



**EARLY LITERACY DOES NOT MEAN EARLY READING**

Even before they know what words are, children benefit from watching and listening to you read aloud. Within their first year, they're able to learn basic language and reading concepts, such as how to hold a book and that you're reading words, not pictures. The earlier children grasp these concepts, the easier they learn to read when they're ready.

**Early Literacy Behaviors**

**Book Handling Behaviors**

Behaviors related to a child's physical manipulation or handling of books, such as page turning and chewing.

**Looking and Recognizing**

Behaviors related to how children pay attention to and interact with pictures in books, such as Gazing at pictures or laughing at a favorite picture. Behaviors that show recognition of and a beginning understanding of pictures in books, such as pointing to pictures of familiar objects.

**Picture and Story Comprehension**

Behaviors that show a child's understanding of pictures and events in a book, such as imitating an action seen in a picture or talking about the events in a story.

**Story-Reading Behaviors**

Behaviors that include children's verbal interactions with books and their increasing understanding of print in books, such as babbling in imitation of reading or running fingers along printed words.

Schickedanz, (1999). *Much more than the ABCs: The early stages of reading and writing*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.



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## Ways to Share Books with Babies & Toddlers

### Make Sharing Books Part Of Every Day

Read or share stories at bedtime or early morning.

### Have Fun

Children can learn from you that books are fun, which is an important ingredient in learning to read.

### A Few Minutes is OK-Don't Worry if You Don't Finish the Story

Young children can only sit for a few minutes for a story, but as they grow, they will be able to sit longer.

### Talk or Sing About the Pictures

You do not have to read the words to tell a story.

### Let Children Turn the Pages

Babies need board books and help turning pages, but a three-year-old can do it alone. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!

### Show Children the Cover Page

Explain what the story is about.

### Show Children the Words

Run your finger along the words as you read them, from left to right.

### Make the Story Come Alive

Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story.

### Make It Personal

Talk about your own family, pets, or community when you are reading about others in a story.

### Ask Questions About the Story, and Let Children Ask Questions Too!

Use the story to engage in conversation and to talk about familiar activities and objects.

### Let Children Tell the Story

Children as young as three years old can memorize a story, and many children love to be creative through storytelling.



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[www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders](http://www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders)

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