

Developmental Milestones of Early Literacy



MOTOR:

COGNITIVE:

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

6–12 months



- reaches for book
- book to mouth
- sits in lap, head steady
- turns pages with adult help

- looks at pictures
- vocalizes, pats pictures
- prefers pictures of faces

- hold child comfortably; face-to-face gaze
- follow baby's cues for "more" and "stop"
- point and name pictures

12–18 months



- sits without support
- may carry book
- holds book with help
- turns board pages, several at a time

- 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

- 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

18–24 months



- turns board book pages easily, one at a time
- carries book around the house
- may use book as transitional object

- 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 pictures

- 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 "what's that?"
- 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

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