

Parent Page

August/
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www.jeffcochildcare.org

Nominate Your
Child Care Provider
For JCCCA
Provider of The Month!
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The Importance of Reading to Children from Birth to Age 5

Reading aloud to children from birth through age 5 is one of the most powerful early interventions for healthy development. It supports **language, cognitive, social-emotional, and literacy skills** in ways that benefit children for life.

1. Builds Language and Cognitive Skills

From birth, babies are hardwired to develop language, and exposure to a wide variety of words and sentence patterns is essential. Books introduce vocabulary and grammar that children wouldn't hear in everyday speech, expanding their ability to understand and use language. Research shows that children read to daily hear up to 290,000 more words by kindergarten, and with consistent reading, that can exceed a million words. [Child Mind Institute](#)

2. Strengthens Brain Development

Reading aloud creates neural connections in areas responsible for language and cognitive control. Even before children can talk, they connect words to pictures and real-world objects, laying the foundation for literacy and problem-solving skills. [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

3. Fosters Social-Emotional Growth

Stories provide opportunities to discuss feelings, coping strategies, and empathy. Shared reading strengthens the parent-child bond, promotes attachment, and helps children regulate emotions. [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

4. Supports Emerging Literacy

By age 18 months, many children begin to understand that pictures represent real things. Between 15–20 months, they may notice print, and by 32 months, some can point to or trace words they've heard. [NAEYC](#)

5. Encourages a Lifelong Love of Learning

Starting reading early sparks curiosity and a positive association with books. This can lead to a lifelong habit of reading, which is linked to better academic performance, critical thinking, and resilience. [Psychology Today](#)

6. Creates a Language-Rich Environment

Using varied vocabulary, asking questions, and engaging in dialogic reading (pausing to let children fill in words) deepens comprehension and word learning. [Child Mind Institute](#)

7. Practical Tips for Parents and Caregivers

- Read daily, even if the child is too young to talk.
 - Use "parentese" (slow, exaggerated speech) to capture attention. headstart.gov
 - Let children turn pages, point to pictures, or tell parts of the story.
 - Choose a variety of books—picture books, early readers, and stories with diverse themes.
 - Keep reading sessions short and engaging, especially for younger infants.
- In short, reading to children from birth to age 5 is not just about preparing them for school—it's about building the brain, strengthening relationships, and planting the seeds for lifelong learning. [Learning Points Associates](#)

"Let's Read Together!"



A Read Aloud Program for Young Children
Sponsored by Jefferson County Child Care Association
www.jeffcochildcare.org

Ask your JCCCA child care provider if they are participating in JCCCA's "Let's Read Together!" program from August 26 to October 28, 2026. This is a free family engagement project sponsored by JCCCA for members. All participating children receive a free children's book.

Parent Page Edited by Cheryl Chinn