



STEPS OF EARLY LITERACY



MOTOR	COGNITIVE	WHAT PARENTS CAN DO
0-6 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts soft, plastic books in mouth • Begins reaching for books • Moves arms as rhymes are sung 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to look at human faces and black and white patterns • Turns to the sound of a familiar voice for songs and rhymes – may respond by cooing, gurgling or smiling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing nursery rhymes or make soft rhyming noises • Be sensitive to your baby’s particular cues and stop if she gets tired • Pay close attention to your baby’s needs for stimulation • Imitate your baby’s sighs, sounds, coos, and gurgles
6-12 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches for book • Book to mouth • Sits in lap, head steady • Turns pages with adult help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at pictures • Vocalizes, pats pictures • Prefers pictures of faces • Understands simple words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold child comfortably; face-to-face gaze • Follow baby’s cues for “more” and “stop” • Point and name pictures
12-18 MONTHS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits without support • May carry book • Holds book with help • Turns board pages, several at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer mouths right away • Points at pictures with one finger • May make same sound for particular picture (labels) • Points when asked, “where’s...?” • Turns book right side up • Gives book to adult to read • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to child’s prompting to read • Let the child control the book • Be comfortable with toddler’s short attention span • Ask “where’s the...?” and let child point

**Make it easy for babies to explore and choose books.
Have an open basket or container within reach of your child so that he/she may be able to choose for himself.**

18-24 MONTHS

- Turns board book pages easily one at a time
- Carries book around the house
- May use book as for comfort in new situations

- Names familiar pictures
- Fills in words in familiar stories
- “Reads” to dolls or stuffed animals
- Recites parts of well-known stories
- Attention span highly variable

- Relate books to child’s experiences
- Use books in routines, bedtimes
- Ask “what’s that” and give child time to answer
- Pause and let child complete the sentence

24-36 MONTHS

- Learns to handle paper pages
- Goes back and forth in books to find favorite pages



- Recites whole phrases, sometimes whole stories
- Coordinates text with picture
- Protests when adult gets a word wrong in a familiar story
- Reads familiar books to self

- Keep using books in routines
- Read at bedtime
- Be willing to read the same story over and over
- Ask, simple questions i.e. , “What’s that?” “What is she doing?”
- Relate books to child’s experiences
- Provide crayons and paper

3 YEARS AND UP

- Competent book handling
- Turns paper pages one at a time



- Listens to longer stories
- Can retell familiar story
- Understands what text is
- Moves finger along text
- “Writes” name
- Moves toward letter recognition

- Ask, “What’s happening?”
- Encourage writing and drawing
- Let child tell the story



Source: Reach Out and Read National Center

CHILDREN DEVELOP AND LEARN AT THEIR OWN PACE. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT TALK TO YOUR CHILD FAMILY EDUCATOR OR FAMILY DOCTOR.