

Books and Your Baby

A Guide to Reading To Your Baby 4 to 6 Months



Dear Parent,

By now you are settling in with your baby and having fun getting to know their unique personality. We are excited to share with you that the next phase of your baby's development, between four and six months, is such an exciting stage of development! Now you can look forward to seeing them start to really respond to the books you read.

Over the next few months your baby will begin to make babbling sounds, start to clap their hands together, and get more interested in the world around them. Soon you'll start to notice that your baby will enjoy particular books and develop favourite titles. Your baby's new abilities and interests will make reading together so much fun for you both!

If you have not had a chance to read them yet, we are also happy to recommend our earlier booklets for families of babies from birth to three months of age, and our grandparents guide.

Happy Reading!
Read to Me!



Let's Talk!

Talking is important! Your baby is listening to you from birth. And, if you watch carefully, they are communicating with you, too. Gurgles, gazes and cries are ways your baby communicates what they need and want. As your baby develops, they will increase the ways they communicate with you.

Tips for Talking to Your Baby

- Babies need to hear words to learn words, so talk as you go about your day. Encourage grandparents and siblings to join in on the fun!
- You can simply tell your baby what you are doing, "I'm folding your pajamas – they are so soft and cuddly." "Let's listen to the birds – they are chirping so loudly!"
- Talk in your home language – it is easier to express yourself in the language you know best and you'll use a lot more descriptive and unique words when you do. Don't worry, your baby won't have any difficulty picking up an additional language later on.
- Read, read, read! There is no better way to share language than reading books to your baby. Not only do babies enjoy stimulation from looking at the pictures and hearing your voice, books also provide a lot more unusual words and complex sentence structures than when we are simply talking. This helps build the foundation for learning to understand language and read later on.
- Talk about the pictures in books – it's how babies learn the names of things.



Let's Talk Rhymes!

There's a reason why nursery rhymes have been around for hundreds of years – the bouncy rhythm of rhymes actually helps babies learn to talk!

- Research has shown that babies are drawn to language that has strong rhythm, rhyme and beat in the words, such as the kind of beat heard in '**row - row - row - your - boat**'
- Rhymes slow down language and break words into individual sounds. This helps your baby to hear the individual parts of words, as in '**me-rri-ly, me-rri-ly, me-rri-ly**', in the rhyme *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*.
- Rhymes introduce new words and help build your baby's vocabulary. By having fun playing with language, you're giving your baby the opportunity to learn new sounds and words.
- Before your baby learns how to talk they will practice making sounds by babbling. The sounds in rhymes, like the long **O** sounds in *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, and the short **A** sounds in *Baa Baa Black Sheep* will help your baby practice for saying more words later on.
- There's a rhyme for every time of the day - you can use rhymes to calm and entertain your baby while you are cooking, when you are driving, or changing a diaper, and singing a lullaby can soothe a crying baby to sleep. As your baby grows there are lots of action rhymes that your baby will love to copy. Check out the resources at the back of this booklet for links to learning fun new rhymes online.
- The best thing about rhymes is that they are free, fun and portable! Memorize some rhymes you can take them with you wherever you and your baby go!



Being Social During COVID-19

Even with options for combining family bubbles, you may still be physically apart from close friends and family in your social circle. Staying connected and engaged is more important than ever during this period of social distancing, particularly with a baby. One way to stay connected is to use phones, texts and video chat. Parenting groups and organizations are developing new and innovative ways to connect with parents, so keep checking websites to see what new social responses are being offered. Virtual parenting groups on social media can also help you to create community.

Screens, Devices and Your Baby

Normally, families are encouraged to avoid screen use with children under two. This is because children learn best through play in the real world and through back-and-forth interactions with the people who care for them. With physical distancing for COVID-19 however, screens have become increasingly important tools for socialization. A healthy way to use screens with babies is to use them for social connection through video chatting, where you can interact and respond just like in person.

Video Chatting with Young Children

You can make visiting at a distance more interactive by acting out what the person on the screen is doing – if they sing a lullaby to your baby, you can gently rock them. If they do a tickle rhyme, you can tickle your baby. If they are giving your baby a cuddle, you can cuddle your baby for them. Unsure where to start? Friends and family can read a bedtime story, sing a lullaby, speak a rhyme, or even play peekaboo with your little one. Your baby will love playing and listening, and will begin to remember and build deep bonds with you, your family, and your friends.



Babies Love Books! Reading With Your Baby in the First 18 Months

Every Read to Me bag contains *Babies Love Books*, an 18-month guide to reading with your baby. We wanted to make sure you were able to use our guide to help you get started reading to your baby, so we are giving you the next three months of the guide in this booklet.

If you have the chance, print off each month so you can refer to it throughout the day. You'll find information on how to read to your baby at this stage, get age-appropriate book suggestions and learn lots of tips for activities to do with your baby throughout the day.

15 months

Inside the guide



Pre-reading Guidance

Now that your toddler is getting older and learning new skills, the way you read together will change. Toddlers like to move around and be independent. After all, there is so much for them to explore!

Don't get frustrated if your toddler doesn't want to sit still while you read right now. Keep trying to find a time when they want to sit and listen to a story.

Choose books about things your toddler loves, and read the books they bring to you, even if it is the same book over and over. Try reading aloud while your toddler plays nearby. They might run over to check out the pictures or listen to the story as they play. They may even try to shut the book as you read! That's okay — you can finish the story later.

Rhyme of the month

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, knees and toes
 ...Head and shoulders, knees and toes, eyes, ears, mouth and nose!

Reading to a toddler

Books...

Little Blue Truck
Little Blue Truck
Little Blue Truck

Your toddler...

- May only want to listen to a book for a short time
- May grasp a book (tryen) and try to scribble on paper
- Enjoys playing games like *Ring Around the Rose* or *Peek-a-Boo*

Try this...

- Link the books about everyday things like eating, bathing or getting ready for bed!
- Keep a stack of books where your toddler can reach them
- Try using funny voices for the characters in the stories to make reading fun

Book recommendations

Developmental Milestones

Reading Tips and Activities

Hang this guide for 18 months of reading fun!



Babies Love Books!

4 months



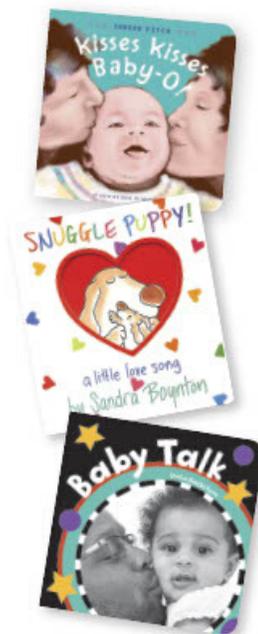
Talk to me

Did you know that your voice is the most important sound your baby hears? Talking to your baby makes them feel loved and cared for. You will notice your baby turning toward the sound of your voice. Your baby will communicate with you by gazing at you, smiling, crying or gurgling.

Babies need to hear words to learn words, so talk to your baby as you go about your day.

Babies start to babble around 4 months. They are talking to you — cheer them on! Use your baby's name when you are chatting, and soon they'll understand that you are talking to them. Even though your baby can't answer you yet, ask them questions and leave time for them to "respond" to you — this will show your baby that talking is a back-and-forth activity.

Books...



Your baby...

- ★ Chats with babbling sounds
- ★ May bring their hands together
- ★ Likes to cuddle up with you and look at books while you read aloud

Try this...

- ★ Show your baby family photos and talk about them
- ★ Talk to your baby as you go about your day — while washing dishes, folding laundry or changing a diaper
- ★ Say rhymes that have a bouncy rhythm

★ The moon is as round, as round can be
...Two eyes, a nose, and a mouth, like me! ★

5 months



Rhyme time!

Did you know that hearing rhymes can help your baby learn to talk? Babies respond to language that has strong rhythm and rhyme. Rhymes also break words into sounds that help your baby hear the smaller parts of a word, as in “**Twin-kle, twin-kle, lit-tle star.**”

Before your baby learns how to talk, they will practice making sounds by babbling.

If you memorize a few rhymes, you can say them wherever you and your baby go: the doctor’s office, the grocery store or driving in the car. You can also use rhymes to calm your baby at nap time or to entertain them as you go about your busy day.

Books...



Your baby...

- ★ Can sit with support
- ★ May grasp and reach for objects
- ★ May try to copy your sounds and gestures

Try this...

- ★ Hold your baby on your lap while you read
- ★ Have fun saying sounds like “oh-oh-oh” and “ba-ba-ba”
- ★ Listen to nursery rhymes and music with your baby

Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream
...Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream



6 months



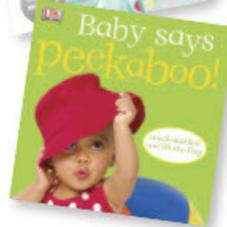
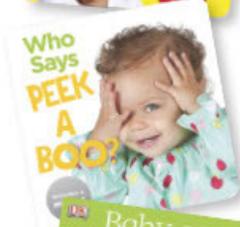
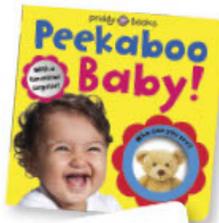
Peek-a-boo!

Babies learn through play — it is how they learn about the world around them and gain coordination and muscle control. Playing is important for your baby right now, but they can't do it alone. They need *you* to guide them as they explore their world and learn new skills.

Peek-a-boo is the perfect game to play with your baby.

It's all about eye contact — your baby loves to see you and know that you are looking at them. Hold your hands in front of your face and ask your baby, “Where am I?” As you open your hands, say, “Peek-a-boo! Here I am!” At first, your baby will be surprised to see you. Later on they will know what to expect and will get even more excited by the game.

Books...



Your baby...

- ★ Can bring their hands to their mouth
- ★ Loves to explore objects
- ★ May make sounds like “ga-ga” and “da-da”

Try this...

- ★ Have fun naming things for your baby: “Look at the ball! It's a big red ball!”
- ★ Let your baby grab, chew and play with board books. Babies need to experience books with all of their senses
- ★ Try playing peek-a-boo with your baby using a light, wispy scarf

Touch your ears, pat your nose, tickle baby's little toes!

...Hide your eyes ... where are you? Baby's playing peek-a-boo!



Nursery Rhymes for Your Baby

Nursery rhymes contain the building blocks your baby needs to learn language. Babies are drawn to language that has strong rhythm and rhyme, and rhymes slow down language and make it easier for babies to hear and learn words. You can use rhymes to calm and entertain your baby as you go throughout your busy day, and singing a lullaby can soothe your baby to sleep.

Touch Your Ears

Touch your ears,
Pat your nose,
Tickle baby's little toes!

Hide your eyes...
Where are you?
Baby's playing peekaboo!

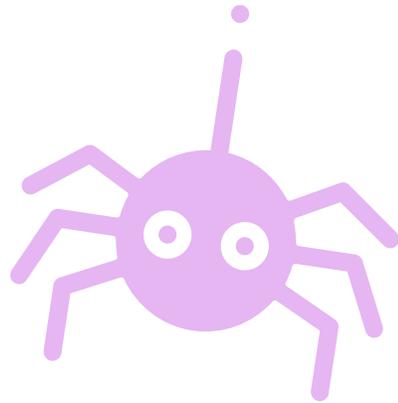


The Grand Old Duke Of York

The Grand Old Duke Of York
He had ten thousand men,
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.
And when they were up they were up,
And when they were down they were down,
And when they were only half way up
They were neither up nor down
Oh he marched them to the left,
He marched them to the right,
He marched them round and round and round,
And he marched them out of sight!

Eensy Weensy Spider

Eensy weensy spider
Climbed up the water spout;
Down came the rain,
And washed the spider out;
Out came the sunshine,
And dried out all the rain;
And the eensy weensy spider
Climbed up the spout again!



Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
All the king's horses
And all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again



The Moon Is Round

The moon is round
As round can be
Two eyes, a nose
A mouth, like me!

Row Row Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream



Using Your Library From Home

Nova Scotia Public Libraries

In addition to in-person services, all regions also offer digital collections and online content, including e-books, audiobooks, magazines and more. You'll be able to find baby and toddler books to read or listen to with your baby.

Don't worry if you do not have a library card! You can register for a virtual card online. Click the links below to register for a card in your region. You can find your library region by visiting the [Nova Scotia Public Libraries Map](#) or by visiting links to your region below:

[Annapolis Valley Regional Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Cape Breton Regional Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Colchester-East Hants Public Library](#) To register for a card in this region, please email anste@cehpubliclibrary.ca with your name, address & phone number. A library card and personal identification number will be emailed to you.

[Cumberland Public Libraries](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Eastern Counties Regional Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Halifax Public Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[South Shore Public Libraries](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

[Western Counties Regional Library](#) Click [here](#) to register for a card

Buying Baby Books Locally

Bookstores in Nova Scotia

The following local independent bookstores and publishers have good selections of baby and children's books for sale. Many offer online shopping, curbside pickup or other delivery options.

Bainton's Tannery Outlet & Mad Hatter Bookstore in Annapolis Royal currently can ship, deliver locally, or arrange curbside pickup. They take e-transfers and credit card payment over the phone. Call 902.532.2070

Bookmark Halifax is offering online ordering and has a great selection of Atlantic Canadian books. Call 902.423.0419

LaHave River Books is posting photos of their new releases and books on Facebook, and you can reach them there, by email at lahaveriverbooks@gmail.com or by phone on the weekends (902.688.1855).

Nimbus Publishing publishes a large number of Atlantic Canadian baby and children's books and offers free shipping on orders over \$50. Use coupon code NIMSHIP50 at checkout.

Nurtured Products for Parenting carries baby books and other children's items. They offer online shopping and curbside pickup from Monday to Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm, as well as HRM drop off within a 30 minute radius of the store. Call 902.405.4367.

Tattletales Books has online shopping available and a great selection of Atlantic Canadian picture books, as well as games, activities and toys. You can pay with a credit card over the phone for curbside pickup at their Dartmouth location.

Woozles Bookstore in Halifax does free deliveries within a 30 minute radius of the store. Call 902.423.7626 to arrange a delivery or curbside pickup, or for book recommendations. You can also order online.

Online Reading Resources

Websites

All-a-Board! is a free quarterly online magazine all about baby books. Each issue features articles on interesting aspects of board books. To receive a copy, subscribe to [The Baby Book Nook](#) and a new issue will land in your inbox each season.

Audible is the world's largest producer of digital audiobooks. While schools are closed for COVID-19, they are offering all stories free to stream on your desktop, laptop, phone or tablet. You can link to their stories for [Littlest Listeners here](#). You can explore the collection, select a title and start listening.

BookTrust is the UK's largest reading charity. You can visit BookTrust's website to find resources for children of all ages. Search their book suggestions and rhyme videos.

- [To listen and learn great rhymes to do with your baby, click here.](#)
- [To find books for babies according to theme, click here.](#)

Jbrary is an online library of story time resources. Two Canadian librarians share enjoyable and instructive videos of songs, rhymes, finger plays and more. It's like having a baby program at your fingertips! You'll learn so many fun activities to carry you through your day:

- [For Babytime Storytime Videos click here](#)
- [For Bath Time Storytime Videos click here](#)
- [For Lapbounce Videos click here](#)
- [For Lullabies and Soothing Songs click here](#)

[Caring for Each Other from Sesame Street](#) is a special COVID-19-focused online kit filled with a broad variety of free resources that you can use all day long to spark playful learning, offer children comfort, and focus a bit on yourself.

[A Support Guide for Parents Raising Babies and Toddlers through the Coronavirus](#) is a guide from [Quartz](#) that lists resources and activities for young children, ideas to care for caregivers and resources about how young children learn.

[Sing Along Songs](#) is a YouTube channel from Edmonton Public Library that leads you through fun and educational baby programming. You'll also enjoy their Storytime Station for children ages 2-5

Online Reading Resources continued

SingwithOurKids.com is a website providing free songs and activities for birth to five.

StoryBlocks.org is an online collection of songs and rhymes for babies, toddlers and preschoolers, in a variety of languages

[Storytime Seedlings](http://StorytimeSeedlings.com) is an educational podcast to grow young readers. Episodes are all on early literacy development for children from newborn to five years old. Programs feature books, finger-plays, rhymes, stories and songs for a screen-free storytime experience, anytime.

Podcasts

[Mabel Murple's Popping Purple Wordspinning World](http://MabelMurplesPoppingPurpleWordspinningWorld.com) Canadian storyteller, poet and author, Sheree Fitch, invites you into her world of words. Join Sheree on her energetic journey of imagination and creativity—and fun. A great place to start is with [this episode of the podcast](#) featuring two of Sheree's beloved baby books, *If I Were the Moon* and Read to Me favorite, *Kisses Kisses Baby-O!*

Social Media

There are lots of great Instagram and Facebook pages that suggest books and reading activities. Make sure you follow [Read to Me's Facebook](#) page for videos, book suggestions and reading tips. Read to Me also has hundreds of [Pinterest](#) boards featuring baby books arranged according to age, topic and interest.

Online Classes and TED Talks about Early Learning

[Building Babies' Brains through Play](#) is a mini parenting master class from UNICEF and Harvard's Center on the Developing Child. In it, director Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. explains the importance of serve and return interactions like play—and how easy they are to do. You can check out the series of videos by clicking the link above.

TED Talks:

- Patricia Kuhl studies how we learn language as babies, looking at the ways our brains form around language acquisition in [The Linguistic Genius of Babies](#)
- Rebecca Bellingham talks about [Why We Should All Be Reading Aloud to Children](#)

Local Community & Online Supports for Your Family

211 Nova Scotia provides support to Nova Scotians navigating social services. TTY: dial 711 from your TTY device and advise the operator you wish to call 2-1-1. Dial 211 or www.ns.211.ca

Caregivers Nova Scotia offers general resources and supports for friends and family who are caregivers

Family Resource Centres in Nova Scotia Some centres are offering virtual programming, connection and responsiveness to families via email, phone and social media. [Visit this map](#) to connect with a Family Resource Centre in your area

Kids Help Phone provides text, phone and live chat supports for children and youth. They provide 24/7 support in both French and English. The website also has information on different youth topics. The service is confidential. 1-800-668-6868

Mindwell U is a free online program that challenges you to take five minutes out of your day to learn the basics in mindfulness, a practice that allows a person to focus their attention and be fully present in a moment. Mindwell U can be accessed anywhere on any device

Strongest Families offers programs for adults, as well as children and youth, offered by telephone coaches. During Covid-19 if you, or a family member are looking for mental health resources, please call 1-866-470-7111 for support



We would love to hear from you as you introduce books and reading to your baby. You can connect with us at readtome.ca or on our Facebook page.

Read to Me is a non-profit, province-wide early reading promotion program that gives a free bag of books and reading resources at the hospital bedside to every baby born in Nova Scotia.

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