



Make book time fun and educational for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together can be a good way to connect with your son or daughter. Reading also helps your child's language development and listening skills. As you know, having ASD impacts the way your child reacts to situations and people and how she looks at the world around her.

Children with ASD often have trouble making eye contact and sharing their thoughts with words or gestures. Some children have a very short attention span when being read to or when reading. Try reading for short periods of time, pointing and naming objects as you read. Other children with ASD may read very early and show intense interest in certain subjects and want to read everything they can on that topic. **Whether your child has mild or severe ASD, making reading a fun activity can help your child's learning and social skills.**

If your child likes routine in her day, try reading her favorite book to help move her from one task to another. For example, reading can set the stage for nap time and bedtime. Work with your child's behavior and/or occupational therapist to learn how reading can help with social skills, new activities, and transitions.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping her brain to develop. Reading aloud to your child allows her to hear your voice and listen to spoken words. Your child is also more likely to ask questions and learn about the world around her. **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 see reading time as both fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- Borrow books from the library that have photos and drawings of babies and people's faces. This can help your child recognize emotions.
- Read the same story again and again. The repetition will help her learn language.
- Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- Find books that have lots of repetition of phrases. Also find books with rhymes. Softly clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm.
- Find books that have buttons your child can press that have sounds.

Some suggested books for your infant

- **Babies** by Susan Canizares
- **Global Babies** by Mara Ajmera
- **Smile!** by Roberta Grobel Intrater

Some suggested books for your toddler

- **Lots of Feeling** by Shelley Rotner
- Books by Susan Canizares such as **Babies on the Move** and **Feelings**

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:

- Sit on the floor next to your child.
- Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text.
- Find books on topics that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds. Borrow library audio books that your child can start or stop by pressing a button.

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- Books by Simms Taback such as ***There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*** and ***This is the House that Jack Built***
- ***Lyle Lyle Crocodile*** by Bernard Waber

How children can learn more about autism spectrum disorder

Get these books:

- ***My Friend Has Autism*** by Amanda Tourville (Ages 5–10)
- ***My Brother Charlie*** by Holly Robinson Peete (Ages 4–8)
- ***Autism and Me*** by Ouisie Shapiro (Ages 5–12)
- ***Ian's Walk*** by Laurie Lears (Ages 4–8)

How parents can learn more about autism spectrum disorder

Read these books:

- ***A Practical Guide to Autism: What Every Parent, Family Member, and Teacher Needs to Know*** by Fred Volkmar and Lisa Wiesner
- ***Does My Child Have Autism: A Parent's Guide to Early Detection and Intervention in Autism Spectrum Disorders*** by Wendy Stone
- ***Writing Social Stories with Carol Gray*** (Book and DVD)

Contact these groups for more information:

- Autism Society of America—(800) 328-8476 or www.autism-society.org
- Autism Speaks—www.autismspeaks.org. Ask for ***First 100 Days and the Newly Diagnosed Families/School Community*** toolkits.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly. Look for the ***Learn the Signs. Act Early.*** program.
- Easter Seals: Act for Autism—www.easterseals.com
- First Signs—www.firstsigns.org
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Autism Fact Sheet—www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism/detail_autism.htm