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## Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™ Tip Sheet

### Reading with Your Child

Reading is one of those pleasurable activities parents can engage their children in that provides so many developmental benefits. When done on a regular basis, reading helps young children to develop language and listening skills and prepares them for recognizing the written word. Most importantly, reading provides the opportunity for parent and child to enjoy each other's company in a quiet, fun and emotionally satisfying way.



#### COMFORT

- ◆ Make reading a part of your child's daily bedtime routine. From the youngest infant to the oldest preschooler, reading at bedtime provides comfort and security. The nicest way to end the day is sharing a favourite story with a parent.
- ◆ Pay attention to which pages or books become your child's favourite. When you support your child's interests he gets the message that what he likes or cares about is valued.
- ◆ Describe the emotions shown in pictures or in the characters, e.g., "Baby bear looks sad. Do you think he needs a hug?" Young children need to hear and learn the words for feelings as they begin to make sense of their own emotions.





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#### PLAY

- ◆ Take time to talk about the story together. Say, “I wonder what will happen next” or ask, “What do you think this girl is going to do?” This simple conversation stretches your child’s imagination and creative thinking. For younger children ask them to point to an object when you ask, “Where’s the cow?” or wait for a response when you ask, “What’s that?” Very young children will learn that communication is a two way process.
- ◆ Change the tone of your voice and use lots of animation in your face, e.g., whisper for someone who is sleeping, or use a lower tone for something that is big. This will engage your child in the story and she will also learn to watch your face and listen to your voice for different emotions.



#### TEACH

- ◆ Reread stories that have become favourites and leave out key words or phrases. Your child will love to fill in the blanks, practice beloved rhymes or take the opportunity to retell the story in her own words. This will make reading an interactive experience.
- ◆ Take the opportunity to talk about the colour, shape and size of objects. It will take a while before your preschooler will be able to identify and label the abstract concepts of size, shape and colour but books provide a simple vehicle to make them aware of such concepts.

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