

Reading

from birth



A GUIDE
FROM BIRTH
TO AGE SIX YEARS



*Peterborough Victoria
Northumberland and Clarington
Catholic District School Board*

Congratulations

... on the birth of your child! I know this is an exciting time for you as you prepare to take home your new baby.

One of the great joys, and responsibilities of parenting is making sure your child gets off to a good start. Learning begins at birth, and books should be a part of every child's life. In fact, it may surprise you to learn that 50 percent of a child's intellectual capacity is developed by the age of four! That's why the PVNC Catholic District School Board has become involved in the Reading from Birth project. We encourage you, as parents, to read to your children from the start, building reading into your child's daily life. With your support, we can be partners in helping your child learn.

On behalf of the PVNC Catholic District School Board, I am pleased to provide you with this brochure. An information package about our programs and services may be obtained by calling the Communications Department at (705) 748-4861 Ext. 243. Best wishes to you and your new baby!

Sincerely,



Mike Langlois
Director of Education

TURNING THE FIRST PAGE

You cannot start the reading process too early in your child's life. In fact, learning begins at birth - so should reading. Here are some tips to help you and your child begin your reading journey together:

1. Talk and read to your child from birth.
2. Share the joy of reading with your child through your positive attitude toward reading. Be the best model; let your child catch you reading or talking about something you've read.
3. Set aside a regular reading time; it need only be 15 minutes as long as you both can relax and enjoy the time spent.
4. Find a quiet, cozy spot where you can curl up with your child and read.
5. Turn off the television and read, if only for 15 minutes.
6. Reading is an enjoyable and inexpensive activity the whole family can share. Libraries are available for everyone and they provide great reading programs. Ask your local library about pre-school and toddler times or family film nights.
7. Select a spot in your home to keep library books, school books and family favorites. This way, they'll be at your fingertips when you want them.
8. Let your children select their own books without pressure or criticism from you. They'll develop their own tastes.
9. When you read to your child, relax and enjoy the time. Both you and your child should try to retell favorite stories. Ham it up a little - get into the character you're reading about. See how a change of voice can create more excitement in a story.
10. Encourage your children to make their own storybooks. Photo albums are ideal - complete with characters well known to your child.

IN THE BEGINNING: BIRTH TO SIX MONTHS

As early as four weeks, your newborn has developed certain waking patterns. Hand and eye co-ordination begins. Baby listens to your voice and looks in your direction. At this stage, you can encourage baby's language development by:

- talking to your baby in soothing tones
- talking to your baby during bathing and diaper changes
- naming body parts as they are washed
- singing lullabies and nursery rhymes

Babies at six months want to handle and grab everything within reach, including books. So keeping in mind that books will head straight for the babies mouth - look for easy to clean soft cloth or padded books. Also recommended are manipulative books that squeak when squeezed or pressed.

SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR

At this stage in your child's development, your baby learns to handle a book simply by watching you. Your child's initial concepts about print develop the same way. Your child will watch how you hold a book, where you start, and how you turn the pages. You can help your child enjoy books by:

- pointing at a picture and saying, "Look at this"
- asking "What's that?"
- naming a picture after showing it to your child
- saying, "Show me the ball (ball, cat, cup, etc.)"

Your toddler now recognizes shapes, faces, and colours. For this age, consider books with single, colourful drawings or photographs that are usually outlined, without a background scene. Board books are popular:

- their thick, sturdy pages are virtually indestructible. "Feely" books introduce your child to a variety of textures and are a good transition between toys and real books.

Suggested Books:

Pat the Bunny, by Dorthy Kundardt

Nursery Rhyme Board Books/Mother Goose

Baby's First Book, by Garth Williams

What Is It?, by Tana Hoban

Baby Board Books, series by Helen Oxenbury

ONE TO TWO YEARS

At this stage, your child is becoming more aware of details. Children enjoy searching for items in storybook pictures. Notice how the action songs and rhymes you've sung to your child have more meaning now. Your child will anticipate the clapping and tickles that go along with "Pat a Cake, Pat a Cake" - at two years your child will begin to put a few words together. You should provide several short story times throughout the day and at bedtime.

Suggested Books:

Goodnight Moon, by Margaret Wise Brown
Where's Spot?, by Eric Hill
Teddy and Me, series by Brimax
I Can Do It All By Myself, series by Watanabe
Words to Talk About, series by Leo Lionni
Colors, by John Reiss
My Kitchen, by Harlow Rockwell
Beginning Concepts Books, by Tana Hoban
Let's Look All Around The House,
by Harold Roth

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

During these years, language development moves full speed ahead. Your child now enjoys making up stories for picture books and will retell parts of repetitive or cumulative stories. Your child will also be curious about things - questions will be endless! It's time, also to adventure away from home - to nursery school, to the dentist - and books are a good way to help prepare your child for these new experiences. Books that encourage participation are still as important, along with concept books that help children develop awareness and recognize relationships.

Suggested Books:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, by Bill Martin
Millions of Cats, by Wanda Gag
Concept Books, series by Jill Krementz;
Harlow Rockwell
Pancakes for Breakfast, by Tomie de Paola
Rain, by Peter Spier
Out and About, series by Helen Oxenbury
Bennie Bakes A Cake, by Eve Rice
Will I Have A Friend, by Miriam Cohen

FIVE TO SIX YEARS

Your child is now more independent, but still needs reassurance and security. The learning process continues to demand concrete experiences with real objects - but books play a stronger role in developing abstract concepts, like time. Your child has had many experiences with books and eagerly awaits story-time. In fact, your child will often choose books over other activities and have a longer attention span than children without regular reading experiences.

Suggested Books...

Bedtime for Frances, by Russell Hoban
Peter's Chair, by Ezra Jack Keats
Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak
Corduroy, by Don Freeman
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, by Judith Viorst
The Tale of Peter Rabbit, by Beatrix Potter
Fairy Tales such as **Little Red Riding Hood**,
The Gingerbread Boy, **Henny Penny** and
Three Billy Goats.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Principal of your local Catholic District School or by calling the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, Peter L. Roach Education Centre at (705) 748-4861 or 1-800-461-8009.

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