**Ages and Stages of Reading**

**When reading to children of all ages:**

* choose sturdy and colourful books
* take turns turning pages or holding the book
* it’s okay to skip pages, or go in the wrong order
* label objects and actions in the book
* sing nursery rhymes and fingerplays (e.g., The Itsy Bitsy Spider)
* talk about different noises that you hear and what they mean
* talk about everything that is going on around them (e.g., Mommy’s vacuuming the floor back and forth)
* repeat important words
* give time to ask and answer questions

**When reading to a child 2 ½ to 3 years old:**

* choose books with a simple story or rhyming books
* leave out a word in a favorite book so they can fill it in
* use different voices for different parts of the story
* don’t worry about reading the words in the book
* talk about what your child is looking at
* use new words and concepts to talk about what is happening in the book
* point out words on signs and on food labels
* continue to have fun with songs, rhymes and silly words
* let them ‘sign’ cards, art, etc.

**When reading to a child 3 to 4 years old:**

* have him guess what will happen, or make up a new ending
* point out the words and the picture that goes with it
* let him tell the story by looking at the pictures.
* choose books that have a simple story with a beginning, middle and end
* help him make a book with pictures and write what he has done
* include reading/writing in pretend play (e.g. shopping list)
* sing the alphabet song using letters they can see
* play “I Spy” and other listening games.
* play games that let your child decide if words rhyme.
* practice taking care of books
* allow him to retell the story.

**When reading to a child 4 to 5 years old:**

* choose books with longer, more complex stories
* point out words that rhyme or start with the same letter
* point out long words, short words or words that sound funny
* talk about the sounds that different letters make (especially letters in their name)
* play games where your child must count words in a sentence
* play games where you break up words into syllables
* encourage your child to make up their own rhymes (it’s ok to make-up words)
* help him create his own story by recording and/or writing it down (you can write it down for him).

**From 5 on a child learns:**

* the sounds that letters make, and how to put those letters into words
* that letters can be added or taken away to make new words, or sounds
* how to sound out letters and discover what the word is

**What to do if your child doesn’t like books**

* Get your child interested in a story by telling the story using puppets/props first; then bring out the book once they are interested in the story.
* Try other print (e.g. magazines, catalogues, photo albums or scrapbooks) that could lead to an interest in reading.
* Put books everywhere (throughout the house including bathrooms and in the car too!); bathtub books are great!
* Model being a reader by making reading and writing a regular part of your day.
* Point out print around you (e.g. stop signs, store signs, shopping lists).
* Read stories together at times that are better for your child, not just at bedtime.
* Choose books that have things to do (e.g. Lift-the-flap, Touch and Feel).
* Choose books with short stories and good pictures.
* Choose books based on stories that your child already knows and enjoys (perhaps about a favourite movie or character).
* Use puppets/props as you read a story together.
* Make books about your child or about things that your child loves -- use drawings, photos AND words.
* Have story books with audio tapes (try keeping these in your car too!)
* Have your child join in the reading – they can act the story out, fill in the parts they know, guess what is coming next.
* Visit stores/libraries where books are the main attraction; let them choose their own books.
* Take your child to preschool library programs and summer reading programs.