Literacy Australia is to enrich Australian lives and build communities through literacy.

Our mission is to build sustainable, high quality and accessible programs which educate and encourage individuals, families and the broader community. The outcome is to support effective change in programs and practices enabling Australians to achieve lifelong learning, improved life chances and the ability to participate in society.

We aim to:

- Encourage reading for all, and build awareness of the importance of reading to young children from birth
- Support family engagement through activities such as regular reading, playing, singing and talking
- Develop children's literacy and numeracy skills prior to entering formal education
- Improve government, corporate, community and early childhood sector's understanding of early childhood development through education and training
- Foster a lifelong appreciation of books and reading.

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Module 1: Planning your early childhood session

Where to begin

Storytime is a unique and important part of a library staff member's role. It can be a wonderfully rewarding experience for both you and the families who participate.

Where do you begin when developing your programs? Planning is an important part of ensuring your programs and services are effective.

All early years services and programs developed by Victorian public libraries should be underpinned by the industry-agreed, stakeholder-endorsed quality standards set out in *Reading and literacy for all: Quality indicators for early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries*, which is available at www.slv.vic.gov.au/read-program.

These standards are:

EY1	Sound educational underpinning
EY2	Fun and enjoyable for all participants
EY3	Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers
EY4	Competent, passionate presenters
EY5	Inspire a love of reading and words
EY6	Target and involve both children and their family members or carers
EY7	Story-based
EY8	Facilitate access to library collections and services
EY9	Complement other early years services
EY10	Effective evaluation processes
EY11	Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx is an approved framework that is consistent with the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care. The 11 standards for early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries are consistent with the practice principles and outcomes articulated by the VEYLDF.

Using these standards to develop your programs assures the community that the library programs they and their families regularly attend are not only fun, but also explicitly contribute to improved literacy outcomes.



Each month The Little Big Book Club promotes three picture books suitable for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. There is an Activity Time and a Learning Time session plan to support each title, and public libraries can access and download them for free. You'll find them on the Little Big Book Club website, at www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources.

Evaluation

It's important to plan with evaluation in mind. This helps to focus your key objectives and will ultimately support all future planning. When you measure your achievements it helps to make your program better.

Evaluating your program may seem like a daunting prospect, but seeing the results of your work can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your job. The key to the process is planning, and the best people to undertake this task are the people that know the program best – you and your team.

Evaluation should be a feature in the planning of all your programs rather than something to be done at the end, and you should never consider it a standalone activity: it's a set of linked tasks that are undertaken throughout your program. There five key stages in the evaluation cycle – planning, evidence, analysis, reflection and learning.

PLANNING

It is important to clearly define the purpose of evaluation and what you want to end up with at its conclusion. Evaluations can be carried out for a range of reasons and it is important to be clear about exactly why you are undertaking yours. Are you interested in the impact of your program (outcome or summative evaluation)? Do you want to know if it can be improved (performance or formative evaluation)? Or maybe you want to do a mix of both? Do you want to evaluate your whole program or only a specific element? Keep in mind that it is better to evaluate part of a program well than the whole program poorly.

EVIDENCE

It's impossible to overstate the importance of knowing what evidence you need to collect to support your evaluation. What are the most important questions, and what information do you need to answer them? Develop an evaluation plan to help you to understand your evaluation objective and to define what evidence you need to determine if your program's objectives have been met. You should also consider what methods you'll use to collect this information. You might collect it through surveys (with the adults and the children participating), anecdotal records (journals or diaries to record success, milestones and challenges) or by tracking statistics, such as attendance figures.

ANALYSIS

The analysis stage of the evaluation process involves objective and critical assessment of the information you have collected. The objective during this stage is to understand what has happened and, as far as possible, why it happened. The evaluative technique you use should depend on the nature of the data you've collected. This could include statistical analysis of quantitative data (for example, key performance indicators) and identification of recurring themes contained in qualitative feedback (such as participant engagement in reading programs).

REFLECTION

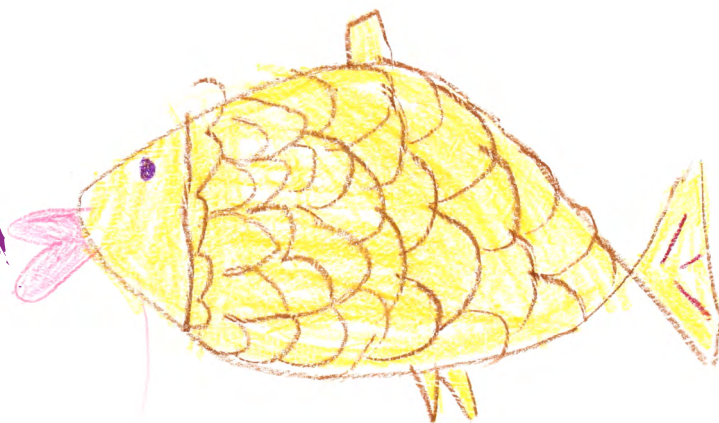
Reflection is an ongoing process in which you consider whether the outcomes and the way in which they were achieved are consistent with your vision for the program. This reflective stage should involve those in your team who are responsible for planning and delivery of the program or initiative, but you might also consider involving those directly influenced by it and others with an independent and objective perspective.

LEARNING

The sole purpose of evaluating your activities is to enhance your programs and initiatives. Once you have captured, analysed and reflected on the evaluation information, the final step is to take action. This action might involve refining aspects of an initiative, undertaking a major review of an activity or choosing to end a program. The ultimate aim of evaluation is to learn. You should communicate your findings to relevant stakeholders – and this may involve celebrating your success.

Start simple

If you are new to Storytime, or if you are making changes to your existing Storytime sessions, start off slowly. Focus on one part and do it well. Wait until you feel confident before you introduce the next element.



Know your material

CHOOSE YOUR BOOK

Choose carefully! And remember the most important rule for any storyteller: read the book many times! Select a book that's appropriate to share with your group and make sure you're familiar with the story – what happens, the rhythm and rhyme; it will give you confidence when you're running the session.

1 Read the book

- Is the content appropriate?
- Does it suit the needs of your group?

2 Read it again

- Will the illustrations engage the reader?
- Is the language suitable?
- Can you use it to support your theme, your outcomes, and your key messages?

3 Read it out loud

- Do the words flow?
- Does it suit your style?

4 Read it out loud again

- When do you need to change your voice?
- When do you need a dramatic pause?
- When do you need to stop and comment, explain, or pose a question?

See Module 2 for a wealth of Storytime book recommendations – from Victorian library staff, and from the Little Big Book Club.

CHOOSE YOUR SONGS

Songs are an important part of early years programs. They support language development, build coordination, and teach children about numbers and counting and innumerable other topics. Simple songs, rhymes and chants are also a great way to gain attention and get everyone ready for listening.

In Module 2 you'll find the Sing a song tip sheet, as well as Welcome songs and chants and a range of other song sheets you may like to use.

Tips on building your repertoire

- Practice at home or at work. You may find it helpful to practice in front of someone you feel comfortable with.
- Choose songs that your audience will know, or songs that have accompanying music.
- Sing songs often enough that you know the words.
- Provide adults in the audience with the words so they can sing along and support you. This could be in the form of a handout, poster or PowerPoint. (See the song sheets in Module 2.) Provide translated song words, to support community languages.
- Invite families to share their favourite books and songs with you, and take some time to learn songs from other cultures that can be shared in your sessions.
- Build up a repertoire of books and songs that you know and can read and sing well. It is important to have material to fall back on when other things don't go to plan.

Organise your props

Props are an interactive and fun way of gaining children's attention before the story, and keeping it during the session.

Props can be a great way to introduce a story. They can grab children's attention and give them important clues about what the story is going to be about. The more prior knowledge children have about a story the greater their comprehension and enjoyment will be.

For example, in the story *Lucy Goosey* by Margaret Wild and Ann James, it says, '... she had even learned to whiffle her wings as she landed in the pond.' A prop such as a puppet, cuddly toy, feather or photo can help introduce the book and this unfamiliar word.

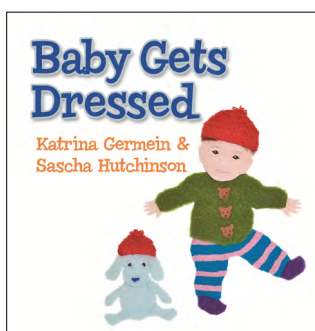
Props don't have to be expensive or fancy; you can often use things commonly found around the home. Bring props that are safe for children to touch, feel, explore and play with. This will enhance the learning experience and will add value to the story you have shared. Select props knowing that children will handle them, and discuss with them appropriate ways of holding, using or sharing props.

Practice using your props and only use them if you feel comfortable with them. Trying to put on a puppet with nervous hands won't enhance your performance!

PROP SUGGESTIONS:

Baby gets dressed

by Katrina Germein

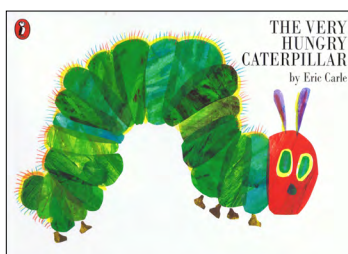


- a baby doll and dolls clothes
- a nappy, bottle, sippy cup or baby clothes
- a photo of you as a baby (enlarged to A4 size) – discuss what you were wearing
- clothes cut out of paper, hanging on a 'washing line'
- a pile of socks for children to match

PROP SUGGESTIONS:

The very hungry caterpillar

by Eric Carle

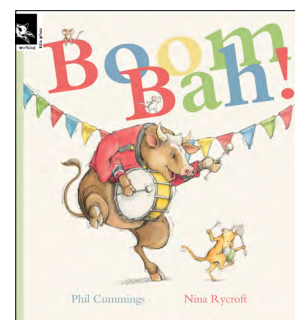


- a basket of fruit (real or pretend) that feature in the story
- a real caterpillar
- a photo of a cocoon
- a selection of green things – including a caterpillar
- a caterpillar made out of an egg carton.

PROP SUGGESTIONS:

Boom bah!

by Phil Cummings



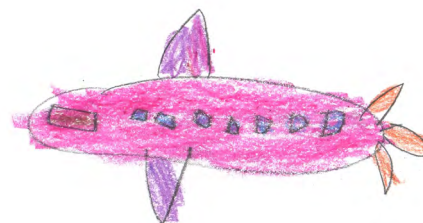
- paper-flag bunting decorations for the room
- flags for the children to wave
- real instruments
- homemade instruments or instruments from the book (a spoon and a teacup, an ice cream container and wooden spoon)
- toy farm animals
- a large photo or poster of a band or orchestra



Have everything ready, close at hand and in the order you will need it

Consider using a Storytime Box. This is a special box, bag, sack or basket – the choice is yours. It should contain everything you will need for your Storytime. There are many benefits to using a Storytime Box:

- It keeps props in the one place. It can help you be more organised, and the more organised you are, the more confident you will be.
- It provides important routine and structure to your session.
- It adds an element of suspense and excitement.



Be prepared!

Use a running sheet to plan what your session will include. You may not need it on hand, but taking time to plan will help manage any challenges on the day. In your plan you may consider:

- What key message do you want to share with the adults? How are you going to share it?
- What outcomes, literacy skill or understanding do you want to focus on? How are you going to implement this into the session?

Use the Storytime planning template to plan your session and what you're going to say. Stick the plan inside your Storytime Box so you can subtly refer to it during the session.

Having a routine helps you and the audience know what is going to come next. It may look something like this:

1 Welcome song

2 Storytime

3 Music time – action songs to get active and get the wiggles out, songs based around the theme or book

4 Storytime (this can be the same book or a new book)

5 Activity Time

6 Goodbye song

You may wish to display your running sheet for parents and carers and their children to see. This helps to establish a positive routine with your families; it also helps them become familiar with the library and what to expect when they're there.

Important

Make sure all recycled materials are thoroughly cleaned, and check with families regarding any allergies to be aware of.

Enjoy what you do

Your audience isn't going to enjoy your session if you don't. If you are excited about Storytime your audience will be too.

Give yourself credit. You are probably not a professional singer, actor or performer. You are probably out of your comfort zone. But you're doing it. People are coming to your sessions. They're enjoying them and learning from them. Children love to hear adults sing and have fun.

Remember – Storytime is important!
It is an opportunity to build the foundations for all future learning.



Share an activity

Providing an activity can add an important element to your session. 'Playing' with the story gives children the chance to develop important early literacy skills, including comprehension and vocabulary, and is a good way to revisit the story in a fun and meaningful way.

Activity Time may also be the only opportunity some children have to access materials and resources such as paint, glitter, cutting and pasting, building blocks, playdough, dress ups and noisy musical instruments.

See [STEAM inspiration for sessions and programs](#) and the [Storytime session plan tip sheet](#) for some great ideas. Also visit Raising Literacy Australia at www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources and explore the extensive library of Activity Time planning sheets, which are free for public libraries to access and download.



Have realistic expectations

Young children have a very short attention span, so you need to plan accordingly. Focus on the quality of stories, not the quantity. It is better to read one book and read it well than to read several books to restless and tired children.

Plan your Storytime in small segments that have a balance of active and passive activities suits little children. See [Sessions for different ages and stages](#) for suggestions. Also visit Reading Literacy Australia at www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources and explore the Learning Time sheets, which are free for public libraries to access and download.

Supporting positive behaviour

USE POSITIVE, SPECIFIC PRAISE

It is far more effective to focus on what children are doing well than it is to focus on negative behaviours.

Praise is most useful when it is specific. Including the action in the praise reinforces the behaviour you want to see in all children.

Try some of the following:

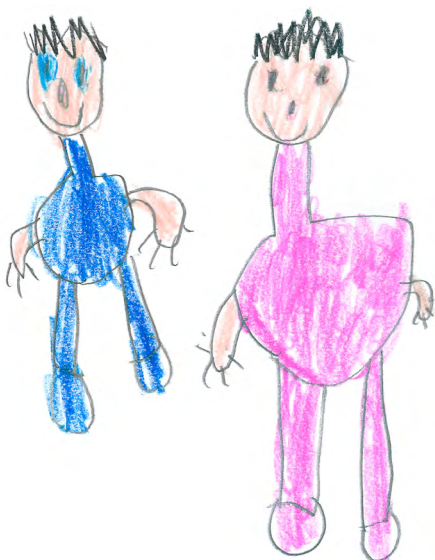
- I love the way Indira has her hands in her lap ready for the story to start.
- Thank you for not calling out during the story.
- I can see you are trying very hard to...

Think about what behaviours you want to see and point them out, for example:

- looking at the book
- singing the song
- putting their hand up
- sitting on their bottom.

ESTABLISH GUIDELINES

Children (and adults) need to know what is expected at Storytime. You need to have clear, simple guidelines and share them regularly. Introduce the 5 Ls for Listening and share them at the beginning of each story. Consistency and repetition are key.



5 Ls for Listening

1 Legs crossed

2 Hands in laps

3 Lips shut

4 Ears listening

5 Eyes looking

You may wish to explain to the parents and carers that this routine is common practice in kindergartens and preschools. It's a great way for children to learn expected behaviour. (There will be times when children cannot keep still: this is normal, so reassure parents that it's okay!)

Parents and caregivers need guidelines too. They will appreciate knowing from the start what is expected of them. Think about what guidelines might be useful for the adults in your group, and share them regularly. You may even decide to open up discussion with your families and ask them to contribute their ideas for some group norms.

Have the guidelines in a place for all to see, written down on a poster or a handout that parents and carers can read themselves. Consider language barriers and use images as well as words.

Be confident and share the guidelines at the beginning of each session. They might include:

- Mobile phones should be on silent during Storytime.
- There will be a chance at the end of Storytime to catch up with friends.
- Support your child during the story. Sit and enjoy the session together.

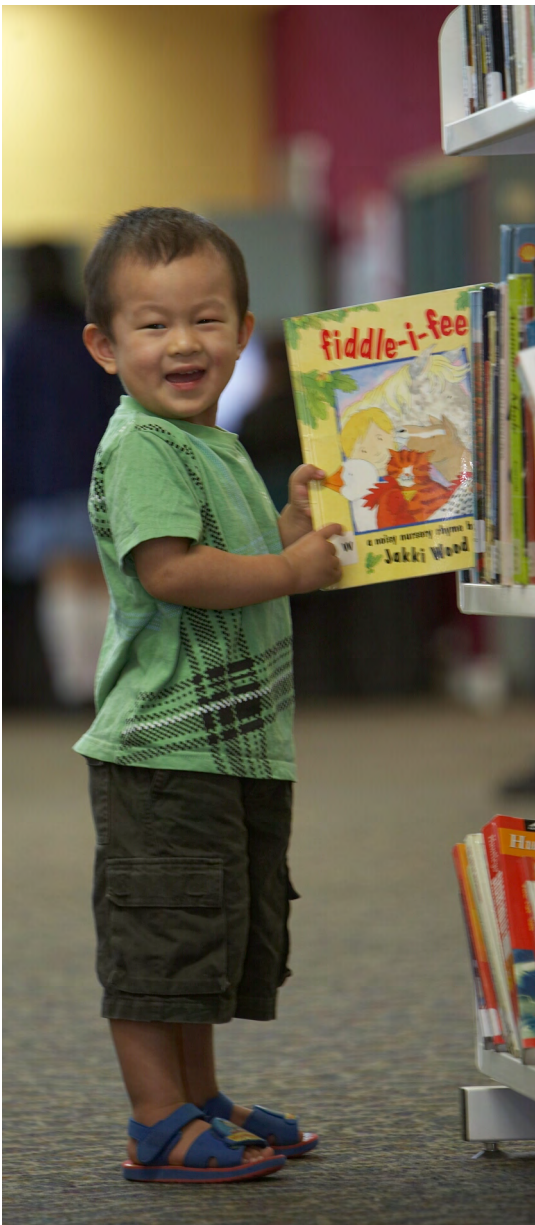
- Be an active role-model and participate in the session. When you join in with your child you are helping them to be engaged and to learn.
- Sing loudly! It doesn't matter what you sound like – it only matters that you sing. (Songs help build children's vocabulary and are fun.)
- If children see you joining in then they are much more likely to participate and enjoy the session too!



TIPS ON MANAGING LARGE GROUPS

Large groups can be particularly noisy and this can be a challenge for the presenter. Here are some suggestions:

- Have a Storytime cuddly toy. Give the toy a name and personality so that it becomes an important part of each session. Introduce the toy to the children, and explain that the toy needs everyone to be very, very quiet at Storytime so that it can hear the story. Choose a good listener to hold the toy during the story. If it gets too loud, ask the children what the toy needs during Storytime – 'very quiet'.
- Use the power of silence. Pause. Gather your thoughts and gauge what is happening in the room. Remember, noise isn't always a negative outcome – children are naturally noisy when they're having fun! Are they focussed? Are they purposefully engaged? Follow your instincts and know it is okay to pause during a story and re-engage participants with a song, rhyme or active movements. You may be able to return to the story, or it may be better to continue with songs and rhymes if the energy level is uncontrolled. Come back to the story next session.
- Have a Plan B. Always have a selection of well-known songs, rhymes, finger-plays and simple games that you can fall back on if concentration is low, or the session has become difficult.
- Children need plenty of active play to help their brains grow. Providing time for active play is highly appropriate for a successful session.
- Build your confidence by trying new ideas. It can take a while to find out what works for the children and families in large groups. Persevere and keep in mind that each week will have a different outcome.
- Talk to some families afterwards to find out what they think works in large groups. This will give parents and carers some responsibility and ownership of the sessions. Communicating regularly is the most effective way to build rapport with families.



IGNORE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Drawing attention to inappropriate behaviour can reinforce the behaviour. Try and ignore it wherever possible, and instead focus your attention on positive behaviours. This helps reinforce appropriate behaviours and expectations for Storytime. Children will respond to consistent messaging over time.

SET THINGS UP TO SUCCEED

If children are pulling books off the shelves during Storytime, move the shelves or move the children. Invest in a Storytime rug so children have a defined area to sit.

Remind children and parents of expectations before you start. If your group is particularly restless, it is okay to stop the story, get out wiggles, have a dance, sing songs and then come back to the story. If it is not possible to keep reading it doesn't mean the session has failed. Move on to an activity; you can always revisit the story another time. Storytime should not be measured by how many books you read – focus instead on the level of engagement with the children.

EVALUATE YOUR OWN PRACTICE

Spend time considering your practice in relation to the behaviours occurring in your session. Consider some of the following:

- Can all the children see the book?
- Can all the children hear you?
- Do the stories match the age and needs of the group?
- Do the activities engage the children and families in play and conversation?
- Do the parents know what is expected of them?



Planning with themes

Children learn best through play, and there are many ways that language and literacy experiences can be incorporated into Storytime.

Planning Storytime themes can:

- help you to engage with children through their interests and experiences
- help you make decisions about which books and songs to share
- expand your knowledge of appropriate books within a specific topic or theme
- stimulate meaningful repetition through careful selection of stories, songs and rhymes
- encourage parents to engage with their children at home
- provide an opportunity to embrace diversity and share different cultures from your community and around the world.

Using themes is a great way to get children interested. Engage with families and observe the children in your programs to find out what interests and motivates them. Here's an example of how you might plan a Storytime session with a cooking and food theme:

- Share the books *I'm a hungry dinosaur* by Janeen Brian and Ann James and *Can we lick the spoon now?* by Carol Goess and Tamsin Ainslie.
- Follow with an activity exploring recipes, ingredients and things used to bake a cake. Use props such as aprons for children to wear; and mixing bowls, wooden spoons, baking trays and measuring cups for children to use.
- Encourage families transfer this activity to home by talking during meal preparation, shopping trips or during imaginative play. It can be as simple as having a teddy bears' picnic, pretending to order and eat at a café, being a chef and baking a playdough cake, or even making mudpies in the garden.

For more ideas, see [STEAM inspiration for sessions and programs](#), and [Storytime book recommendations by theme](#).



STEAM inspiration for sessions and programs

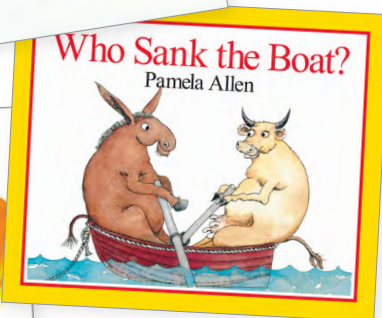
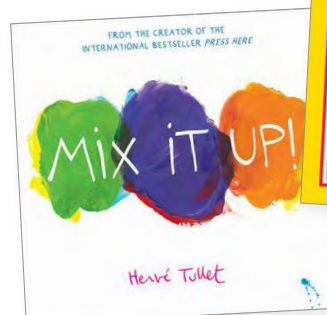
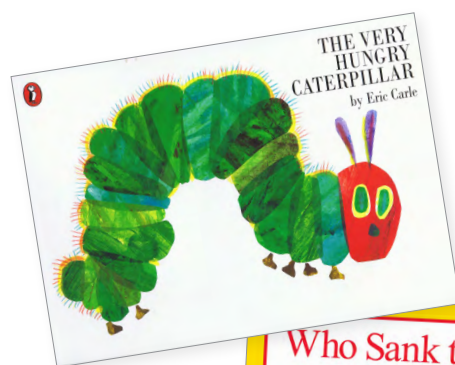
During their early years children are learning and developing a range of skills that become the foundation for all future learning. Libraries are well positioned to include a range of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) activities in early years programs to help develop children's curiosity, imagination, problem-solving, social skills, creative thinking and knowledge about the world around them.

Many books incorporate one or more areas of STEAM, and you can use a range of images, props and activities to give depth to your STEAM Storytime session. You will need to consider the age of children participating in your sessions, as well as the physical space and resources available. Here are a few suggestions that are age-appropriate for early years programs.

SCIENCE

Experimenting, exploring and discovering: What happens? How does it work?

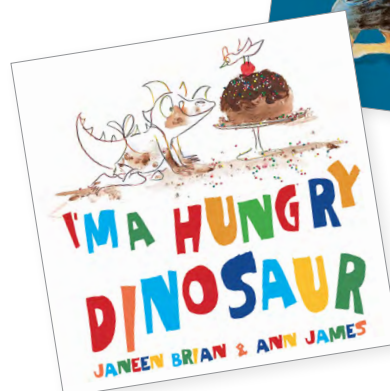
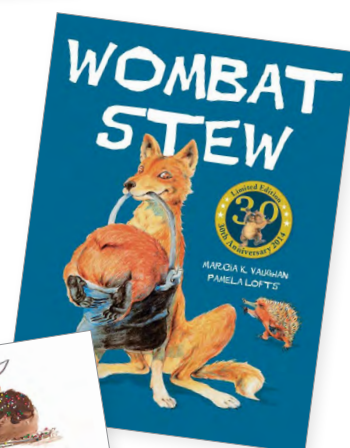
- Read *The very hungry caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Look at videos on YouTube showing stages of metamorphosis, and make your own caterpillar or butterfly using craft supplies, recycled objects or materials from nature.
- Read *Who sank the boat?* by Pamela Allen. Use objects such as plastic cups, metal teaspoons, plastic blocks, and twigs or leaves from the garden, and spend time making predictions about what will float and what will sink. This works well as a group or individual activity.
- Read *Mix it up!* by Hervé Tullet, and experiment with colour mixing. What happens when you mix blue and red together? You can paint onto paper, or use zip-lock sandwich bags and secure them to a window with masking tape so that the children can touch without making a mess.



TECHNOLOGY

Incorporating different technologies

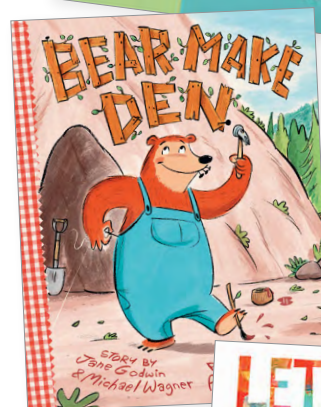
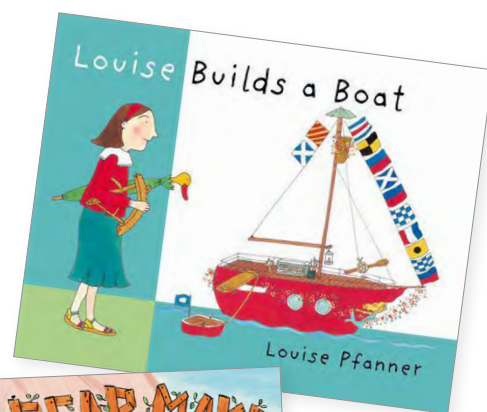
- Only use technology to enhance experiences, never to take away or replace children interacting and fully engaging. For example, you could use an iPad to capture children's work, or a Smartboard to show videos of new ideas or concepts. You can use E-books and share a story on a projector, or add music and props.
- Read *Wombat stew* by Marcia Vaughan and Pamela Lotts, or *I'm a hungry dinosaur* by Janeen Brian and Ann James. Explore utensils that are needed for cooking and meal preparation, such as mixing bowls, measuring cups, whisks, wooden spoons, jugs or baking trays.



ENGINEERING

Building, creating and constructing: Playing with blocks, discovering how things work and problem solving

- Read *Louise builds a boat* by Louise Pfanner and make boat! What materials do you need? Try things like plastic tubs, margarine containers, milk cartons, yoghurt pots or strawberry punnets. If possible, have a tub or sink of water to see if children's boats float.
- Tell the story of the *Three little pigs* and discuss the materials they used to make their houses. Experiment and construct homes for the little pigs and see what happens when you huff and puff like wolf in the story.
- Read *Bear make den* by Jane Godwin and Michael H. Wagner. Use pop sticks, construction paper, plasticine, masking tape and so on to make a hut/cave/den. Children can explore different ways to make their den and through trial and error will learn about construction.



ARTS

Expression and exploration through creative

activities: It's not about craft, it's about creativity

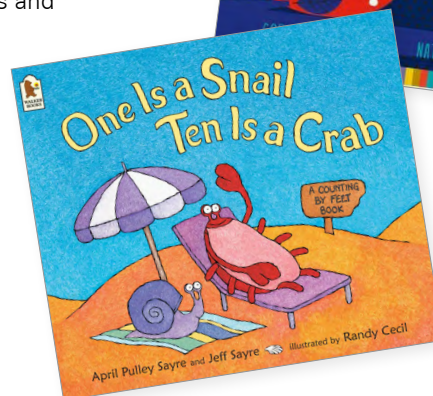
- Remember that it's the process that is important – not the end product.
- Read *Let's play* by Alborozo. Use objects and instruments to play music and retell the story through movement, sound and dance.
- Read *Out of shapes* by Ashley G. Use a range of shapes in an open-ended activity – what can you create? Cut out shapes out of coloured paper, use blocks in different shapes, or stencils for older children.



MATHEMATICS

Numbers, patterns, shapes, sorting and matching

- Read *Small, smaller, smallest* by Corina Fletcher and Natalie Marshall and explore numeracy concepts. Take time to sort objects in size order; use items such as pine cones, leaves, blocks, books – even the children themselves – and arrange them by height.
- Read *One is a snail, ten is a crab* by April Pulley Sayre and Jeff Sayre. Sing songs that have numbers in them. Incorporate counting into your session: ask children how many eyes, fingers or toes they have. Use a dice to incorporate numbers into games – for example, roll the dice and if it lands on 3, jump three times. This is a way to develop 1:1 correspondence, which children need to know before they learn how to count. Encourage families to explore numbers and counting at home. Setting the table is an ideal time to count. How many people are eating dinner? How many plates do we need? How many cups, spoons, forks?
- Read *Find me a castle* by Beci Orpin. Matching is an important skill for children to develop. Go on a scavenger hunt through the library. You can look for shapes, colours or numbers! Count how many castles you can find, how many red objects, or how many circles.



Sessions for different ages and stages

Every Baby Bounce, Rhyme Time, Toddler Time and Storytime session will be different, depending on your library, the community, the staff member or volunteer running the session – and, of course, the children and families attending. The following session guides are designed to help you plan, and they can be adapted to your library's needs. It is essential that you spend time with families, build rapport and from this develop a sense of what support or activities are needed. Networking with other service providers or organisations in your community, as well as with other library branches, is an effective way to enhance early years programs. Services and organisations to network with include:

- playgroups
- Maternal and Child Health nurses
- kindergarten/early learning centres
- kindergym
- speech pathologists
- occupational therapists
- community service providers
- local government departments
- community centres
- other libraries
- primary schools
- local hospitals running maternity classes and outreach programs for first-time parents.

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS FOR BABIES

Programs for parents and carers with babies are an effective way to introduce (or re-introduce) families to books and libraries, to provide information and support parents and carers to be their child's first teacher, and to help establish positive literacy practices right from the start. Here's an example of an early years program for babies:

1 Welcome – always welcome families, even if they visit regularly. Introduce yourself each session so that families know your name. This is especially important if different staff run sessions.

2 Take time for sharing – this is an opportunity for parents to share new milestones: a first step, a word, or any other achievement, no matter how small. This helps staff to build rapport and learn about where babies are at developmentally, and it provides families a space to share information in a safe environment.

A response to 'My baby raised his hands up when we sang "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". It was very sweet!' might be something like 'Wow, what a special moment! Your son is starting to copy your actions as you sing. It won't be long before he'll be singing along with you. That's a perfect song to sing with babies.'

3 Sing songs with gentle actions – these are perfect for babies. Encourage parents and carers to hold their baby so they are face-to-face. Babies learn how to speak by watching and copying their parents' or carers' face.

4 Share a story – if you are incorporating stories, use big books or have multiple copies of board books available for families to hold and read along with you. You can read the same book each week, role-modelling how to use or share the book in different ways. Book kits are ideal, and board books withstand chewing and are easy to wipe clean. Board books with high-contrast images in black-and-white are easier for newborns to focus on while their sight is developing.

5 Sing again! – sing more songs and encourage families to share their favourites.

6 Play and interact – this might be with puppets, coloured scarves, bubbles or blocks, or it could be simple tummy time with a book laid out in front of each baby.

Things to consider

SCHEDULING

Are your sessions at appropriate times and on appropriate days? Be aware that your group's attendance may fluctuate depending on babies' routines. Do not be concerned if families don't arrive on time, or if they leave early.

WELCOME

Can you greet people at the library door? Is it possible to sit facing the entrance so you can see new families arrive? Always welcome them with a smile.

LENGTH OF SESSION

Be flexible with session length; each week will be different, and this is perfectly normal. Try to make sure that staff have enough time with families. It's more important to support families and build relationships that it is to consistently deliver an hour-long session.

WHAT DOES THE SPACE LOOK LIKE?

Prams, prams, prams. Make sure there is enough space for families and their prams. Can families sit in a circle? This is a great way for you and all the adults to see each-other's faces.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Empower families to use their home language as much as possible, and invite them to speak to their child in their home language during your sessions. You can celebrate the diverse cultures in your local community by singing songs or using phrases in other languages. If appropriate, share resources in your library collection that are in languages other than English.

REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION!

Remember: even if you feel like you are a parrot and on constant replay, repetition is important. Babies are born ready to learn, and they learn and grow through consistent, appropriate activities. It is important to share this with parents as well.



EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS FOR TODDLERS

Toddlers are almost always on the move! They are taking in the world around them at a rapid pace. As children grow, so should their experiences – programs for toddlers need to be flexible and offer a wide range of opportunities to explore, learn and play. Here's an example of an early years program for toddlers:

- 1 **Welcome** – toddlers thrive on repetition and routine. Start each session in the same way to help children build confidence and to let families know that it is time to begin. You might like to choose a simple song that engages young children; try to incorporate one that has actions. Alternatives might be a bell to ring, a special clap, or a prop such as a parachute.

- 2 **Share a story** – choose a story that is short and developmentally appropriate. Toddlers have short attention spans, and they need to move their bodies. Choose interactive stories that invite child participation.

- 3 **Sing songs** – choose songs that get little bodies up and moving. Children need plenty of active play to help support healthy brain development.

- 4 **Play time** – play is a child's work. You might like to have a range of play-based activities that support early motor skills. You can use different activities each week, but try to include a range of choices – toddlers are more likely to engage if they are able to move from activity to activity.

- 5 **Goodbye** – establish a goodbye routine; again, it may be a song, bell or clap. Depending on your setting you may be able to leave play activities out for families to continue to use and enjoy.

Ideas for toddlers' play activities

- playdough
- matching cards
- blocks
- finger paint
- dress up
- dancing
- musical instruments
- bubbles
- boxes
- blank paper and crayons
- blank paper, stickers, glue and craft materials

Things to consider

TAKE TIME TO PLAN

Be flexible with your session but always make time to plan. Read your story beforehand and know when to invite children to interact with the story. Have a few books ready; some weeks you may read two or three books and other weeks you may not be able to finish even one! This is normal, especially with toddlers who have short attention spans. You can always come back to the same book the next week. Or read favourite stories over and over.

REFLECT THE COMMUNITY

Children are learning about the world around them, including people and friends in their community. Consider who attends your sessions, which languages are spoken and which cultures are represented and incorporate that into your plan.

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Routines prepare older children to be ready for kindergarten and prep/foundation (the first year of primary school). During these sessions you might focus on developing some of the skills that children need before they start formal schooling. (Print out [The benefits of Storytime at the library](#) in Module 2 to share with parents.)

Here's an example of an early years program for preschoolers:

1 Welcome – begin each session in the same way. Use an action song to help children know when it's time for the session to begin

2 Sing songs – Before reading you may like to sing songs to settle children ready to participate. Choose songs linked to the story you are going to share or group favourites

3 Before reading – engage imagination and curiosity by using props to introduce your story. You can discuss the theme of your story and unpack any new concepts or ideas as a group

4 After reading – you may:

- Choose to sing songs – parents may not be comfortable singing with their child at home so it is good practice to include songs in your session plan.
 - Share the story a second time - explore the pictures and discuss what is happening in the illustrations. You may like to use props to retell the story, asking children 'can you remember what comes next?' This is a great way to build narrative and recall skills.
-

5 Activity Time – incorporating play or art and craft into your session is a way to extend beyond the story and helps children make connections from story to real experiences.

6 Goodbye – establish a goodbye routine. This is an effective way to conclude your session. Make time to talk one-on-one with families. Building a relationship with your families is crucial. Depending on the size of your group you may need to choose a few different families each week. You may want to keep a private record of who you individually spent time with. Over a period of time this will help ensure you talk with every family individually. (A diary or logbook can also be an effective way of recording conversations, or tracking ideas that you are trying out, which can be used as part of feedback into program evaluation.)



Things to consider

SPACE FOR CREATIVITY

Storytime is an opportunity to explore, create and experiment. It is important to consider what activities you are offering and whether there is space for more creativity. This doesn't mean spending lots of money. Often, it is about simplifying activities and making it about the process rather than the end result. For example, having playdough to play with, mould, sculpt and manipulate or having a range of materials for children to experiment with such as pop sticks, material, blocks or boxes. This gives each child an opportunity to use their imagination and follow their own interests. Try having a balance of open ended activities as well as templates and instructions to follow.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Speak to families and the children after every session and find out what works, and what doesn't work, for them. Listen to their ideas, which could range from how everyone is seated, to inclusion of favourite songs or stories or upcoming special events, and consider how this could be reflected appropriately in your sessions. An example could be a child re-imagining a song and changing the words (Twinkle Twinkle Little Moon!) or, sharing songs in other languages that your group are interested in including.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Children are learning about the world around them, so consider the local community and invite guests to come in and talk with the group. You might choose local business owners, professionals such as police and fire fighters, artists, parents, grandparents or even a pet! Theme your sessions and have a range of picture books available for families to borrow and explore further.



Module 2: Tools, tips and templates

Module Two is a guide to support facilitators running early years programs. In it you will find tools, templates and tip sheets to assist with planning your sessions.

Resources include:

- Storytime books recommendations – favourite titles from Victorian public library staff, and recommendations by theme from Raising Literacy Australia
- Storytime session plan
- Activity time and Learning time example sheets
- Supporting positive behaviour: preparation checklist
- Online resources

TIP SHEETS FOR STAFF

- Sharing information with families
- Milestones in child development
- Conversation starters
- Sing a song

SONG SHEETS

Print these and use them as needed. These songs (with the exception of the Welcome songs and chants) are also available on LBBC's Nursery Rhymes for everyday CD www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/products/nursery-rhymes-for-every-day-booklet-and-cd.

- If you're happy and you know it
- Five little speckled frogs
- Old MacDonald had a farm
- The grand old Duke of York
- Open shut them
- Twinkle, twinkle little star
- Galumph, went the little green frog
- Teddy bear, teddy bear
- Row, row, row your boat
- Incy Wincy spider



TIP SHEETS FOR PARENTS

- Read every day (baby, toddler and preschooler)
- Sing every day (baby, toddler and preschooler)
- Talk every day (baby, toddler and preschooler)
- Play every day (baby, toddler and preschooler)
- Reading with school-age children
- Speak to your child in your home language
- Screen time for young children
- The benefits of Storytime at the library

You'll find additional tip sheets for parents at the Little Big Book Club website: www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources.

Storytime book recommendations from library staff across Victoria

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>A cat and a dog</i>	Claire Masurel	9781558589490
<i>House for wombats</i>	Michael Dugan	9780091570019
<i>Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day</i>	Judith Viorst	9780689711732
<i>Alexander's outing</i>	Pamela Allen	9780140554786
<i>All change</i>	Ian Whybrow	9780340981221
<i>An ordinary day</i>	Libby Gleeson	9781865043579
<i>Annie's chair</i>	Debora Niland	9780143501985
<i>Arthur</i>	Amanda Graham	9780947212124
<i>Bubble bath pirate</i>	Jarrett J. Krosoczka	9780670035991
<i>Caps for sale</i>	Esphyr Slobodkina	9780064431439
<i>Clarrie's pig day out</i>	Jen Storer	9780733334443
<i>Cock-a-doodle, quack, quack!</i>	Ivor Baddiel	9780385751049
<i>Cows in the kitchen</i>	by June Crebbin	9780763606459
<i>Dave's cave</i>	Frann Preston-Gannon	9780857636232
<i>Dear zoo</i>	Rod Campbell	9780230747722
<i>Don't let the pigeon drive the bus</i>	Mo Willems	9780786819881
<i>Don't open this book</i>	Andy Lee	9781760451486
<i>Don't touch this book</i>	Jan Van Helsing	9783938656211
<i>Edward the emu</i>	Sheena Knowles	9780207170515
<i>Edwina the emu</i>	Sheena Knowles	9781743095553
<i>Eye to eye</i>	Graeme Base	9780670078592
<i>Fancy that</i>	Pamela Allen	9780140509717
<i>Fish out of water</i>	Helen Palmer	9780394800233
<i>Fortunately, unfortunately</i>	Michael Foreman	9781849392242
<i>Giraffes can't dance</i>	Giles Andreae	9781841215655
<i>Go away, big green monster!</i>	Ed Emberley	9780316236539
<i>Good night, gorilla</i>	Peggy Pathmann	9780399224454
<i>Green eggs and ham</i>	Dr Seuss	9780375810886
<i>Hairy Charlie and the frog</i>	Jackie French	9780864613738
<i>Hairy Maclary books</i>	Lynley Dodd	9781582460598
<i>Harry the dirty dog</i>	Gene Zion	9780099978701
<i>Hello Spot</i>	Eric Hill	9780723268604
<i>Herman & Rosie</i>	Gus Gordon	9780670076031
<i>Hooray for hat!</i>	Brian Won	9780544159037
<i>I dream of an elephant</i>	Ami Rubinger	9780789260338
<i>I went walking</i>	Sue Williams	9780606010214
<i>I'll wait, Mr Panda</i>	Steve Antony	9781444916676

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>When Henry caught Imaginitis</i>	Nick Bland	978174169030
<i>It might be an apple</i>	Shinsuke Yoshitake	9780500650486
<i>It's a tiger</i>	David LaRochelle	9781452121949
<i>It's bedtime, William</i>	Deborah Niland	9780143505402
<i>Journey</i>	Aaron Becker	9781406355345
<i>Just another ordinary day</i>	Rod Clement	978060615599
<i>Lavender's blue</i>	Kathleen Lines	9780192782274
<i>Lemons are not red</i>	Laura Vaccaro Seeger	9781417761012
<i>Lion lessons</i>	John Agee	9780735228351
<i>Mix it up!</i>	Hervé Tullet	9781760110956
<i>Monkey and me</i>	Emily Gravett	9780230015838
<i>Muddled-up farm</i>	Mike Dumbleton	9781742748320
<i>My cat Likes to hide in boxes</i>	Eve Sutton	9780908507306
<i>No way Yirrikipayi</i>	Alison Lester & children from Milikaptit School, Melville Island	9780992478070
<i>Noisy book</i>	Soledad Bravi	9781877467523
<i>Not your typical dragon</i>	Dan Bar-el	9780670014026
<i>Once I heard a little wombat</i>	Renee Trembl	9780857987402
<i>Once upon a time</i>	Nick Sharratt	9781406331929
<i>One woolly wombat</i>	Kerry Argent	9781862917088
<i>Open very carefully: A book with bite!</i>	Nick Bromley	9780763661632
<i>Owl babies</i>	Martin Waddell	9780763612832
<i>Perfect square</i>	Michael Hall	9780061915147
<i>Pete the cat</i>	Eric Litwin	9780545419666
<i>Pig the pug</i>	Aaron Blabey	9781443157377
<i>Piranhas don't eat bananas</i>	Aaron Blabey	9781743625781
<i>Pirate Pete</i>	Nick Sharratt	9780810989238
<i>Please Mr Panda</i>	Steve Antony	9780545804165
<i>Polar Bear, polar bear, what do you hear?</i>	Bill Martin	9780758734327
<i>Possum Blossom</i>	Gina Newton	9781865047959
<i>Possum magic</i>	Mem Fox	9781862919747
<i>Press here</i>	Hervé Tullet	9788492750368
<i>Sally Snickers' knickers</i>	Lynn Ward	9781921720499
<i>Shark in the park</i>	Nick Sharratt	9780385604697
<i>Shark in the park on a windy day</i>	Nick Sharratt	9780552573108
<i>Shh! We have a plan</i>	Chris Haughton	9781406361650
<i>Some dogs do</i>	Jez Alborough	9780744583397
<i>Spots in a box</i>	Helen Ward	9780744583397
<i>Stuck</i>	Oliver Jeffers	9780698143647
<i>Tap the magic tree</i>	Christie Matheson	9780062274458
<i>Teddy took the train</i>	Nicki Greenberg	9781925267167

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>Thank you, Mr Panda</i>	Steve Antony	9781444927856
<i>The artist who painted a blue horse</i>	Eric Carle	9780141348131
<i>The backwards birthday party</i>	Tom Chapin	9781442467989
<i>The big animal mix up</i>	Gareth Edwards	9780340989890
<i>The blue balloon</i>	Mick Inkpen	9780340586327
<i>The book with no pictures</i>	BJ Novak	9780525427735
<i>The bus is for us</i>	Michael Rosen	9781406365542
<i>A dark, dark tale</i>	Ruth Brown	9781594139918
<i>The day the crayons quit</i>	Drew Daywalt	9780007513765
<i>The dot</i>	Peter H. Reynolds	9780763669782
<i>The duckling gets a cookie?</i>	Mo Willems	9780545661133
<i>The greedy goat</i>	Petr Horáček	9781406367164
<i>The Gruffalo's child</i>	Julia Donaldson	9780142407547
<i>The little mouse, the red ripe strawberry, and the big hungry bear</i>	Don Wood	9780685561317
<i>The Lorax</i>	Dr Seuss	9780394923376
<i>The red boat</i>	Hannah Cumming	9781846434815
<i>The terrible plop</i>	Ursula Dubosarsky	9780374374280
<i>The tiger who came to tea</i>	Judith Kerr	9780008144029
<i>The very brave bear</i>	Nick Bland	9781760150365
<i>The very cranky bear</i>	Nick Bland	9781443107853
<i>The very hungry caterpillar</i>	Eric Carle	9780399226908
<i>The watermelon seed</i>	Greg Pizzoli	9781484712368
<i>The wide-mouthed frog</i>	Keith Faulkner	9780803718753
<i>The wrong book</i>	Nick Bland	9781741693409
<i>Thelma the unicorn</i>	Aaron Blabbey	9781743625804
<i>There's a sea in my bedroom</i>	Margaret Wild	9780140540642
<i>There's a bear on my chair</i>	Ross Collins	9780857633934
<i>This book just ate my dog</i>	Richard Byrne	9780192737298
<i>This is a ball</i>	Beck Stanton	9780733334351
<i>Too loud Lily</i>	Sophie Laguna	9781862918931
<i>Walking through the jungle</i>	Julie Lacome	9780744536430
<i>We're going on a bear hunt</i>	Michael Rosen	9780744523232
<i>What's in the witch's kitchen?</i>	Nick Sharratt	9781406340075
<i>Where is the green sheep?</i>	Mem Fox	9780670041497
<i>Where the wild things are</i>	Maurice Sendak	9780099408390
<i>Elmer</i>	David McKee	9781783444250
<i>Who's in the loo?</i>	Jeanne Willis	9781842706985
<i>Whoever you are</i>	Mem Fox	9781842706985
<i>Whoops!</i>	Suzi Moore	9781760066789
<i>Wombat stew</i>	Marcia Vaughan	9781743622575

Storytime book recommendations by theme

The Little Big Book Club has Activity Sheets and/or Learning Sheets for almost all of these titles. You can download them for free at www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources.

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
Around the world		
<i>My cat likes to hide in boxes</i>	Eve Sutton	9780140502428
<i>Imagine</i>	Alison Lester	9781741147124
<i>Handa's hen</i>	Eileen Brown	9780744598155
<i>Whoever you are</i>	Mem Fox	9780152007874
<i>Fang Fang's Chinese New Year</i>	Sally Rippin	9781862912915
<i>Somewhere else</i>	Gus Gordon	9780670078851
<i>I got this hat</i>	Kate & Jol Temple	9780733332302
<i>At the zoo I see</i>	Joshua Button & Robyn Wells	9781925360455

Bed time		
<i>Time for bed</i>	Mem Fox	9781862917149
<i>One ted falls out of bed</i>	Julia Donaldson	9780333947821
<i>Check on me</i>	Andrew Daddo	9780733324192
<i>I love my mum</i>	Anna Walker	9781741697957
<i>Luurnpa the magical kingfisher: a Dreaming narrative</i>	Bai Bai Napangarti	9781876288242
<i>Guess how much I love you</i>	Sam McBratney	9781406300406
<i>Quick as a wink, Fairy Pink</i>	Lesley Gibbes	9781921504860
<i>Goodnight everyone</i>	Chris Haughton	9781406352320
<i>It's bed time, William</i>	Deborah Niland	9780143505402
<i>Time for bed, Isobel</i>	David Bedford	9781921049941
<i>Tuck me in!</i>	Dean Hacothen	9781406328745
<i>Sleepy bears</i>	Mem Fox	978876288280

Childrens Book Council of Australia winners		
<i>Mr Chicken goes to Paris</i>	Leigh Hobbs	9781741757699
<i>The red bridge</i>	Kylie Dunstan	9781921136726
<i>Jamela's dress</i>	Niki Daly	9780374437206
<i>My two blankets</i>	Irena Kobald	9781921714764
<i>Perfect</i>	Danny Parker	9781760125554
<i>With Nan</i>	Tania Cox	9781921136122

Childrens Book Council of Australia shortlist		
<i>The wrong book</i>	Nick Bland	9781741693416
<i>Clancy and Millie and the very fine house</i>	Libby Gleeson	9781921541193
<i>Bear and Chook by the sea</i>	Lisa Shanahan	9780734411112
<i>Fearless</i>	Colin Thompson	9780733320255

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>Ernie dances to the didgeridoo</i>	Alison Lester	9780733621005
<i>Family forest</i>	Kim Kane	9781921564703
<i>Tom Tom</i>	Rosemary Sullivan	9781876288983
<i>Lucy Goosey</i>	Margaret Wild	9781921049873
<i>The tall man and the twelve babies</i>	Tom Niland Champion	9781742371153
<i>Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley</i>	Aaron Blabey	9780670070947
<i>Penguin</i>	Polly Dunbar	9781406312461
<i>Shhh! Little mouse</i>	Pamela Allen	9780670070688
<i>A monster wrote me a letter</i>	Nick Bland	9781865046112
<i>Puffling</i>	Margaret Wild	9781862915992
<i>Molly and Mae</i>	Danny Parker	9781742975276
<i>I'm a dirty dinosaur</i>	Janeen Brian	9780670076154
<i>Scary night</i>	Lesley Gibbes	9781921504631
<i>Noni the Pony goes to the beach</i>	Alison Lester	9781743311141

Christmas

<i>Silent night</i>	Juliet Groom	9780864619334
<i>Maisy's Christmas Eve (with CD)</i>	Lucy Cousins	9781406304756
<i>Santa's Aussie holiday</i>	Maria Farrer	9781741690187
<i>An Aussie Night before Christmas</i>	Yvonne Morrison	9781865046532
<i>Six white boomers</i>	Rolf Harris	9781865046174
<i>Slinky Malinky's Christmas crackers</i>	Lynley Dodd	9780733318870
<i>Spot's first Christmas</i>	Eric Hill	9780723249405
<i>I love Christmas</i>	Anna Walker	9781741693317
<i>The jolly Christmas postman</i>	Allan Ahlberg	9780141340111
<i>Just right</i>	Birdie Black	9780857630308
<i>Wombat Divine</i>	Mem Fox	9781862913028
<i>Christmas wombat</i>	Jackie French	9780732291723
<i>Santa's outback secret</i>	Mike Dumbleton	9780857982254

Families

<i>Baby</i>	Tania Cox	9781876288112
<i>Molly and her dad</i>	Jan Ormerod	9781921272974
<i>My dad thinks he's funny</i>	Katrina Germein	9781742031217
<i>Little brothers are...</i>	Beth Norling	9780143502111
<i>Lucy Goosey</i>	Margaret Wild	9781921049873
<i>I spy Mum!</i>	Janeen Brian	9781921042164
<i>Kisses for Daddy</i>	Frances Watts	9781877003783
<i>Look see, look at me!</i>	Leonie Norrington	9781741758832
<i>Five little ducks</i>	Public Domain	9780060734657
<i>Down the back of the chair</i>	Margaret Mahy	9781845076023
<i>Family forest</i>	Kim Kane	9781921564703
<i>Piglet and Mama</i>	Margaret Wild	9781876288594
<i>Possum magic</i>	Mem Fox	9781862915657
<i>Hello Little Babies</i>	Alison Lester	9780733330414
<i>I spy Dad!</i>	Janeen Brian	9781921042171

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>Clancy the courageous cow</i>	Lachie Hume	9781862915633
<i>My dad</i>	Anthony Browne	9780552546683
<i>All through the year</i>	Jane Godwin	9780670073993
<i>Piglet and Papa</i>	Margaret Wild	9781876288761
<i>can we lick the spoon now?</i>	Carol Goess	9781921504259
<i>Time for bed</i>	Mem Fox	9781862917149
<i>You are my special baby</i>	Carol Chataway	9781921504181
<i>Tom Tom</i>	Rosemary Sullivan	9781876288983
<i>With Nan</i>	Tania Cox	9781921136122
<i>We're going on a bear hunt</i>	Michael Rosen	9780744523232
<i>Whose family?</i>	Jeanette Rowe	9780733318641
<i>Where's the dragon?</i>	Jason Hook	9781402716249
<i>Guess how much I love you</i>	Sam McBratney	9781406300406
<i>Wild Pa</i>	Claire Saxby	9780857988003
<i>Heather has two mummies</i>	Lesleá Newman	9781406359404

Feelings and emotions

<i>Be brave, pink piglet</i>	Phil Cummings	9780734415929
<i>I need a hug</i>	Aaron Blabey	9781743629093
<i>No place like home</i>	Ronojoy Ghosh	9780857988461
<i>Florette</i>	Anna Walker	9780670079414
<i>71 sheep try soccer</i>	Pablo Albo	9780994289599

Friends

<i>Yummy ice-cream</i>	Emma Quay	9781741696486
<i>Frida and Bear</i>	Anthony Browne	9781406365575
<i>Echidna Jim went for a swim</i>	Phil Cummings	9781760152994
<i>Duck</i>	Janet A. Holmes	9781921272875
<i>Wanted: The perfect pet</i>	Fiona Robertson	9780670073566
<i>Clancy and Millie and the very fine house</i>	Libby Gleeson	9781921541193
<i>Little Blue</i>	Gaye Chapman	9781921541209
<i>Bear and Chook by the sea</i>	Lisa Shanahan	9780734411112
<i>Squish rabbit</i>	Katherine Battersby	9780702239250
<i>The great expedition</i>	Peter Carnavas	9781921042812
<i>Me and You</i>	Geneviève Côté	9780143504047
<i>Ernie dances to the didgeridoo</i>	Alison Lester	9780733621005
<i>Penguin</i>	Polly Dunbar	9781406312461
<i>Let's play house</i>	Emma Quay	9781741696509
<i>Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley</i>	Aaron Blabey	9780670070947
<i>A song for Lorkie</i>	Jennifer Castles	9781742377186
<i>Eight</i>	Lyn Less	9781862915190
<i>Bobby Dazzler</i>	Margaret Wild	9781876288686
<i>Louie the pirate chef</i>	Simon Mitchell	9781921504235

Letter writing

<i>Dear zoo</i>	Rod Campbell	9780330512787
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TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>Ernie dances to the didgeridoo</i>	Alison Lester	9780733621055
<i>A monster wrote me a letter</i>	Nick Bland	9781865046112
<i>The twelve days of Christmas: 1 man, 12 days, 78 gifts</i>	Heath McKenzie	9781742030104
<i>The jolly Christmas postman</i>	Allan Ahlberg	9780141340111

Make-believe

<i>The Gruffalo</i>	Julia Donaldson	9780333710937
<i>Hooray! There's a hippopotamus on our roof having a party</i>	Hazel Edwards	9780670072637
<i>Hunting for dragons</i>	Bruce Whatley	9781741693294
<i>Where's the dragon</i>	Jason Hook	9781402716249
<i>Parrot carrot</i>	Jol and Kate Temple	9781742376868
<i>The Gruffalo's child</i>	Julia Donaldson	9781405020466
<i>The wrong book</i>	Nick Bland	9781741693416
<i>The flying orchestra</i>	Clare McFadden	9780702237041
<i>Max meets the monster</i>	Tracey Hawkins	9781921042362
<i>Let's play</i>	Hervé Tullet	9781760292980
<i>Sir Lilypad</i>	Anna Kemp	9780857075154

Music

<i>Donald loves drumming</i>	Nick Bland	9781741690996
<i>The flying orchestra</i>	Clare McFadden	9780702237041
<i>The wheels on the bus</i>	Penny Dann	9781843622246
<i>Too Loud Lily</i>	Sofie Laguna	9781862918931
<i>I love to dance</i>	Anna Walker	9780741690798
<i>The wonky donkey</i>	Craig Smith	9781869439262
<i>The lion sleeps tonight</i>	Solomon Linda	9781741698077
<i>Bom! went the bear</i>	Nicki Greenberg	9781742376714
<i>The animal undie ball</i>	Ruth Paul	9781869436322
<i>Boom bah!</i>	Phil Cummings	9781876288907
<i>Ballroom bonanza</i>	Nina Rycroft	9781876288907
<i>Let's play</i>	Gabriel Alborozo	9781743316283
<i>Bush concert</i>	Helga Visser	9781862919150

Numbers

<i>Spot can count</i>	Eric Hill	9780140567014
<i>The very hungry caterpillar</i>	Eric Carle	9780140569322
<i>One is a snail, ten is a crab</i>	April Pulley Sayre & Jeff Sayre	9780763626310
<i>My first 123</i>	Pamela Allen	9780143502036
<i>The Nickle Nackle tree</i>	Lynley Dodd	9780733320644
<i>Bush bash</i>	Sally Morgan	9781921714771
<i>One duck stuck</i>	Phyllis Root	9780763615666
<i>Ten little fingers and ten little toes</i>	Mem Fox	9780670072392
<i>Let's count goats!</i>	Mem Fox	9780670075058
<i>Play School numbers</i>	ABC Books	9780733323188

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN
<i>the Waterhole</i>	Graeme Base	9780143502197
<i>Five little ducks</i>	public domain	9780060734657
<i>Rocket countdown</i>	Nick Sharatt	9781406322248
<i>Ten in the bed</i>	Penny Dale	9781406309614
<i>One woolly wombat</i>	Kerry Argent	9781862917088
<i>Grug 123</i>	Ted Prior	9780731815043
<i>Duckie's ducklings</i>	Frances Barry	9781406347159

Nursery rhymes

<i>Row, row, row your boat: What can you see?</i>	Angie Lionetto-Civa	9781921042539
<i>There's a goat in my coat</i>	Rosemary Milne	9781741758917
<i>Dear Mother Goose</i>	Michael Rosen	9781406318326
<i>The ABC book of lullabies</i>	ABC Books	9780733323621
<i>If you love a nursery rhyme</i>	Susanna Lockheart	9781741757323
<i>Five little ducks</i>	public domain	9780060734657
<i>The jolly Christmas postman</i>	Allan Ahlberg	9780141340111
<i>DK book of nursery rhymes</i>	Debi Gliori	9780789466785
<i>Twinkle, twinkle, little star</i>	Mandy Foot	9780734416872

Rhyming stories

<i>Let's go visiting</i>	Sue Williams	9781876288044
<i>Sleepy bears</i>	Mem Fox	9781876288280
<i>Eyes nose fingers and toes</i>	Judy Hindley	9780744577525
<i>Where is the green sheep?</i>	Mem Fox	9780143501763
<i>Blossom Possum</i>	Gina Newton	9781865047959
<i>The Gruffalo</i>	Julia Donaldson	9780333710937
<i>The wonky donkey</i>	Craig Smith	9781869439262
<i>My cat likes to hide in boxes</i>	Eve Sutton	9780140502428
<i>Hullabazoo!</i>	Lisa Hollier	9780670074822
<i>Parrot carrot</i>	Jol and Kate Temple	9781742376868
<i>Hop on Pop</i>	Dr Seuss	9780007158492
<i>Bom! went the bear</i>	Nicki Greenberg	9781742376714
<i>Santa's Aussie holiday</i>	Maria Farrer	9781741690187
<i>Not me!</i>	Nicola Killen	9781405248303
<i>Ten little fingers and ten little toes</i>	Mem Fox	9780670072392
<i>Each peach pear plum</i>	Allan Ahlberg	9780140509199
<i>The Gruffalo's child</i>	Julia Donaldson	9781405020466
<i>Boom bah!</i>	Phil Cummings	9781876288907
<i>We're going on a bear hunt</i>	Michael Rosen	9780744523232
<i>Green eggs and ham</i>	Dr Seuss	9780007158461
<i>Ten in the bed</i>	Penny Dale	9781406309614
<i>Silly galah</i>	Janeen Brian	9781862914421
<i>Oi dog!</i>	Kes & Claire Gray	9781444919592
<i>Hooray for birds!</i>	Lucy Cousins	9780763692650

Storytime session plan

This resource steps you through the main elements of planning a quality early years session.

You will also find some good ideas in [Sessions for different ages and stages](#) and [STEAM inspiration for sessions and programs](#). And be sure to visit Raising Literacy Australia at www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources: Activity Time and Learning Time session plans are free for public libraries to access and download.

BOOK(S)

Choose the right books! A book may be a favourite or fantastic in a one-on-one setting, but will it translate well to a group? Consider the following for each book you introduce:

- Is the book age-appropriate?
- Have you read it aloud? Can you read it well/easily?
- Are the illustrations suitable?
- Is it interactive? Should it be interactive?
- Is it the right length?
- Is the theme appropriate?

KEY MESSAGE

What message are you focusing on today? (It might be the importance of song and rhyme, for example.)

- How will you share this information with families?
- How will you incorporate it into your session so it is meaningful and well received?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

What do you want to achieve today? What is the purpose? Are you drawing on learning outcomes from the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF; www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx)?

Or is it developmental learning – sounds, counting, cognitive, motor skills? Consider the following:

- What do you want the learning outcome to be?
- Can the VEYLDF support your session?
- How will you and the participants achieve the learning outcome?

WELCOME

First impressions are important. How will you draw the crowd in? What do the children like? What is comfortable for you? Consider the following:

- Do you want to establish a routine?
- Do you want to introduce a Welcome song to bring the group together?
- Do you need song sheets?
- Will you use props? A Storytime Box? Tools, like a parachute or blanket, or a rug?
- How will you establish expectations?

BOOK INTRODUCTION

- Do you want to use props?
How will you use them?
- Print concepts – how will you introduce the title, author and illustrator?
- How will you hold the book?
- Do you need to clarify any tricky words, or new experiences, before the story?

DURING READING

Taking time to plan doesn't mean it will all run smoothly! Flexibility is important, but a solid plan gives you a foundation and helps to make the session run with purpose and be more engaging – and it gives you confidence. Consider the following:

- What will you focus on during the reading?
- Will you look out for positive behaviours? (Write them down so you don't forget.)
- What questions will you ask, if any?



- What kind of interaction do you want/does the book support? (Remember that some books are best read all the way through and others need explanations or interaction.)
- What ages are the children in your group? What are their specific needs?
- Is the book the right length for the children in your group? (If it's too long and there are too many questions you'll lose the story; if it's too short and doesn't have enough questions it won't engage the children.)

AFTER READING

Take time to reflect and extend the experience. Consider the following:

- Do you have questions to ask the children? Is this an opportunity for the children to ask questions?
- Is there need for a break to get little bodies moving and stretching?
- Will you read the same book again? Another with a similar theme/idea?
- What ideas/play/activities could the families try at home?
- Can you share a story related to the story you've read?

SONGS AND RHYMES

Including songs and rhymes is such an important way to build literacy and support children's development. Consider the following:

- Are there songs related to the theme of your session?
- Will you sing the same songs every week?
- Will you sing the same song once, twice or three times?
- Do the children have favourite songs you could include?
- What active songs are suitable?
- Is language in the song you've chosen appropriate?
- Will you use instruments?
- Will you use flash cards? Props?
- Do you need song sheets for parents?

ACTIVITY TIME

Including craft or other activities helps to foster a love of books and gives families an opportunity to talk about the story they have heard. Activity Time can be a wonderful extension of the book, and helps children to develop a range of skills.

Cognitive skills

- attention – focussing on a task
- memory – recalling information
- logic and reasoning – finding solutions, exploring trial and error
- auditory processing – understanding sounds, letters, words
- visual processing – perceiving, analysing and thinking about visual images

Motor skills

- cutting, gluing, colouring, moulding, threading
- dancing, coordination, movement

Children need a variety of experiences in order to form all the connections necessary for building strong foundations for development. Consider the following when planning activities:

- What resources will I use? Paint, play doh, paper and glue?
- What play activity will I include?
- What should the atmosphere be like? Will you include music?
- What environment will work best? Inside or outside?
- Is the craft activity suitable for the children in the group?

Talk to parents about what are they doing at home. Are there any gaps?

The Little Big Book Club provides free resources, download at

www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources

- Activity Time – free resources for parents
- Learning Time – free session plans for libraries



Featured Stories Program

books
for
preschoolers



Featured Stories Program



Featured Stories Program



Learning Time – session plans

books
for
preschoolers

Whether it's at work or at home, mums are always busy.

Mum Goes to Work describes a working day from two different perspectives, that of the child and that of the mother. It is a very original in its storytelling, depicting women of many cultures working in a wide variety of roles, including gardening, waitressing, and studying. Leila Rudge's illustrations inject life and humour into the text. An entertaining pictorial subplot is created as the mums interact through the day, which adds depth and humour to the story.

Key Message for Parents - Children learn through being engaged and doing

The most powerful way young children learn is through play. Share tips with parents on how they can support their child through playful experiences. Some suggestions include:

- Take time to play together. Your child will love spending time with you and it is an effective way to learn together. Through dramatic play children develop language skills and social skills. Start a "Dress-up Box" by collecting old hats, dresses, scarves and jackets. Encourage dramatic play by dressing up yourself and being someone different - put on some music and dance together
- Through imaginative play children explore aspects of their own identity, gain social skills and build their confidence. Simple props like cardboard boxes can be used for rockets, cars or houses. Children do not require expensive toys; your time is the best investment.

Learning Outcomes - Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

(Children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions, and feelings" (Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Framework, 2009). We can support a child to become a confident communicator in the following ways:

- Being sensitive to the needs of children whose first language is not English
- Making sure that after story time, we allow time for group sharing and discussion
- Prompt children's thinking by asking open-ended questions and predictive questions
- In today's story you could ask: What did you enjoy about the story? What were your favourite parts and why?
- Through discussion and conversation we are encouraging children to articulate their ideas and develop critical thinking and language skills. Modelling good listening and language skills is important too
- Encourage communication with peers through group activities like songs, dances and craft
- Reading a wide range of texts together on a regular basis, including digital and print based.

Find booklists, tip sheets, nursery rhymes and activity and learning time sheets @ thelittlebigbookclub.com.au

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Supporting positive behaviour: Preparation checklist

Children are all different and will bring with them a wide range of experiences, understanding and ability when it comes to managing their behaviour, emotions and expectations. The best way to manage behaviour in your Storytime session is to be prepared.

See [Supporting positive behaviour](#) and then think through and prepare each part of Storytime:

☐ Books

☐ Songs to sing and song sheets

☐ Props

☐ Activity and active play

☐ Space set up

☐ Routine

- ☐ Welcome – use this opportunity to inform families and children about what the session will be about
 - ☐ Make sure families and children are aware of your expectations
 - ☐ If there are particular concerns about inappropriate behaviours (throwing objects, ripping books) you can address them as a group.
 - ☐ Share your Storytime guidelines (keeping in mind that children will all have different abilities and attention spans).
-

☐ Key message – What are you focusing on today?

☐ Key phrases to remember – for example, 'I loved the way you joined in with the actions while we were singing songs today'

☐ Ask families for input after the session



Sharing information with families

Plan your session, incorporate routine and be consistent in your messages.

Include information in your welcome speech:

- Welcome to Storytime! Today we are going to explore...
- Welcome to Baby Bounce. Did you know that babies learn to speak by watching your mouth move? Get comfortable and, if you can, spend the session facing your baby so they can see your face and your beautiful smile as we sing together.

Don't overwhelm families with information. Keep it simple and choose one key message to share. For example, you may be focusing on concepts of print, and before you read you can explain 'Children need lots of experiences with books before they will fully understand how books work. When you read at home, let your child turn the pages, or help your baby by saying "Let's turn the page" as you read.'

Build in sharing time to your routine. Learn about where babies are at developmentally and you will be able to gently share information that is relevant to your families. (See Tip sheet: Milestones in child development for more on this.)

PHRASES TO USE

- Did you know?
- Research now tells us that...
- I would love to share something I have learned about...

SIMPLE MESSAGES TO SHARE

- **It's never too early to read to your baby.** Sharing books with a baby is a great way to bond and help them to develop strong language skills.
- **Singing songs helps children learn new sounds and words.** When we sing we slow down our speech and children can hear the sounds or parts of the words more clearly.
- **Babies and children need to hear fluent language to learn to speak.** We know now that children can transfer language skills from their home language when they're learning a new language. Celebrate your language!
- **This song has some simple actions.** Join along with me. When we sing words with actions your baby/child will be making stronger sense of the words we are saying.
- **It is always okay to stop reading a book** and to come back later.
- **At home, take time to explore the pictures with your child.** Ask questions such as, 'What do you think is going to happen next?' Or, 'What was your favourite part of the story?'
- **By sharing stories children learn how books work,** which will help them later on when it is time to learn to read.
- **Books help children to learn about the world around them.** There aren't many wild animals roaming our suburbs, but you can easily meet them in a book!
- **Have books in different places,** so that babies, toddlers and preschoolers can easily access them. Keep some in the car, in different parts of the house, in the toy box.
- **It is important to role-model good reading behaviours.** Let your child see you reading lots of different things. Explain what you are reading and why – for example, 'I am reading this recipe so I know how much flour to put in the cake'.



Milestones in child development

Every child develops at their own pace, but parents often ask for advice on how their child is tracking and how they can best support them. This is a guide for staff on how to talk with parents and carers about developmental milestones for babies and young children, and how to incorporate Read, Sing, Talk and Play into everyday routines.



BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS

Newborns are constantly learning, and every day they're becoming more aware of themselves, their family and their environment.

- Read, sing, talk and play with your baby right from the start. Including these activities as part of your daily routine will help your baby to take in new experiences by listening to your voice and interacting with you.
- Share books throughout the day, and chat while changing nappies, feeding, or dressing your baby.
- Sing songs during car trips or during bath time, and play games like peek-a-boo when your baby is happy and relaxed.



SIX TO 12 MONTHS

From six months of age babies will be holding their head steady, will be sitting with little or no support and will be able to confidently grasp objects. Spend lots of time playing together, and keep a range of things for your baby to hold, such as rattles, cloth or board books and teething rings. (Babies explore and learn by putting objects into their mouths, so choose things that are safe and cannot be swallowed.)

- Share books as part of your daily routine. Board and cloth books are great for babies, as they are safe to chewed or suck on. Babies respond well to books with black-and-white illustrations and books with images or photographs of other babies.
- Sing lullabies or nursery rhymes with simple actions. It won't be long before your baby will begin to copy you.
- Talk with your baby. They love to hear your voice! Spend time facing them so they can watch and copy your facial movements. Your baby will be communicating with smiles, babbling, cooing and lots of eye contact. Listen out for sounds such as *ma*, *ba*, *da* – it won't be long before they are saying words!
- Play regularly, smile and make eye contact with your baby. Babies enjoy games such as round and round the garden, this little piggy and pat-a-cake. Give lots of cuddles and if you can, get down to your baby's level for play time or tummy time. Follow their cues for 'more play' and 'time to stop'. Each day will differ depending on their mood, motivation and routine. It's okay to stop an activity and come back to it later.

12 TO 24 MONTHS

Older babies will be developing their motor skills and will spend time exploring cause and effect by dropping or throwing objects such as books, food and toys. With repeated experiences babies and toddlers will begin to learn and understand appropriate behaviour and concepts such as sharing. Your child will be ready to start walking anywhere between 11 and 18 months of age.

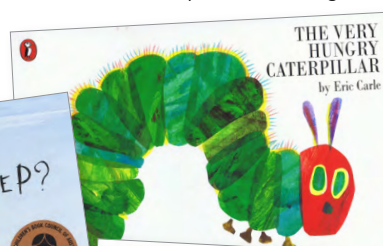
- While sharing stories let your child turn the pages and babble or talk about the pictures in the book. Board books are sturdy, so children can hold and turn the pages easily, without ripping or tearing them. Ask your child simple questions such as 'What can you see?' This is a perfect way to learn about what your child finds interesting, and it also helps build their vocabulary and learning.
- Stories with repetition are perfect for building an understanding of narrative and comprehension – they help children become familiar with how to tell a story and understand what is happening. *Where is the green sheep?* by Mem Fox allows children to match the pictures to the words they are hearing – for example, 'Here is the red sheep', while pointing to the red sheep. The repeated question 'But where is the green sheep?' throughout the book helps children to learn about what's happening in the story and encourages them to interact and participate.
- Sing favourite songs over and over – repetition is important! The more words and sounds that young children hear, the stronger their vocabulary will be later. The more words that a child knows, understands and uses, the better learning outcomes will be.
- Take time to respond to your baby. Older babies will be using single words, and then two- to four-word phrases. Spend lots of time talking with your child and use lots of words to describe what is happening, what you are doing, seeing, hearing etc.
- Books can be play objects too! Keep books where older babies and toddlers can easily access them, such as in a toy box or on a low bookshelf. Babies and toddlers will likely move from activity to activity, so it can be useful to have a range of things (like books, blocks, cuddly toys, finger paint) for them to explore. This helps to engage them and support their curiosity as their attention span is developing.



TWO TO THREE YEARS

At this age your child will have developed a range of skills. The more experience they have the more confident they will be, whether it is turning paper pages of a book, climbing up a slippery dip, connecting Duplo blocks or holding a crayon to scribble and draw on blank paper.

- Share your child's favourite books often. This will keep them engaged and help to develop a love of reading. Repetition will help to build up their understanding of how books work – for example, that the pictures match the words you read. You may find that your child will be able to enjoy longer picture books.
- Sing songs with actions and get little bodies moving! Actions help children to understand what they are singing about. Good songs to sing include 'If you're happy and you know it', 'Row, row, row your boat', 'The grand old Duke of York' and 'Open shut them'.
- Between the ages of two and three your child will have a burst of language learning, and will know and use a lot more words. Help to develop their language skills by including lots of describing words when you chat with your child. For example, when helping them with a drink of water say, 'Here is your favourite cup. It's blue and has a bright-yellow fish swimming on it'; before reading a story you might say, 'What book have you chosen to read? *The very hungry caterpillar!* Can you guess what foods he might eat?'
- Active play has an important role in your child's brain and overall development. Active play is any time your child is really moving! Think: running, jumping, dancing, rolling or twirling. You can get outside in your garden or visit a playground. Books can offer ideas for being creative and doing some imaginative play – for example, read *We're going on a bear hunt*, and then set up an obstacle course for your child to go on a bear hunt. You



can crawl under the table, weave between washing on the line, wade through a sea of cushions...

Use the describing words from the story as inspiration.

FOUR TO FIVE YEARS

By the time children are four or five they may enjoy longer stories, and they may even make up their own story and 'read' to you. If your child is showing interest in writing, try playing games with words, such as drawing letters in the sand, rolling out the first letter of their name with playdough, or pointing out special letters (like the letters of their name) in books or on street signs when you are out and about.

- Read favourite books. You may like to introduce longer stories such as fairy tales or short chapter books that you can enjoy over a number of days. Counting and alphabet books help children match the pictures to the text. They are an effective way to introduce numeracy concepts and to become familiar with letters and sounds.
- Sing songs your child knows and enjoys. For a challenge, why not change the words to your favourite songs? You can include your child's name or change the sounds or animals. (For example, 'If you're happy and you know it... paint like Ava; or, 'If you're sad and you know it... give a frown'; or, 'Old Macdonald had a farm, and on that farm he had an... ELEPHANT!') You can even sing in other languages! Be as creative as you like.
- Talk as much as you can with your child. Have conversations and discussions about topics that interest them. Talking is a perfect way to build vocabulary and for children to learn about language and the world around them.

Play encourages imagination and creativity.

Follow your child's interests and take time to play together. Role play and dress-up games allow children to use their imagination and draw upon past experiences. Through role play your child will learn about different roles, explore new ideas and have opportunities for problem solving. A large cardboard box is an ideal play object, as it can be almost anything – a cave, rocket ship, a shop or a house. The possibilities are endless!

Conversation starters

Talking with and sharing information with families can be confronting! This is why it is important to establish rapport with your families so that you (and they) are comfortable. The local library may be the only time a family connects with others within their community and by creating a warm and welcoming environment, families will be invited to share their own experiences and will be open to new information.

Here are some suggestions for conversation starters.

TALKING TO FAMILIES ATTENDING YOUR SESSION

- Welcome! My name is [Name]. Let me help you get settled.
- What is your child interested in? (*dinosaurs, trucks, climbing, fairies?*)
- Can I help you find some books to borrow?
- Does your child have a favourite book? (*Remind families that it may be frustrating reading the same book over and over, but repetition is so important to children's healthy brain development that it's best just to keep reading it!*)
- Perhaps I can help you find more Dr Seuss/Mem Fox/rhyming stories.



TALKING TO FAMILIES WHO DO NOT ATTEND REGULARLY

- Hello! It's so wonderful to see you back again.
- Welcome back! Do you and Claire have a new favourite song/book?
- It's great to see you when you can make it. Would you like some activity ideas to take home to use between visits to the library? (*You can download free Activity Time sheets www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources*)

SHARING INFORMATION

Share research and information and news of community event in a simple and friendly way.

- Did you know that research now tells us that children who can rhyme usually learn to read and write more easily? When we sing songs we slow down our speech and children can hear the parts of words more clearly.
- I would love to share some information with you...
- I have just been reading/learning about...
- This weekend there is a community fun day/event... Here are some more details.



REASSURING FAMILIES

- Claire has a lot of energy! (Celebrate and acknowledge vibrant behaviour so that families know that they are welcome and that play/excitement are an important part of the session.)
- I have noticed that John...
 - seems to enjoy singing 'Row, row, your boat'. Are there any favourite songs you sing at home that we could include at Storytime?
 - is sharing toys/blocks/craft materials really well.
 - is joining in throughout the session. He is becoming more engaged each week!

TALKING WITH CHILDREN

Get into a habit of speaking directly to children, and use positive reinforcement.

- Well done John, it was great to see you singing with us today!
- Claire, I am so happy you shared the story about your neighbour's cat with us all!

Talking with the children in your session is a great way to then engage in conversations with parents and carers.

Sing a song

Children learn best through play. Play makes learning meaningful and children can explore, experiment and progress at their own pace. Singing songs is great because you can do it anywhere – in the car, at the shops, during bath time and as part of a bedtime routine.

Song and dance helps to:

- **support language development** – when we sing, rhyme or chant we tend to slow down our speech, and this allows children hear the parts of the words more clearly
- **build coordination** and support children to learn about their own bodies – sing songs such 'Hokey pokey', 'Open shut them' and 'Heads and shoulders'
- **teach children about numbers and counting** – many songs count up to and down from five (or beyond); try songs like 'Five little speckled frogs', 'Zoom, zoom, zoom, we're going to the moon' and 'Five in the bed'. (Use your hands to do actions with counting songs. It's a simple way to develop children's ability to count and explore numbers, and will help with their learning later at school.)

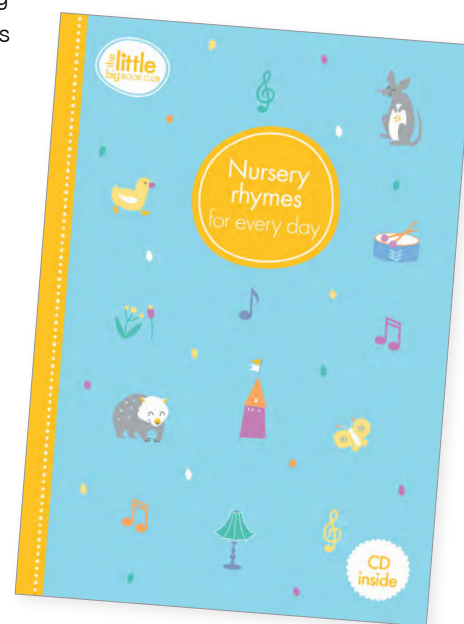
During early years sessions at your library you can:

- share tips and suggestions with parents and encourage them to include singing in their daily routine
- encourage families to sing songs in their home language
- provide song sheets to help parents and carers remember the words
- include songs in your sessions as much as possible; choose songs with actions to show families how they can sing at home
- invite families to share their favourite songs and include them in your sessions; this is a great opportunity to learn new songs, including those from other countries and cultures
- show how songs can be adapted to suit families, by personalising songs to include their child's name, or changing the animals or sounds in the song.

An effective way to learn names of the children (and adults) in your group is to change the words to songs! Ask children and parents and carers what they like to do when they are feeling happy, then include it in the song. It is lots of fun and will help to get adults engaging and participating:

- If you're happy and you know it, paint like Viraj
- If you're happy and you know it, twirl like Claire
- If you're happy and you know it, jump like Mika

Raising Literacy Australia has produced the 'Nursery Rhymes for Everyday' booklet and CD, complete with song words and a music CD with 14 well-known nursery rhymes. The CD contains instrumental tracks, perfect for singing in other languages or for changing the words to favourite songs.



Welcome songs and chants

Storytime welcome chant

STORYTELLER

1 2 3 eyes on me

AUDIENCE

1 2 eyes on you

STORYTELLER

If you are here and you
are listening to me

Clap your hands and count to three

(all together clap hands and count to three)



Wiggles

I wiggle my fingers

(hands in air and wiggle fingers)

I wiggle my toes

(look down and wiggle toes)

I wiggle my shoulders

(move shoulders)

I wiggle my nose

(wiggle nose)

Now, no more wiggles

(pointer finger wiggles)

Are left in me

(thumbs point to self)

So I will be still

(big clap)

As still can be

(whisper this last line and fold hands in lap)

Get ready for reading

These are my reading glasses

(make glasses on eyes with circled fingers)

This is my reading cap

(put your hands like a tent on top of your head)

This is how I fold my hands

(bring your hands down and fold them)

And put them in my lap

(place them in your lap)

The listening song

(to the tune of 'Frère Jacques')

Eyes are watching

Ears are listening

Lips are closed

Hands are still

Feet are very quiet

You should really try it

Good listening, good listening

If you're happy and you know it

Through song we can help children understand feelings and emotions and support them as they are learning to recognise and manage their own. Explore feelings by changing the words (if you're happy and you know it, give a smile; if you're sad and you know it, say boo hoo; if you're sleepy and you know it, take a nap).

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands

(clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands

(clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it

Then you really ought to show it

If you're happy and you know, it clap your hands

(clap clap)

If you're happy and you know, it nod your head

(nod, nod)

If you're happy and you know it, nod your head

(nod, nod)

If you're happy and you know it

Then you really ought to show it

If you're happy and you know it, nod your head

(nod, nod)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet

(stomp, stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet

(stomp, stomp)

If you're happy and you know it

Then you really ought to show it

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet

(stomp, stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, shout Hooray!

(Hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, shout Hooray!

(Hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it

Then you really ought to show it

If you're happy and you know it shout Hooray!

(Hoo-ray!)

Five little speckled frogs

Counting songs help children learn about numbers. Use your fingers or toes to count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Look for numbers when you are out and about: at the park you might see two ducks, in the garden you might see three flowers, and in the car you might drive by four red cars!

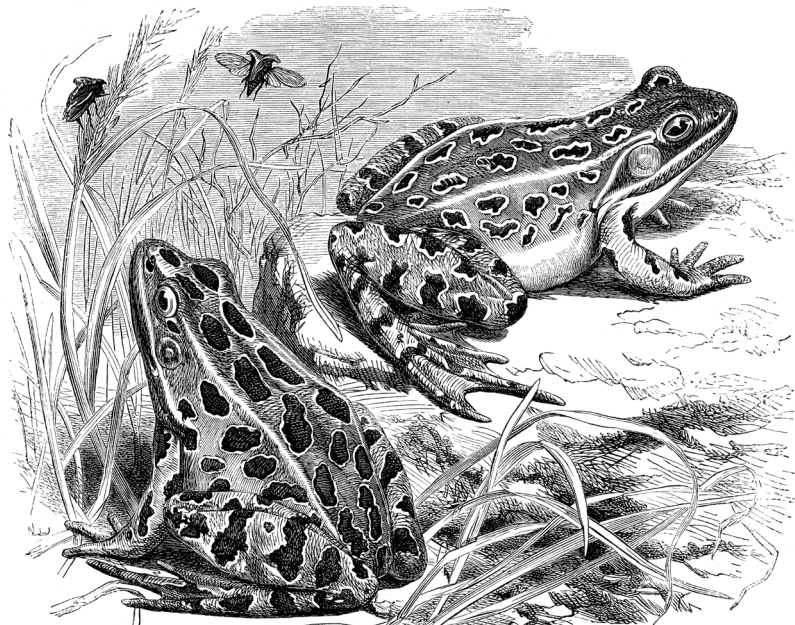
Five little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log
Eating some most delicious grubs – yum, yum
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool
Now there are four green speckled frogs – glub, glub

Four little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log
Eating some most delicious grubs – yum, yum
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool
Now there are three green speckled frogs – glub, glub

Three little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log
Eating some most delicious grubs, – yum, yum
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool
Now there are two green speckled frogs, – glub, glub

Two little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log
Eating some most delicious grubs – yum, yum
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool
Now there is one green speckled frog, – glub, glub

One little speckled frogs, sat on a speckled log
Eating some most delicious grubs, – yum, yum
One jumped into the pool, where it was nice and cool
Now there are no green speckled frogs – glub, glub!



Old MacDonald had a farm

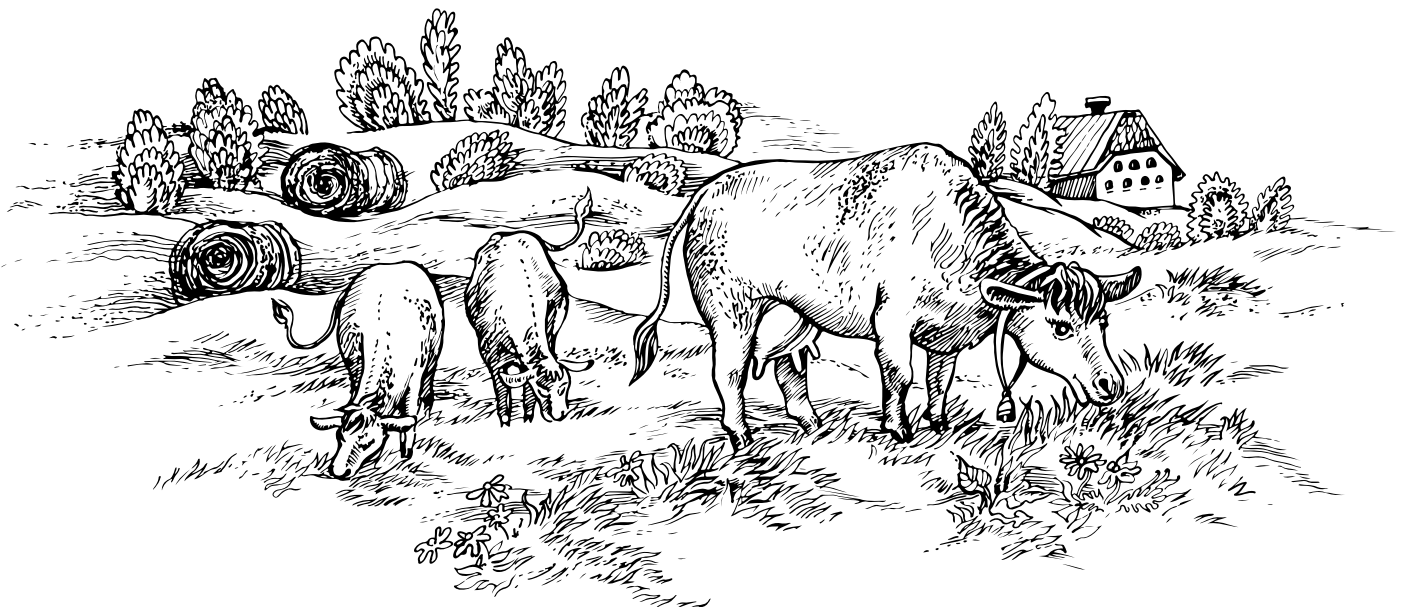
We can explore animal noises and movement through song. Your child might not see cows, pigs or ducks every day but through songs and stories they can build up their knowledge and understanding of the sounds they make, where they live and how they move.

Old MacDonald had a farm, e- i- e- i- o
 And on that farm he had some cows, e- i- e- i- o
 With a moo-moo here, and a moo-moo there
 Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo-moo
 Old MacDonald had a farm e- i- e- i- o

And on that farm he had some ducks, e- i- e- i- o
 With a quack-quack here, and a quack-quack there
 Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack quack
 Old MacDonald had a farm, e- i- e- i- o

And on that farm he had some sheep, e- i- e- i- o
 With a baa-baa here, and a baa-baa there
 Here a baa, there a baa, everywhere a baa-baa
 Old MacDonald had a farm, e- i- e- i- o

And on that farm he had some pigs, e- i- e- i- o
 With an oink-oink here, and an oink-oink there
 Here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink-oink
 Old MacDonald had a farm, e- i- e- i- o



The grand old Duke of York

Singing songs to babies is a perfect way for them to hear words in a meaningful way.

This song can be interactive. Hold your baby on your lap to begin, then raise them up high and down low at different times in the song. Babies love this!

Oh, the grand Old Duke of York

He had ten thousand men

(hold baby on your lap)

He marched them up to the top of the hill

(raise baby up)

And he marched them down again

(lower baby back down to your lap)

When they were up – they were up

(hold baby up)

When they were down – they were down

(lower baby back to your lap)

When they were only halfway up

They were neither up nor down

(hold baby up, then back to your lap)

Repeat one or two times



Open shut them

Babies and toddlers learn to talk by listening to words, and by watching your face move while you talk with them. When you sing or chant you slow down your speech and your baby can hear the sounds in the words more clearly. Sing songs while facing your baby, make eye contact and smile – it won't be long before they try to copy you and join in. This is the start of them learning to talk.

Open shut them, open shut them

(open hands wide, and close into a fist)

Give a little clap!

(clap hands once or twice)

Open shut them, open shut them

(open hands wide, and close into a fist)

Lay them in your lap

(place hands in your lap or touch baby's lap)

Creep them, creep them

Creep them, creep them

Right up to your chin!

(walk fingers up to your chin or baby's chin)

Open wide your little mouth

(open up your mouth – baby will try to copy)

But do not let them in!

(tickle baby's tummy)

Shake them, shake them

Shake them, shake them

Shake them just like this

(shake your hands in front of your body)

Roll them, roll them,

Roll them, roll them

(roll hands over each other)

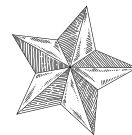
Blow a little kiss!

(blow a kiss to your baby)



Twinkle, twinkle little star

Many nursery rhymes have simple actions that go along with them. By using actions as you sing or chant you are helping your child make connections between the words and the actions. Children learn by doing it themselves and actions help them to remember the words.



Twinkle, twinkle, little star

(hold hands up facing baby, gently wiggling your fingers)

How I wonder what you are

Up above the world so high

(raise hands up above your head)

Like a diamond in the sky

(make a diamond shape with your fingers)

Twinkle, twinkle little star

How I wonder what you are

(hold hands up facing baby, gently wiggling your fingers)

When the blazing sun is gone
When he nothing shines upon
When you show your little light
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are



And now in Spanish...

– with thanks to Salisbury Library Service, Aurimar and Santiago

Estrellita dónde estás

(estrell-EE-ta DON-day es-TAS)

Me pregunto quién serás

(meh pre-GUN-to kien seras)

En el cielo sobre el mar

(en el thee-AY-lo sobray el mar)

Un diamante de verdad

(un dia-MAN-tay day BEHR-dad)

Estrellita dónde estás

(estrell-EE-ta DON-day es-TAS)

Me pregunto quién serás

(meh Pre-GUN-to kien seras)



Galumph, went the little green frog

Babies and children love to see happy faces, and singing songs is a great way to play. Take time to look at your child while you are singing; this helps them to copy expression and gets them engaged in the activity.

Ga – lumph, went the little green frog one day
 Ga – lumph, went the little green frog
 Ga – lumph went the little green frog one day
 And the frog went galumph, galumph, galumph



But we all know frogs go
(clap, and wave hands from side to side)

La de dah de dah
(clap, and wave hands from side to side)

La de dah de dah
(clap, and wave hands from side to side)

La de dah de dah
 We all know frogs go
(clap, and wave hands from side to side)

La de dah de dah
 They don't go
 Galumph, galumph, galumph!

ACTION TIP

Start this song by holding up closed hands so your child can see them. Every time you sing 'Ga-lumph' open your hands, stretch out your fingers, and close them again.

Teddy bear, teddy bear

Toddlers have lots of energy, so sing songs that get their bodies moving!

Songs with actions are a great way for your child to make connections between the words they are singing and what those words mean. And repetitive songs and rhymes are great for building confidence – the more times you sing songs, the better your child will remember them and join in.

Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch the ground
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch your nose
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch your toes
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch your belly
 Teddy bear, teddy bear shake like jelly
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch your ear
 Teddy bear, teddy bear give a cheer (YEAH!!!)
 Teddy bear, teddy bear touch your knees
 Teddy bear, teddy bear sit down please



Row, row, row your boat

Songs with actions help little bodies to move and groove!

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

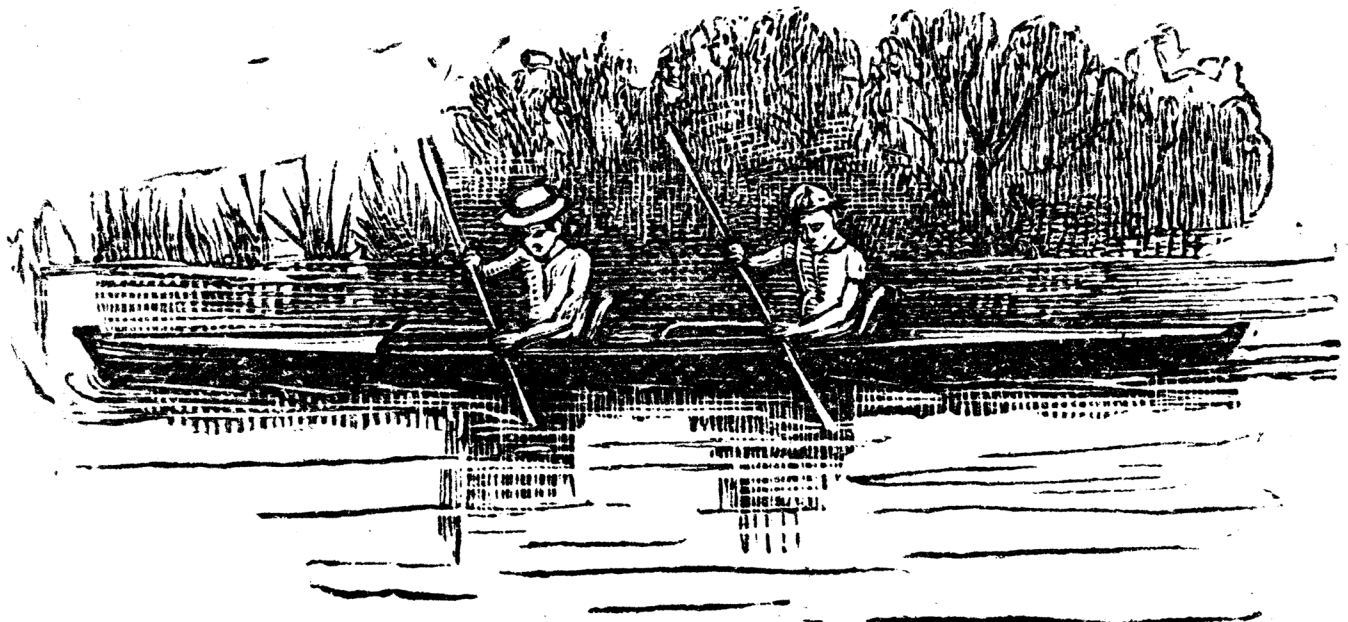
Row, row, row your boat
Underneath the sea
Ha, ha, fooled you
I'm a submarine

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
If you see a crocodile
Don't forget to scream – AAAGGH!

Rock, rock, rock your boat
Gently to and fro
Wibbledy, wobbledy, wibbledy, wobbledy
Into the water you go – SPLASH!

ACTION TIP

Sit with your child in your lap or on the ground. Face your child and take their hands, and gently rock back and forth as you pretend to row down the stream in your boat.



Incy Wincy Spider

Singing songs helps children to learn more words. When you sing, you give your child a chance to hear the words and an opportunity to practise saying tricky ones aloud.

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout

(make a diamond by touching your pointer fingers to your thumbs, and then swivel or walk your fingers up)

Down came the rain and washed the spider out

(wiggle your fingers like falling rain)

Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain

(move your hands in a large circle, with fingers outstretched)

So Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again!

(make a diamond by touching your pointer fingers to your thumbs, swivel or walk your fingers up)

Incy Wincy spider was climbing up the tree

(make a diamond by touching your pointer fingers to your thumbs, swivel or walk your fingers up)

Down came the snow and made the spider freeze

(wrap your arms around yourself, or hug your child)

Out came the sun and melted all the snow

(move your hands in a large circle, with fingers outstretched)

So Incy Wincy spider had another go

(make a diamond by touching your pointer fingers to your thumbs, and then swivel or walk your fingers up)

Repeat verse one

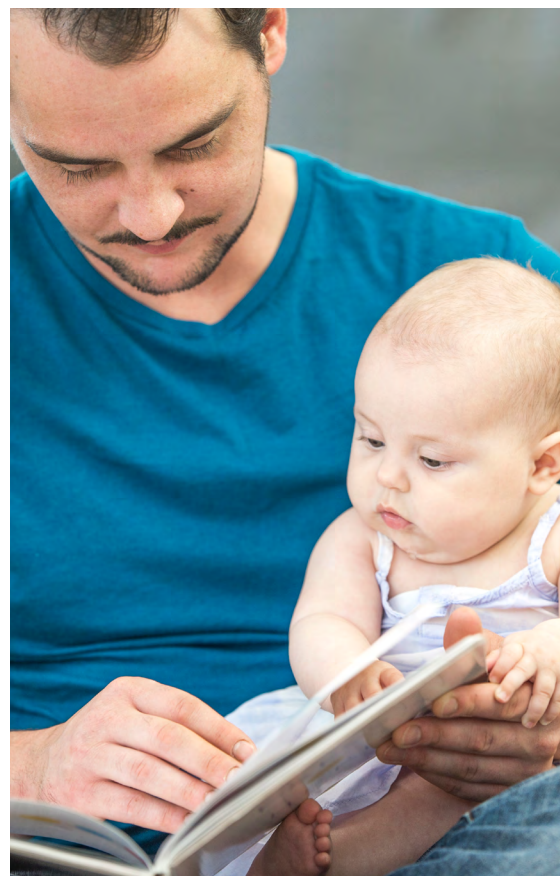


Read every day

We now know that 80 per cent of a child's brain development happens in the first three years of life. Your baby is learning from the day they are born. You can start sharing stories with your baby in their first few days. Black-and-white books are perfect for your newborn's developing eyesight.

- You don't have to read the words, just talk about the pictures.
- Visit the library and borrow books. Many libraries have Storytime or Baby Bounce sessions, which are free.
- Keep books near your baby so they can touch and play with them.
- Older babies love other children, so they will enjoy simple books with faces of babies and toddlers
- Sharing stories, whether reading from books or telling a story, is a perfect way for babies to hear lots of words, which will help them learn to speak. Use the language you speak most at home.
- Babies do not need any screen time. Babies learn how to talk by being with a caring adult who regularly talks and reads with them.
- Read together every day. This will help your child develop important pre-reading skills.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their baby. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your baby's developing brain.



Sing every day

Your baby is learning from the day it is born. Singing is a gentle way to bond with your baby while sharing your favourite songs. Use a range of well-known traditional songs and more modern tunes to help your baby develop a love of music and build their speech and language.

- You can sing anywhere! Sing with your baby while playing, bathing, walking or driving.
- Your baby needs to hear your voice and they won't mind if you are making up the words or singing out of tune.
- Babies thrive with one-to-one interactions; singing is an easy way to have fun together and build strong bonds.
- Babies need to hear fluent language to learn to speak. Sing songs in your home language right from the start.
- When we sing we slow down our speech, which makes it easier for babies to hear the parts of the words. This helps them hear the sounds of words while having fun singing and enjoying music.
- Lullabies are calming and help babies feel comforted and ready for sleep.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their baby. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your baby's developing brain.



Talk every day

Many people ask, 'Why should I talk to my baby who cannot talk back?' Your baby is learning from the day it is born, and will learn to speak by hearing you talk with them every day.

- Being face-to-face is important. It can feel silly talking to a baby who can't respond, but they will be watching your face and your mouth, and they will communicate with you by smiling, making eye contact and babbling back to you.
- Chat with your baby every day – while you are changing their nappy or clothes, giving them a bath, feeding them, or sitting with them on your lap. Try describing what you are doing ('I'm going to put your red hat on your head.')
- Talk in the language that you feel most comfortable with. For babies to learn how to speak they need to hear lots of words and hear them often. It is best for you to talk to your baby in the language you speak most at home.
- Babies need to make a range of sounds and use cooing and babbling before they are developmentally ready to talk. Between the ages of 12 and 18 months they will be speaking their first words, even if they are a little difficult to understand. If your baby is not speaking or attempting to speak by this age you should seek advice from a doctor. They are there to help.

The first three years of your child's life play a huge role in their development, in particular their ability to talk and understand speech, words and language. Visit the Speech Pathology Australia website at www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/spaweb/Document_Management/Public/Fact_Sheets.aspx#anchor_baby for information and tips.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their baby. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your baby's developing brain.



Play every day

Babies are born ready to learn, and they learn best through play. A baby plays through simple activities involving watching, babbling, touching, hearing and being cuddled and supported by caring adults, siblings and friends.

- You are your baby's favourite plaything. Babies do not need all the latest toys, gadgets or TV shows – their favourite toy is you! Babies learn best by interacting with parents and carers who spend one-to-one time with them.
- Babies learn by watching the world around them. The way your baby plays will change as they get older and become more aware and develop their physical abilities.
- Babies (younger than two) do not need any screen time. A baby learns best through simple activities.
 - Try games like Peekaboo – hide your face behind your hands and then move your hands away quickly to show your smiling face as you say 'Peekaboo!'
 - Sing songs or finger rhymes like 'Round and round the garden', 'This little piggy' and 'Pat-a-cake'.
 - Share stories, give lots of cuddles and, if you can, get down to your baby's level for play time or tummy time.
- Through play your baby will hear plenty of words, and this helps them to learn to talk.
- Follow your baby's cues. Watch for your baby's tired signs, such as yawning, turning their head away, blinking, rubbing their eyes or crying. These are signs that your baby may need a rest or sleep.

Play is a really great way of bonding with your baby and having fun together while they are learning. It's not just something for a child to do until they start school – experts say that children up to the age of eight develop best when they learn through play.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their baby. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your baby's developing brain.



Read every day

Toddlers have a burst of language at around 15 to 24 months, where they begin to learn and use many new words every day. They are beginning to walk, talk and develop personalities of their own. This can make reading a challenge because they may not sit still for a long story – and that's normal.

- You don't have to read the whole book if your toddler can't sit still. Try again later!
- Read with fun in your voice and use expression to bring the story to life.
- Cuddle up and read your child's favourite books over and over again. This helps them start to develop many skills they will need for kindergarten and school (hearing rhyme, sounding out words, learning how a book works, and lots more).
- Give them opportunities to join in – for example, let them hold the book, turn the pages or read the book to you. It won't be correct and it might not even make sense, but you are giving them the chance to see themselves as a reader and that is very powerful.
- Sharing stories, whether reading from books or telling a story, is a perfect way for children to increase the number of words they know and can use. Use the language you speak most at home.
- Try and read for 15 minutes a day, but don't worry about doing it all at once. Try five minutes in the morning, five minutes in the afternoon and five minutes at bedtime. It all counts and it will help your child develop important pre-reading skills.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your toddler's developing brain.



TODDLER

Sing every day

Your toddler is growing quickly and they are learning so much about their world. Songs are a great way to have fun together and teach simple words. Toddlers have a burst of language development between around 15 and 24 months, and begin to learn and use many new words every day. Songs have an important role to play.

- Don't worry if you can't sing in tune, or can't remember the words. Make up your own words to a tune you know and your child will soon love to join in with you, especially if you can include their name.
- Toddlers learn best through social time with people, and singing is an easy way to have fun together. You can sing anywhere! Sing with your child while playing, bathing, walking or driving.
- Children need to hear lots of language as part of learning to speak. Sing songs in your home language to build the number of words they know and can use.
- Sing songs with actions to help engage active toddlers. Songs such as 'If you're happy and you know it', 'Row, row, row your boat' and 'Heads and shoulders' are perfect for singing with toddlers.
- When we sing we slow down our speech, which makes it easier for children to hear the parts of the words. This helps them hear the sounds of words while having fun singing and enjoying music.
- Repetition is key for toddlers – go ahead and sing their favourite song for the hundredth time: it is actually building strong brain connections!

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your toddler's developing brain.

Talk every day

Toddlers are well known for wanting to know about everything and asking hundreds of questions every day! Talking together about what you are doing and including them in daily life is a great way to help them develop conversation skills as well as vocabulary (the number of words they know and can use). The more words a child hears each day, the more words they will know when they start kindergarten or school, which gives them a head start in learning.

- Talk to your child about what you can see and describe colours, shapes and sizes.
- Turn off the TV, smart phone and computer. Children are able to concentrate better without the distraction.
- Apps, computer programs and educational videos are not proven to improve a young child's speech or learning. Your child will learn so much more by spending time talking with a caring adult and having fun reading, singing songs and playing games together.
- Toddlers need lots of time to practice their new talking skills, and this means lots of repetition. You may find yourself talking about the same toy, or reading the same book or singing the same songs over and over. This is perfectly normal and is an important part of helping your child build strong language skills.
- Talk in the language that you feel most comfortable with. Children need to hear lots of words and hear them often. It is best for you to talk to your child in the language you speak most at home.
- Toddlers can get frustrated when they don't know the word for something, can't express how they feel or have trouble explaining. Give them plenty of time to get their words out, and try not to interrupt or answer for them.

The first three years of your child's life play a huge role in their development, in particular their ability to talk and understand speech, words and language. Visit the Speech Pathology Australia website at www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/spaweb/Document_Management/Public/Fact_Sheets.aspx#anchor_baby for information and tips.

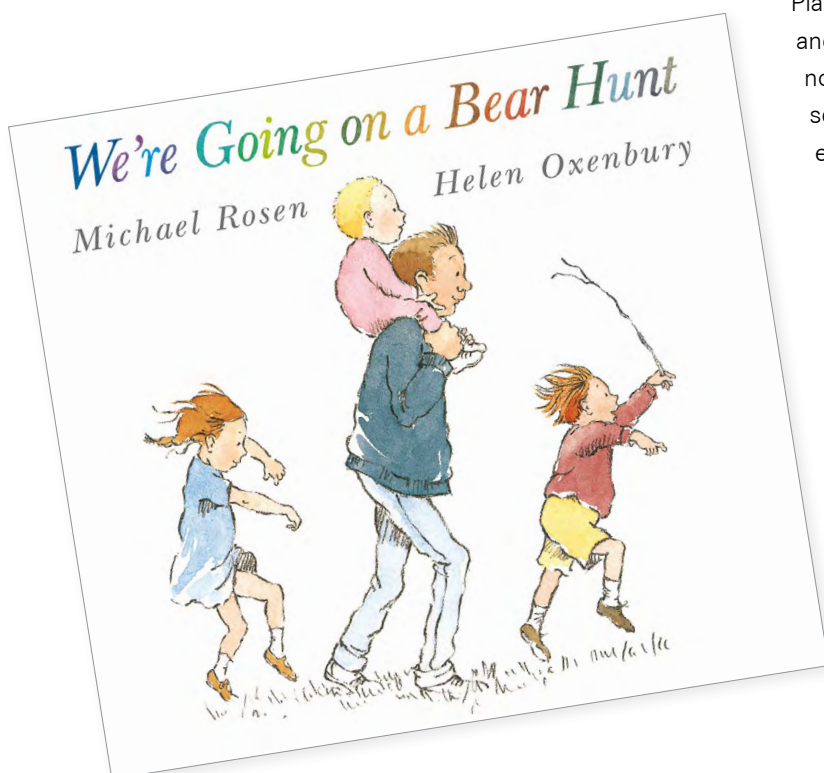
Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your toddler's developing brain.



Play every day

Toddlers learn best through play, and play can happen anywhere! Families are a child's first teacher and there is so much that children can do at home to follow their interests. Spend time talking and interacting with them and very soon they will be learning colours, shapes, simple science concepts, numbers and letters, and feeling connected with family and friends.

- Play looks very simple but your toddler is learning so much – just playing shops allows them to explore maths, social and sharing skills, and learn new words.
- Active play outside is incredibly important for your child's physical development and mental health. Experts tell us that children aged between one and five years need three hours of activity spread throughout the day. Try dancing, pushing and pulling toys, playing hide-and-seek, moving through an obstacle course, kicking balls, catching balloons or bubbles, and taking walks to the park or shops. Try to be aware of the time your child spends in car seats, strollers, high chairs or watching television, as children should not be still for more than an hour at a time (apart from naps or sleeping) whenever possible.
- Use simple everyday objects and let toddlers explore and use their imagination. Try using cardboard boxes (a car, rocket, treasure box or baby bed), a washing basket (a boat or a bus), newspapers (paint on, fold into shapes, or pretend to read) or pillows (obstacle course or baby bed). A large sheet over a table with some cushions underneath makes a great cubby house or reading corner. Draw chalk outside on a path or use water to 'paint' onto a fence.
- Sensory play is great for your toddler's development. This can include playing in sandpits, using playdough, finger-painting, cooking, singing and dancing to music, smelling flowers or watering the garden, dress-ups, playing with water or scoops in a sink, or learning to ride a scooter.
- Books can offer ideas for creative and imaginative play. For example, read *We're going on a bear hunt* and then set up an obstacle course for your child to go on a bear hunt. You can crawl under the table, weave between washing on the line and wade through a sea of cushions. Use the describing words from the story as inspiration.



Play is a really great way of bonding with your child and having fun together while they are learning. It's not just something for a child to do until they start school – experts say that children up to the age of eight develop best when they learn through play.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your toddler's developing brain.



Read every day

Preschool is an exciting time for your child as they start to become more independent. Reading every day will prepare them for kindergarten and school by building their vocabulary (the number of words they know and can use) and their understanding of the world around them.

- It's never too late to start reading with your child. Read together every day. This will help your child develop important pre-reading skills.
- Talk about writing, too. Mention to your child how we read (in English we read from left to right, but in other languages it is from right to left) and how words are separated by spaces. Occasionally run your finger under the words as you read them.
- Don't make every time you share a story into a lesson. Read together for enjoyment and have fun making animal sounds and funny voices.
- Sharing stories, whether reading from books or telling a story, is a perfect way for children to build the number of words they know and can use. Use the language you speak most at home.
- Be interactive. Discuss what's happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions.
- Preschool children are not expected to start kindergarten or school being able to read or write, or even know the alphabet. Teachers say children learn best when they start school with good social skills and are eager to learn.
- If you have concerns about your child's language development, hearing and/or sight, please seek advice from your child's doctor. They are there to help.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your child's developing brain.

PRESCHOOLER

Sing every day

Every day your preschooler is learning and developing their own personality. Singing is a great way to bond with your child while sharing their favourite songs. Use a range of well-known traditional songs and rhymes and more modern tunes to help your child develop a love of music and build their speech and language skills.

- Preschoolers will learn while having fun through sharing songs and by exploring rhyme and rhythm. When we sing we slow down our speech, which makes it easier for children to hear the parts of the words. This helps them hear the sounds of words while having fun singing and enjoying music.
- Make up your own words to a song you know and your child will soon love to join in with you – especially if you can include their name.
- Change the words to favourite songs. You might like to make up the words to a tune you both know. Include their name or change the animals or sounds in the song – be as creative as you like! For example, in 'Old MacDonald had a farm', sing 'and on that farm he had a kangaroo! With a jump-jump here...'
- Children need to hear lots of language as part of learning to speak. Sing songs in your home language to build the number of words they know and can use.
- Songs that include physical actions are great for building memory and developing coordination.
- Music has been shown to 'wire both sides of the brain' as well as being a source of joy and fun. So go ahead and turn up the music, sing out loud with your child and dance around the kitchen – it's building and strengthening their brain!

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your child's developing brain.

Talk every day

By the time they're preschoolers, children will be interested in many different activities – such as a particular sport, drawing or painting, music, or other topics such as dinosaurs or make-believe. Talking with them about their interests is a great way to help develop their language skills. Build on your child's natural curiosity and help them to discover more about topics that interest them.

- Don't be afraid to use lots of new words, especially long words if you can, and explain what they mean. When a child has an interest in something they will readily learn complex words and be keen to use them. If a child can understand and use 'Tyrannosaurus Rex' then they can understand many other long words too!
- Talk in the language that you feel most comfortable with. Children need to hear lots of words and hear them often. It is best for you to talk to your child in the language you speak most at home.
- Visit the library and join your child as a member. Borrow all kinds of books, including story books and fiction books that describe factual topics such as dinosaurs, sports, cooking, arts and music, animals and the natural world.
- We now know that far better learning happens through real-life experiences than through screen time. Apps, computer programs and educational videos are not proven to improve a young child's speech or learning. Your child will learn so much more by spending time talking with a caring adult and having fun reading, singing songs and playing games together.
- Children can get frustrated when they don't know the word for something, can't express how they feel or have trouble explaining. Give them plenty of time to get their words out, and try not to interrupt or answer for them.

The first five years of your child's life play a huge role in their development, in particular their ability to talk and understand speech, words and language. Visit the Speech Pathology Australia website at www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/spaweb/Document_Management/Public/Fact_Sheets.aspx#anchor_baby for information and tips.

Parents and carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your child's developing brain.



Play every day

Children learn through play, and play can happen anywhere! Families are a child's first teacher and there is so much that preschoolers can do at home to they can follow their interests. Play helps children to use their imagination, to explore new ideas, to problem-solve and experiment.

- Children learn through using all their senses: looking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting. Do messy activities outside or in the bath, or even on newspaper on the kitchen floor; try cooking, playing with playdough, finger-printing and painting, gardening, and art and craft.
- Preschoolers don't need a huge range of toys, and are often happiest playing with 'real life' objects. Use items from around your home: plastic bowls and old kitchen utensils in the sandpit; plastic cups and containers in the sink for water play; cardboard boxes for building; and old clothes, scarves or hats for dress-ups. Imagination is very important for children at this age!
- Preschoolers benefit from some guided time with an adult helping them in directed play, but they also need plenty of time for free play, where they can use their imagination and have fun doing their own thing.
- Active play outside is incredibly important for your child's physical development and mental health. Experts tell us that children aged between one and five years need three hours of activity spread throughout the day. Try dancing, pushing and pulling toys, playing hide-and-seek, moving through an obstacle course, kicking balls, catching balloons or bubbles, and taking walks to the park or shops. Try to be aware of the time your child spends in car seats, strollers, high chairs or watching television, as children should not be still for more than an hour at a time (apart from naps or sleeping) whenever possible.

For more information on active play, in a range of languages, check out the following website: www.health.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/Content/getset4life-index

Play is a really great way of bonding with your child and having fun together while they are learning. It's not just something for a child to do until they start school – experts say that children up to the age of eight develop best when they learn through play.

Parents or carers can share stories, songs and cuddles regularly with their child. Reading, singing, talking and playing are essential activities that help your child's developing brain.



Reading with school-age children

Reading aloud and sharing stories has many benefits for children and it's important to continue reading with your child once they start school. Reading with your child is one of the best things you can do to support them while they are learning to read.

- Read books your child enjoys. Take time to talk about the story and to discuss what is happening in the illustrations. The more you read and talk with your child the more opportunities they will have to practice reading.
- Keep 'school readers' as part of a homework routine. At bedtime let your child choose stories or longer chapter books that they enjoy. Your child might read to you, you might take turns reading, or you might read to them so they can relax ready for sleep.
- Read to your child even when they can read for themselves. This will grow their love of books and is a great way to bond with your child.
- Be a role model. Let your child see you read as part of your daily activities: reading the newspaper, instructions, and recipes from cookbooks, and enjoying a novel or magazine. This will help them to see reading as a valuable skill that is rewarding and fun.
- If your child prefers to read independently, encourage them to come to you if there are any words they don't know or if there are parts of the story they don't understand. Asking your child to tell you about the story, what has happened in the story and what they liked, helps them to build their comprehension skills.
- Spend time with your child chatting about authors or books they like, or topics they love and would like to learn more about – such as sports, humour, crafts, travel or animals. Join your child up to the local library and borrow books they are interested in.
- If you don't have time, is there someone else who can read with your child or take them to the library? A teenage sibling, a grandparent, a neighbour or friend? Shared reading time is vitally important in building your child's reading skills.
- If you find your child is regularly struggling with readers or other homework, seek advice from your child's teacher or your school. They are there to help and support you and your child. There are many reasons why children have difficulties in reading and writing. The earlier these are identified, the earlier support can be provided and the better the outcome for your child.



Speak to your child in your home language

DID YOU KNOW?

The language you speak most often at home with your baby or child is your home language. For example, if a Korean mum and a Japanese dad speak mostly Japanese to their baby, Japanese is their home language. But if they decided to speak mainly Korean at home, with just a little Japanese, then Korean would be their home language. Parents and families are the ones who provide the main language spoken in the home.

Babies and children need to hear lots of language (talking, reading and singing) to develop good language skills. We know that children who start school with good skills in their home language – children who speak confidently, sing songs and enjoy picture books – will be ready to learn the school language (English) and do well at school. These skills benefit them throughout life.

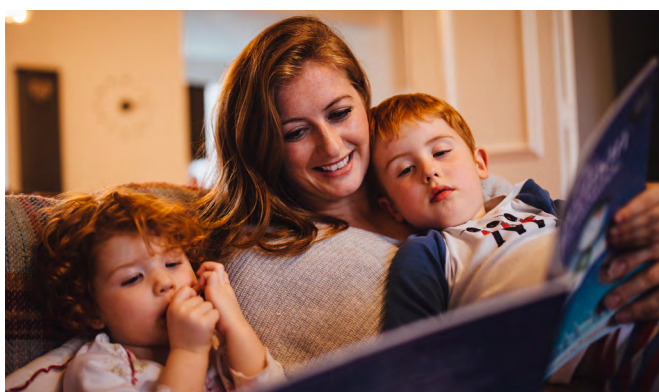
*If you talk to a man
in a language he
understands, that goes
to his head. If you talk
to him in his language,
that goes to his heart.*

– Nelson Mandela

WHY SHOULD WE READ WITH BABIES AND CHILDREN?

- You are your child's first teacher. The language you feel most comfortable speaking at home is exactly what your child needs to hear. Languages spoken at home are special, and help families share their values, traditions and cultural identity.
- When parents or carers spend time with their children and tell stories and talk with them, it helps build vocabulary and conversation skills. This helps children come to school ready to learn the language of their new country and succeed in education.
- It is very important that parents and families speak their home language in everyday conversation and family routines, during family outings and celebrations. This helps children retain their first language and culture. It means they can join in with family and community events and keep in touch with relatives, including grandparents and cousins who may live in other places.

Talk to your library and find out about the range of resources available in your language.



Screen time for young children

Computers, television, tablets and mobile phones are used daily in our lives and in the education of our children. All of them have a tremendous amount to offer, but we now know that there is no benefit for very young children to have screen time.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is recommended that:

- children under the age of two years have no screen time, other than short video-chats (for example, Skyping with grandparents or Facetime video with a parent)
- young children over the age of two watch or use high-quality programs or apps with a supporting adult; this allows parents and carers to watch or play with children and help them understand what they're seeing (*Play School*, for example) on television
- children aged between two and five years have only one hour (or less) of screen time per day, with adults watching or playing with them
- children aged six years and older have consistent limits on the time they spend using electronic media and on the types of media they use.

Tips to help reduce screen time

- Be okay with boredom. It's an opportunity for your child to become more creative.
- Have books, toys, jigsaw puzzles and craft materials on hand and engage your child in a range of activities.
- Be a role model. Try and turn off distractions and spend one-to-one time with your child.
- Avoid screen time before bed. Instead share stories or quiet activities to help calm your child and get them ready for sleep.
- Keep books in the car and take items such as books, crayons and paper with you when you are out and about.
- Balance screen time with a range of other activities.
- Set limits and be consistent. Before your child spends time watching television or playing a game on an app, decide on a time limit together.

The benefits of Storytime at the library

Storytime at your local library offers so many benefits to your child. Coming along to Storytime will help your child to:

- strengthen their social skills, by sharing and interacting with other children
- sit in a group – important for older children as they start kindergarten or Foundation/Prep
- learn to listen to instructions
- build up their confidence in a range of areas such as singing, dancing, contributing to discussion, using books and telling their own stories
- develop motor skills such as cutting, pasting and holding/using crayons
- learn to recognise letters
- learn about language through stories and songs
- understand how a book works – for example, that English-language stories begin at the front of the book and from the top of the page
- become familiar with songs and rhymes
- develop a love of reading and the library.



Storytime Sessions

Where _____

Day _____

Time _____

Online resources

These links are to useful resources for planning your early years literacy programs. You'll most likely have your own set of useful links – be sure to share them with your colleagues.

General websites

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)	www.acer.edu.au
Center on the Developing Child	developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/
Early Life Foundations	www.earlylife.com.au
The <i>Life</i> series (shown on ABC television)	www.abc.net.au/tv/life/
The Little Big Book Club	www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au
Murdoch Children's Research Institute	www.mcric.edu.au
Raising Literacy Australia	www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au
Reading and Literacy Strategic Framework	www.slv.vic.gov.au/read-program
Speech Pathology Australia	www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework	www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears
Victorian Department of Education and Training	www.education.vic.gov.au/

Book reviews

The Book Chook	www.thebookchook.com/
The Bottom Shelf	www.thebottomshelf.edublogs.org/
My Book Corner	www.mybookcorner.com.au/
Kids Book Review	www.kids-bookreview.com/
Where the Books Are	www.wherethebooksare.com/

Play

Honk! Pop-up Play	www.honkpopupplay.org.au/
Irresistible ideas for play based learning	www.playbasedlearning.com.au/
Kids in Nature Network	www.kidsinnaturenetwork.org.au/
Marc Armitage at Play	www.facebook.com/marc.armitage.at.play/
Nature Play	www.natureplay.org.au/
Playgroup Victoria	www.playgroup.org.au/

Literacy and numeracy

The Little Big Book Club	www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/
100 Stories before School	100storiesbeforeschool.com/
Indigenous Literacy Foundation	www.indigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au/

Songs, art and craft inspiration

An Every Day Story	www.aneverydaystory.com/
Early Words Toolkit	earlywords.info/toolkit/
Justine Clarke	www.justineclarke.com.au/
The Little Big Book Club	www.thelittlebigbookclub.com.au/resources
Picklebums	picklebums.com
Raising Children Network	raisingchildren.net.au/
Super Simple Learning	supersimplelearning.com/

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