



**Tip-sheet for
parents of toddlers
(12 months to 3 years)**

Toddlers love and need books

Reading and talking about what you are reading is very important for toddlers. They learn about different experiences through books, and this helps toddlers make sense of the world. Singing songs and saying nursery rhymes are also very important. Remember, it's never too early to develop an interest in and love of reading. Go to www.ncca.ie/aistear toolkit for a list of suitable books for toddlers.

Choosing the right book

Toddlers love picture books especially those about everyday experiences and feelings. They will identify with the characters in the book as they dress, eat, visit, nap, become toilet trained, go to the doctor, play and visit the park. You can also use picture books to introduce new experiences – maybe to help get ready for a new baby, a visit to the hospital or for starting pre-school.

Read the book yourself first to see if it is suitable for your child. A scary book might terrify one child while another child will love it and plead for it to be read again and again! You will know what your child likes and what will capture his or her attention.

Different books suit different times of the day. Children often like to make sounds or move about during an exciting story. For example, books about transport or about animals might have them joining in with sound effects or movements. Choose more soothing stories for bedtime as stories are a good way to wind down and end the day.

Books that include rhymes, songs and repetition are also great for toddlers. These are fun to read aloud especially when your child joins in. Toddlers also love finding hidden things, so lift-the-flap books are really good for this age group. Books with detailed pictures or recurring items hidden in the pictures are also great for discovering and exploring.





Tips for reading with your toddler

<p>Toddlers can read too!</p>	<p>Toddlers love to take part, so pause to let your child finish a phrase or chant a refrain from a familiar story.</p> <p>They also like to point things out. Ask questions like, <i>Where is ...? Can you find the ...?</i> Soon your toddler will be happily pointing to something on each page. Sometimes reading the book could entail simply asking your toddler to find things; you might not get around to reading the actual words at all!</p>
<p>I am listening!</p>	<p>There are times when toddlers will sit very happily and listen to a story. At other times they may need to move as they listen but don't worry if your child skips, runs or tumbles as you read. They may be moving, but they are also listening.</p> <p>Your 'reading aloud voice' needs to keep your toddler's attention so vary your tone and moo, bark and honk if the story needs it! Look for stories that are short and easily understood. Read a little bit a few times a day.</p>
<p>Look at the cover of the book</p>	<p>The first time you read the book talk about the pictures on the cover and ask your toddler to predict (think about and say) what the story might be about. The cover picture usually gives a clue.</p> <p>Tell your toddler the title (name) of the book, the name of the author (the person who wrote the book) and the name of the illustrator (the person who drew the pictures) and do this often so your toddler becomes familiar with these terms.</p>
<p>Look at the pictures</p>	<p>Spend time exploring the pictures and talking about them. Instead of reading the words in the book, talk about the pictures as these are often much more important than the words.</p> <p>Sometimes it is the picture that tells the story and if you only look at the words you will miss the point of the story. For example in <i>Rosie's walk</i> the words never mention the fox but he is near Rosie in all of the pictures!</p>
<p>Ask me interesting questions</p>	<p>Take time to listen to your toddler's opinions and ideas. Try not to ask questions that need a yes/no, right or wrong answer. Instead, encourage your toddler to tell you what he or she thinks about the book: <i>Why do you think ... I wonder how ...</i></p>
<p>Add a prop</p>	<p>Sometimes it is nice to add a prop to make the story more interesting. For example you could have a torch for <i>Can't you sleep little bear</i> or some pieces of fruit for <i>The very hungry caterpillar</i>. The pictures in the book will give you lots of ideas for suitable props.</p>
<p>Give me a nice bedtime story routine</p>	<p>It's a good idea to start reading as part of the bedtime routine. Once your toddler has been fed, bathed and is ready to settle down, he/she will be less interested in handling the book and more likely to listen to you reading a story in a nice gentle voice.</p>

Above all, enjoy reading together!

