

## Sharing books with babies and toddlers

Book sharing is a wonderful way to help your child gain an early love of books. It's fun and is the ideal opportunity to share a cuddle at the same time.

- Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV or radio so there are no distractions.
- Sit your child on your knee and share the book. If you are looking at it with a baby or very young child, don't just leave it with the child at this age, as they won't understand that it isn't for eating or for chewing!
- Don't read for too long. Babies and young children get bored quickly so little and often is best.
- Give your child time to respond to your chatter.
- As well as reading the story, talk about the pictures. If there's a picture of a cat, talk about a cat that you know.
- Don't put any pressure on your child to name the pictures, but if he copies your words, praise him.
- Even at this early age your child will learn how books work - that you start at the front and have to turn the pages for the story to keep going. He will soon start to reach out to help you turn the pages.
- It's good to share favourite books again and again. Repetition helps children to understand and remember the language they hear.
- Let other grown-ups join in – friends, grandparents, older brothers and sisters.
- Visit your local library for different books, it's free to join. Don't worry if books get damaged, libraries understand.
- There are all kinds of books written for babies - touchy feely books, books with noises, books with flaps to lift, cloth books and even books without words.

**Remember, you're not teaching your child to read, just developing an enjoyment for stories and books which will help later on at nursery and school.**

