

FIRST 5

S H A S T A

Reading at Every Age

Tips for Raising a Lifelong Reader

Good reading habits start early. Reading aloud to your child at a young age offers many benefits, including fostering a love of books and developing lifelong learning skills. In fact, research shows that young children who read with their families are better prepared when they start kindergarten and are more likely to succeed in school.

November is Child Literacy Month and a perfect time for families to adopt daily reading habits with their children. First 5 Shasta encourages families to visit the library to participate in storytelling activities and take books home to read together. Here are a few tips on how you can make reading a daily part of your child's life.

Infants

Reading aloud provides special bonding time for parents and infants. Babies enjoy hearing the sound of a familiar voice while the words, pictures and stories stimulate their brains.

- **Start slowly.** Infants have short attention spans so keep your reading time brief. Repeat stories and rhymes often so your baby learns new words and sounds each time.
- **Explore books together.** Babies like brightly colored books with photos of other children and familiar objects, such as toys and baby bottles. Also, choose books with pop-up characters and images that are soft to the touch so your baby can feel different textures.

Toddlers

Reading improves toddlers' listening and speaking skills, and helps them begin to understand words and phrases.

- **Read and repeat.** Toddlers enjoy hearing the same story repeated many times; this helps them make connections between words and pictures. While reading, ask your child to turn the pages and name the objects they see. They can even try to guess what will happen next in the story!
- **Choose the right books.** Toddlers like books that show characters doing familiar things like playing and smiling. Pick books with only a few words per page and stories that rhyme for extra fun.

Preschoolers

As children prepare to enter school for the first time, daily reading habits can give them an extra boost. That's because reading builds confidence as well as vocabulary skills, which are both important for school success.

- **Visit the library often.** Make visits to the library a regular part of your activities with your children, and let them choose several books on their favorite topics. Also, ask about free resources you can participate in together, like preschool storytimes, and don't forget to sign up for library cards – they're free!

- **Always have a book nearby.** Make sure to always have books available for your children, even while running errands or traveling in the car. Read while waiting at the doctor's office or at the bus stop – anytime is a good time for reading!

For more information on early literacy resources or other First 5 Shasta programs, please call 229-8300 or visit www.first5shasta.org y www.first5california.com/parents.

About First 5 Shasta

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. To date, First 5 Shasta has invested approximately \$12 million in Prop. 10 revenues in programs and services that meet local needs.

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