It’s Never Too Early!

Thanks to research over the last decade, we now know much more about how babies develop their early language skills. Here are some facts:

- Babies begin to learn language from birth. Reading aloud exposes children to the sounds of speech.
- Children who are spoken to and read to develop into better readers.
- Reading aloud to babies and toddlers lays the foundation for learning to read.

Toddlers are able to start picking out favorite books or movies after they’ve seen them several times. This is a pre-reading skill, as they are beginning to connect that the way letters, pictures, colors, and patterns are arranged, carries important information. As you read letters or words run your finger under them. This will help your child learn that reading has a system to it. Making your child aware of the print around them will make them stronger readers.

These are the kinds of books that develop print awareness:

- Books with punctuation marks-? ! , .
- Books with signs, lists, labels, menus, charts, instructions, etc. as part of the illustrations
- Books in which characters are using print in different ways, such as writing a letter, or making a checklist
- Any book!

Featured Book

**Miss Mary Mack,** adapted by Mary Ann Hoberman

This version of the well-known song and playground game is filled with new verses and great illustrations that will have your child clapping and singing along in no time. Read along as Mary Mack makes friends with the elephant and places her "silver buttons, buttons, buttons/ Down his nose, nose, nose."

Watch a video and listen to the tune of Miss Mary Mack online:  
bussongs.com/songs/miss_mary_mack.php

More books your baby or toddler will love:

- Big Fat Hen, by Keith Baker
- Overboard! by Sarah Weeks
- Uh-Oh! by Rachel Isadora
- What Shall We Do with the Boo Hoo Baby? by Cressida Cowell
- Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You? by Dr. Seuss
- Baby Reads, by Little Scholastic
- Yummy Yucky, by Leslie Patricelli
More fun with Miss Mary Mack...

Learning first words... Point to the dog on the page, show him the picture and say "dog." Repeat with the other objects in the book. When he is able, encourage him to point to pictures and say what they are. It is important for your child to know that words can describe pictures. If you have the object in your home, show it to your child so they connect that pictures can represent real things.

Out and about... To help your child become aware of print, take a walk through your neighborhood and point out things with print on them: stop signs, street signs, businesses, newsstands, bus stops, etc.

I Spy... Older toddlers can start playing "I Spy." Choose something to focus on in the room, such as a ball. Give clues to describe the ball, such as — "It’s red," "It’s round," "You play with it," and see if your child can guess what it is.

Action Song for Toddlers
This is the Way We Wash Our Hands (to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

This is the way we wash our hands,
Wash our hands, wash our hands.
This is the way we wash our hands
On a cold and frosty morning.

Other verses...
This is the way we brush our hair...
This is the way we pat our clothes...
This is the way we dust our room...
This is the way we clap our hands...

Rhymes for Babies
All I Want are Hugs
(Hold your little one in your arms and give a gentle hug every time you say the word "hug")

All I want are hugs from you,
Hugs to last the whole day through.
Hugs just make me feel so good,
So hug me, hug me, hug me.
Give me lots of hugs today,
Hugs to chase the blues away.
Hugs to last the whole day through,
Just hug me, hug me, hug me!

What your library can do for you...
Your library offers many services for teens and adults, too. Visit your library’s website for information about job searches, audio or electronic books, special programs, book reviews, and much more!

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