

Especially for infants with disabilities

Show Me the Funny

Stories and Listening

Most children enjoy looking at books with pictures of fun and interesting things. Some children who have sensory or developmental difficulties need extra help to benefit from looking at books. This practice guide includes ideas to make it easier for a young child with a disability to enjoy book reading.

What is the practice?

This practice is about changing the way book reading is done so an infant can participate in this activity. Changing or modifying how you show a child a book can encourage him to be part of the book-reading activity.

What does the practice look like?

Where, *when*, and *how* you read a book make it easier for your child to be part of the activity. Infants benefit most from looking at books when they see pictures of familiar things. The more actively involved your child is in book reading, the better.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some things you can do to involve your child in book reading.

- Be sure the book is about something your child likes and includes pictures of fun and interesting things. Think of all your child's interests and pick a book that is about what she likes or prefers.
- Children are sometimes easily distracted. Encourage your child to look at books when there is not much else going on around him. Be sure the TV and radio are turned off. Show your child a book in a quiet place. The fewer distractions, the better.
- Changing when you read to your child can make it easier for him to stay "tuned in" to the activity. It's best to read books together when your child is alert. When a child is alert, he will pay more attention to the book you are showing him.
- Choose a book with large pictures if your child has vision problems or difficulty focusing on the pages. When looking at a book with a child who wears glasses, be sure he has them on. Try books printed on non-glossy paper so the pictures are easier to see. Try books that have only one picture on a page with no other background to reduce distractions.
- Try pointing to the pictures in a book while you describe or talk about what she is looking at. Be sure to hold the book in a position that makes it easy to see where you are pointing.
- Does your child have difficulty sitting or holding her head up? Try holding her on your lap so she can look at the book held in front of her.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your child looking longer at a book you show him?
- Is your child excited about looking at a book or listening to a story?
- Does your child recognize familiar pictures in a book?

Take a look at more FUN reading together

Read all about me!

Lili is an on-the-go 11-month-old who is interested in everything—but not for very long! One thing that seems to keep her attention is pictures of herself and her brother and sister. The best pictures are ones showing things Lili really likes to watch or do. Her mother has made books for each child with about 10 photographs showing them doing their favorite activities. Lili loves to play in the bathtub. Her own special book, *My Bath Is Fun*, has photos of Lili getting into the tub. Other photos show her splashing in the water, playing with bubbles, and doing other fun bathtime things. Mom tells Lili her story, “making a big deal” of everything Lili is doing in each photo. This keeps the little girl’s attention for a long time.



Stick around for a real page-turner!

Nico loves sitting on his mother’s lap while she reads and shows him his favorite books. He reaches for the books and tries to turn the pages. Nico’s motor problems make it hard for him to lift one page at a time. His mother glues wooden craft sticks to each page of his board books in a stair-step manner. This makes it easy for Nico to turn the pages. He has become especially good at putting his fingers under the stick and turning to the next page.

All the better to see you with!

Nine-month-old Micah has difficulty seeing. He holds things close to his face to see what he is holding. Micah really enjoys having his mother read to him. But he finds it hard to see the pictures in some storybooks. Any story about animals always captures Micah’s attention. His mother borrowed some oversized picture books about animals from their local library. The pictures are just the right size for Micah to see. He enjoys getting to listen to a story and see pictures of each animal his mother is reading about.

