

When talking to your child it is important that you use your home language. Your child can learn the English words after they understand the meaning.

Reading

Start your toddler reading by snuggling up with a book together and asking them to tell you all about the pictures. Encourage them to notice interesting things on each page. Ask questions about what is happening and why and you will be helping your toddler understand the meaning behind the pictures. This is part of reading.

Soon your child may be turning pages at the right time in the story, using different words and talking about what they think is happening. Importantly, young children love spending time with a parent, caregiver or other family member and by reading together they will develop their reading skills.

Spend regular time reading with your toddler

- » Help your toddler by reading pictures on labels, in junk mail, in supermarkets, and signs and when they pick up a book and turn the pages.
- » Enjoy reading with your toddler, be enthusiastic about reading books yourself. Use the word 'reading' when you talk with your toddler about reading online, maps, making lists or how signs help you know about something important.

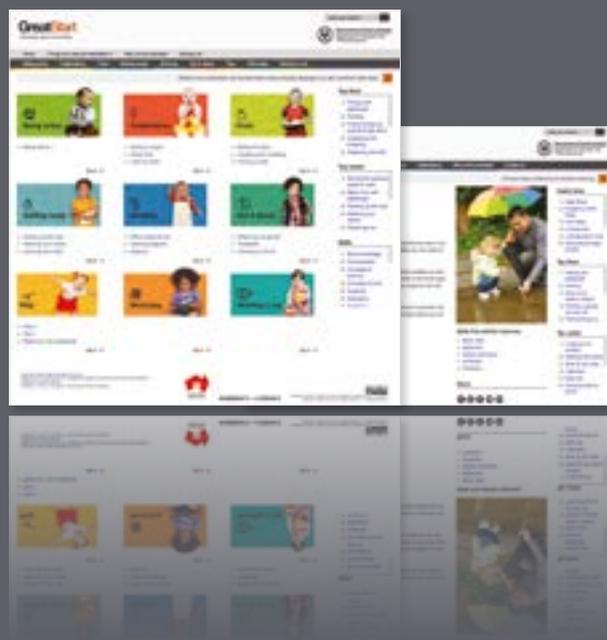


More information

Visit us for more information on how to support your child's literacy learning.

www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting/greatstart

f [EDU.SAGOV](https://www.facebook.com/edu.sagov)



GreatStart

Everyday learning for numeracy and literacy

Literacy



www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting/greatstart

a website for families with young children, from birth to 5 years of age.



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Literacy is the ability to understand or create meaning from events, objects, people's gestures, images, art, film, words, sounds, writing, music or dance.

Babies

Your baby is developing literacy from birth. Babies learn by exploring their world through watching, touch and play. Your baby communicates through looking into your eyes, facial expressions and babbling sounds. When your baby hears words, songs and stories in your home language he or she is beginning to understand the meaning of words. Babies understand words long before they can say them.

You can do things at home to encourage literacy learning.

- » Repeat your baby's sounds as a conversation.
- » Point out things on a walk.
- » Sing songs and number rhymes and enjoy music.
- » Make a time to read picture books together each day.
- » Leave books within your baby's reach.
- » Show your baby that you understand.
 - » Baby – "da"
 - » You – "I see the star."
- » Name actions and feelings so your baby connects the word to them.
- » Use describing words.
 - » Baby - "cat"
 - » You – "A big, black cat."
- » Emphasise new words. "Under the bridge."
- » Join a baby library program.

More GreatStart activity ideas

- » [Dressing your baby](#)
- » [Splish splash I'm having a bath](#)
- » [Getting ready for bed](#)
- » [Feeding baby](#)
- » [It's windy out there!](#)
- » [Baby obstacle course](#)



Toddlers (2 to 3 years)

Your toddler's brain is growing and making them very curious. Help your toddler notice what is around them and you will be supporting their thinking. Your toddler will start to share their thoughts and may begin to try expressing themselves through drawing, creating artwork, building designs or enjoying pretend play. Showing interest in what your toddler is thinking will help them build confidence in communicating.

You can do things at home to encourage literacy learning.

- » Make time to talk together.
- » Sing songs ('Ring a Ring of Roses', 'Incy, Wincy Spider')
- » Use questions that encourage more than yes or no answers. "What can you see?" Give your toddler time to think about what to say.
- » Enjoy word play like, "See you later alligator."
- » Cuddle together to read books each day. Look for clues in the pictures about what might happen next.
- » Make up stories with their toys at bath time/bed time.
- » Limit your toddler's iPad or television time, children learn best through play.
- » Notice outside sounds - birds, planes, leaves, water, wind.
- » Notice 'signs' such as 'S' for a stop sign.

More GreatStart activity ideas

- » [Movin', Grovin' with rhymes](#)
- » [Reading together](#)
- » [Is it bin night?](#)
- » [Setting the table](#)
- » [Climbing up, up, up to the sky](#)
- » [Storytelling stones](#)



Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

Your child is using what they have learned with you as they play with others. They may show their thinking by talking, artwork, construction, dance and pretend play. They may be making meaning from words, books, music, signs, dance, some text or numbers and using technology. Showing interest in what your child has to say will help them want to communicate more!

You can do things at home to encourage literacy learning.

- » Make time to do things together. Go on a picnic and collect things, noticing sights, smells and sounds.
- » Talk about memories... "Remember when..."
- » Listen as your child tells you about what they are making. Using their imagination is more important than it looking realistic.
- » Enjoy pretend play together. Your child could pretend to be the mum or dad.
- » Read favourite books over and over again so your child can read from memory.
- » Help your child to notice the number, size, position, distance, shapes and symbols around them such as in maps, signs, food shapes...
- » Choose iPad activities that encourage creativity.

More GreatStart activity ideas

- » [The paper's here](#)
- » [But why?](#)
- » [Making marks](#)
- » [What does that say?](#)
- » [How many are in there?](#)
- » [Make your own books](#)

