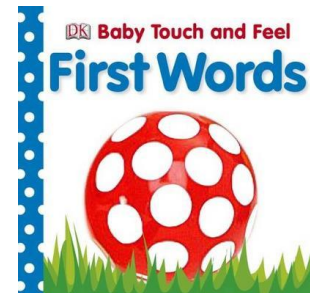


Books, Books, Books

Book sharing with your child is a great way (among its many other benefits) to encourage their language development at each stage.

Start when they're really young – just sitting. Now is the time to start teaching them how to use a book and to make books an enjoyable experience. Sit them on your knee close in to your body and have a simple book with big clear colourful pictures. Something with just one or two objects on a page with not too much going on. Turn the pages and, as they get older, help them to start turning the page themselves. Say what each picture is and sign the word if you have enough hands free.

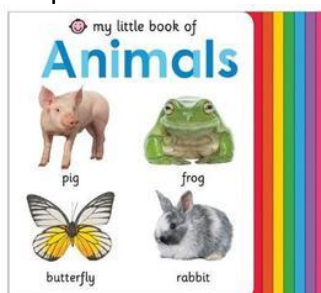
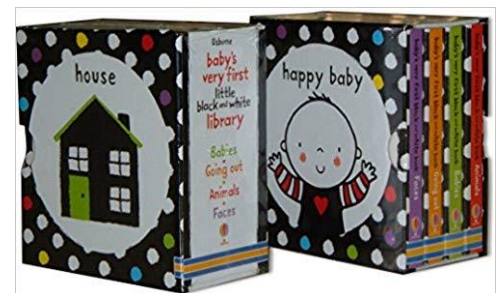


Don't let books just become another toy. Don't leave them in with the other toys and allow them to be thrown.

Buy or borrow tough books for your little ones – board or material or plastic – they have to take a lot of rough handling at this stage.

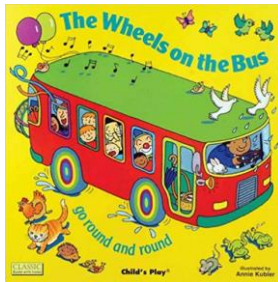
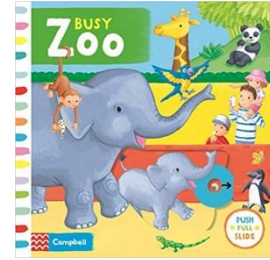
Only do this when your child is happy to sit with you and look at the book. This isn't something to make them do, we don't want books to be a chore, make it a cosy sharing experience when they are relaxed and want to be there. If they start to wriggle then do something else.

Once they can turn pages themselves and are more independent you can start to sit alongside them, maybe at bedtime or a quieter time in the day. Start getting books which will begin to widen the words they know. Maybe get books devoted to one thing – an animal book, or food, or clothes. Sharing these together gives you the opportunity to use different words and signs. Sometimes match real things or toys to the pictures in the book so they can see that this flat picture is the same as the thing they are familiar with.



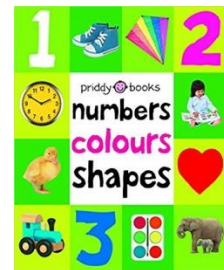
Pictures which have the name written by it are good because you can begin to get them to realise that those squiggles mean something. Point to the written word as you say it.

At the stage where they are using some words or signs themselves, you can begin to introduce books with slightly more developed pictures, like people doing actions or with places in them. This gives you the chance to start showing them how words can be joined together to give more information. Don't just read, describe what you see in simple sentences and point things out to them in the pictures. Ask them to point to what you describe.



Books of favourite rhymes are good too, they will know some of these and relating them back to a book increases interest

If your child is putting words together in simple sentences you might want to be using books which introduce colours; or describing words like big and little, funny, sad etc.; or words which they wouldn't usually come across in their everyday life. This way you are giving them experiences of a wider range of words. Keep pointing out the writing as well. You are preparing them for reading themselves.



Once your child is at school and is beginning to use longer sentences or is joining signs you can begin to help them develop their knowledge of how stories work.

Look at books with them that have a clear story with good characters and a little bit of action. Try to find books where you can start to discuss the story with them. Read the story together but also ask them questions to develop their thinking skills. Ask them who the story is about; get them to think about how the characters feel; talk about what they think will happen on the next page; link what you are reading back to their own experiences "do you remember when you...", use words like "the start", "the end", "then" so they get the idea that things happen in a sequence; discuss the pictures and help them to describe what they see "that one is very tall", "her jumper is red" etc.

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