

*Especially for parents of infants!*

# Baby's First Picture Books

*Stories and Listening*

Can your baby sit on your lap and reach for things in front of her? Great! She's ready for looking at picture books. Check out the following ideas to introduce picture books to your little one.

## What is the practice?

Infants are most interested in books when looking at pictures of people and things they see every day. Imagine the joy of a baby looking at things that are familiar and interesting. This is why book reading can be such fun!



## What does the practice look like?

A baby sitting on an adult's lap is looking at a board book with pictures of baby animals. The child reaches and pats a picture of a kitten. The parent says with delight, "Yes, you see the kitty!" Together they look at another page. Again, the baby reaches and touches the picture. The parent describes what the baby sees. The back-and-forth activity enchants the baby. He enjoys looking through the book over and over.

## How do you do the practice?

Try these simple ideas for helping your child discover the joys of books:

- Identify things that always catch your child's attention. This can be pictures of baby faces or photographs of familiar people. It also can be animal board books, books of familiar objects, or anything your child seems to like.
- Board books and other picture books can be especially engaging. Public libraries often have books especially for babies. You can also make your own picture book! Small photo albums are good ways to show your infant pictures of familiar people, objects, and activities. Search the Web using **how to make books for babies** and you'll find many other ideas.
- Introduce new books to your baby when she is alert and attentive. Nestle your child in your lap or against your arm. Try putting her in an infant seat or prop her in a sitting position in the corner of an armchair.
- Show your child the book. Point at the first picture while saying its name. Follow your child's lead. Describe in short sentences what she looks at or touches. Book-reading times should be like a game of give-and-take. First, you do something (turn the page, for example). Then your child does something (smiles and gets excited). Keep the game going by saying, "The baby is looking at you!" The more your child looks, touches, and enjoys the book-sharing activity, the better.

## How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your child paying attention longer during reading times?
- Does your child reach, pat, or point at the pictures in books?
- Does your child recognize pictures of things she has seen before by smiling and getting excited?

# Take a look at more ways to share picture books

## *Books Are Exciting*

Jody, who is 8 months old, is cuddled in his mother's lap. Mom shows him a book of baby faces. She turns each page slowly. She waits for Jody to show some sign that he notices what he is looking at. Each time Jody moves and gets excited, his mom points to and describes the pictures in the book. The more they look at the book, the more absorbed Jody becomes in the parent-child activity.



## *Noisy Books*

Five-month-old Sara, loves to bang things to make noises. Her mother drums her fingers on different toys when Sara is playing to encourage this. Mom starts a new game by showing Sara a book that has pages with different kinds of noise makers. She opens a page and pats the noise maker. The sound grabs Sara's attention. It's not long before Sara reaches and tries to make the sounds herself. Her mother helps her make the sounds. She also describes the pictures Sara sees and the noises that she makes.

## *Picture Book Delights*

Sean, age 16 months, loves playing lap games with his parents. However, it is hard for Sean to hold his head up, even for short periods of time. His mom and dad, avid readers, are eager to help Sean enjoy books. They lie down with Sean, propping his head in the crooks of their arms to help with head control. Sean's parents know he really likes pictures of animals. The very first time he saw an animal picture book, Sean got excited. He loves every new picture he sees and every word and animal sound he sees and hears. The family enjoys looking at pictures and sharing picture books together.

