



Make book time fun and educational for children with intellectual disabilities

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

Like all children, your child will learn and develop, yet she will likely develop more slowly than other children her age. Reading aloud and talking about the story and the pictures will help your child improve her vocabulary and help teach grammar. When your child reads to you or names objects on the page, she will get added practice to improve her memory and her spoken language skills. As your child grows, talk to her occupational therapist and teachers about ways reading and word-matching games can help improve her reading skills.

If your child is not yet sitting up by herself, prop her up and make sure her seat offers good support. Sit near her as you read. Your baby or young child may not always respond to you at first. As you read, talk to her about the pictures. It is important that you respond to your baby's gurgles and other sounds. This lets your child know that through reading together, you are communicating.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. Reading to your child helps her understand that there are words and pictures on the page. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout her life.**

Try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. Your child will soon see reading time as fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- Buy books or borrow books from the library that have thick, sturdy pages.
- Find books that have rhymes. Clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm of the words.
- Find books that teach everyday things, such as colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.
- Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text. Help your toddler point to objects you name in the book.

Some suggested books for your infant

- ***I Can, Can You?*** by Marjorie W. Pitzer
- Books by Laura Ronay, such as ***Kids Like Me...Learn ABC*** or ***Kids Like Me...Learn Colors***
- Books by Rena D. Grossman, such as ***Families*** or ***Eating the Rainbow***

Some suggested books for your toddler

- **Dr. Seuss's ABC**
- **Feelings** by Susan Canizares
- **The Feelings Book** by Todd Parr
- **Hugs and Kisses** by Roberta Grobel Intrater
- Books by Eric Carle, such as **My Very First Book of Colors**, **My Very First Book of Numbers**, **My Very First Book of Shapes**, or **Eric Carle's ABC**

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- Borrow books from the library on topics that can strengthen your child's daily living skills, such as books about bedtime or going to the dentist. Also, pick books about things your child enjoys, such as animals.
- Read aloud and talk about the pictures. Ask your child to name objects or read aloud.
- Praise your child's efforts at reading!**
- Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds, and buy audio books.

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **At the Seashore** by Ruth Koeppl
- **Poke-A-Dot Old MacDonald's Farm** by Travis King
- **Sounds on the Go!** By Gail Donovan

How children can learn more about intellectual disabilities

- **Hi, I'm Ben and...I've Got a Secret** by Julie A. Bouwkamp (Ages 3–8)
- **My Friend Isabelle** by Eliza Woloson (Ages 4–8)
- **Susan Laughs** by Jeanne Willis (Ages 4–8)

How parents can learn more about intellectual disabilities

Read these books:

- **Babies with Down Syndrome: A New Parent's Guide** edited by Susan Skallerup
- **Children with Mental Retardation: A Parents' Guide** edited by Romayne Smith
- **Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals** by Libby Kumin, Ph.D.

Contact these groups for more information:

- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities—(800) 424-3688 or **www.aaidd.org**
- The ARC (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens)—(800) 433-5255 or **www.thearc.org**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or **www.cdc.gov/actearly**
- Easter Seals—(800) 221-6827 or **www.easterseals.com**
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800)695-0285 or **www.nichcy.org**
- National Down Syndrome Society—(800) 221-4602 or **www.ndss.org**