

# Supporting Language & Literacy at 3 Years

## Making Storytime Fun, With and Without Books

At 36 months, your child is using lots of action words and asking lots of questions. They are probably talking well enough for others to understand them most of the time. Storytime, with or without books, is a great chance to connect with your child, teach them more words, and build a love for books and reading.

Physical books or knowing how to read are not required to build a love of stories and reading. Share family stories or make up stories to share. Don't feel like you must read word for word on the page. Make the book or story your own by using the illustrations to tell your version of the story. Or even make your own simple book.

Use the READ strategy with books and oral storytelling to make the most out of story time.

### **R - Repeat the book or story (A LOT)**

Your child will love listening to a story over and over again. Share the story at least 3-5 times and don't be surprised if they want more. Each time, focus on a different part of the story. The first couple of times focus on the actions, such as what's happening and who's doing it. The next couple of times focus on the thoughts and emotions, like what the characters are feeling and why they do the actions in the story. After that, help your child tell the story and let them share what they remember and learned about the story. Soon, they'll be reading and telling the story with you.

### **E - Engage and Enjoy**

Make storytime exciting by using different voices, acting out parts of the story, and using lots of facial expressions. You can help them understand new words and ideas with PAT – Point to what you're talking about – Act out the word – Tell them what it means using words they already know.

### **A - Ask Questions**

Ask questions to help your child engage more with the story. "Why do you think the turtle goes inside his shell?" "Why do you think they put a leash on the dog before they left the park?" These open-ended questions encourage conversation and let your child share their thoughts and feelings.

### **D - Do More**

Extend the conversation (and the learning) by doing something that connects to the story.

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### **Language & pre-literacy skills to look for:**

- understands words like 'in,' 'on,' and 'under'
- follows more complex instructions (2-3 steps)
- says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked, like 'running,' 'eating,' or 'playing'
- says their first name when asked
- can name most familiar things
- names a friend
- says words like 'I,' 'me,' 'we,' and 'you' and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time
- talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges
- asks 'who,' 'what,' 'where,' or 'why' questions, like 'Where is mommy/daddy?'

There are lots of great books to explore at this age. Here's a short list of some of our favorites:

- *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmens
- *Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf
- *A Little SPOT of Emotion* series by Diane Alber
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
- *Corduroy* by Don Freeman
- *Ricky, the Rock That Couldn't Roll* by Mr. Jay
- *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* by Kat Zhang
- *Hooray, A Pinata!* by Elisa Kleven