

Parenting Counts

Reading, Learning, Living

Sponsored by **MANKATO CLINIC
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The Happy Childhood

From *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading* by Esme 'Raji Codell

Love, like literacy, is a great source of strength. And, like literacy, it is a gift we can give our children that never goes away.

It's all but inevitable that sooner or later our children will face the world's hardships. Amid such challenges it can mean so much to have happy memories and to know that someone has loved them.

Reading with your children is one wonderful way to ensure that they will have those happy memories. But it is not the *only* way. In the words of Garrison Keillor, "Nothing you do for your children is ever wasted." All quality time spent with your children will foster in them the confidence to explore their world and will instill in them the security to concentrate well.

Reading with them – because it is a way of spending quality time together – will help your children be receptive to all learning, including but not limited to reading. It will help them face life's challenges. The following are some ways that you can help your child have a happy childhood.

The Happy Childhood Checklist

- ✓ Have your child dictate stories to you and write them down for them.
- ✓ Visit a museum.
- ✓ Ask your child about her day at the end of it.
- ✓ Tell stories about grandparents and the child's family history.
- ✓ Help your child notice the alphabet and numbers in everyday situations.
- ✓ Help your child write and mail letters to people.
- ✓ Read and discuss the newspaper in front of your child.
- ✓ Switch off the television during prime-time commercials.
- ✓ Take your child to the supermarket with you.
- ✓ Make music with your child.
- ✓ Bring your child on a trip.
- ✓ Bring your child to work with you one day.
- ✓ Celebrate lost teeth.
- ✓ Get your child his own library card...and use it.
- ✓ Take walks or bike rides together.
- ✓ Give your child free time in which to play.

- ✓ Give thanks at mealtimes or bedtime.
- ✓ Close a book before the last page and ask your child what she thinks will happen.
- ✓ Cook with your child.
- ✓ Say you're sorry when you make a mistake.
- ✓ Say yes sometimes when your child expects you to say no.
- ✓ Stay home from work when your child is sick.
- ✓ Listen to knock-knock jokes.
- ✓ Leave a night-light on.
- ✓ Look up an answer to a question with your child.
- ✓ Take pictures and put them in an album.
- ✓ Dance with your child standing on your feet.
- ✓ Stand at the bottom of the playground slide and applaud enthusiastically.
- ✓ Help your child get acquainted with nursery rhymes from an early age.
- ✓ Tell your child that you're proud of him and that you love him.
- ✓ Tell your child you love him even when you're not proud.
- ✓ Read aloud to your child.

The ideal time to begin sharing books with children is during babyhood, even with children as young as six weeks.

National Research Council, *Starting Out Right*

why read
today

funny bones



- A. Knock Knock
- B. Who's there?
- A. Olive
- B. Olive who?
- A. Olive you!



Do you qualify for help? Check out this website to see!

Bridge to Benefits

Bridge to Benefits is a multi-state project by Children's Defense Fund Minnesota to improve the well-being of families and individuals by linking them to help in the form of public work support programs and tax credits.

Bridge to Benefits uses an online screening tool designed to help families and individuals understand if they are eligible for eight public work support programs and two income tax credits to help people meet their basic needs. In Minnesota, thousands of eligible families are not participating in these programs or claiming the tax credits that could provide increased economic stability for their families.

To see if you or someone else may be eligible for help, visit <http://mn.bridgetobenefits.org> to use the Eligibility Screening Tool. You will be asked a few simple questions but you will NOT be asked to give information that identifies you. It's easy, confidential and free!

kids in the kitchen

The 5 Nutrients All Babies Need

By David T. Tayloe Jr., M.D., Babytalk - www.parenting.com

1. **IRON** - Iron is critical for brain development. Good sources: Formula and iron-fortified cereal after six months.
2. **CALCIUM** - This mineral helps children achieve peak bone mass necessary for building strong bones. Good sources: breast milk, formula, and later yogurt, cheese, and oatmeal.
3. **ZINC** - Besides having a positive effect on cognition and development, zinc's primary roles are to maintain immune function and assure optimal cell growth and repair. Good sources: formula and fortified cereal, yogurt, cheese after seven months.
4. **VITAMINS A, D, E, AND K** - **Vitamin A** promotes proper vision and healthy skin. Sources: carrots and broccoli. **Vitamin D** increases calcium absorption and helps with bone growth. Sources: formula and daily supplement for breastfed babies. **Vitamin E**'s antioxidant powers facilitate cell growth and the development of the nervous system. Sources: cereals and grains. **Vitamin K** helps with normal blood clotting. Sources: leafy vegetables, fruit and soybean oil.
5. **VITAMINS C/B** - **Vitamin C** improves iron absorption. Sources: tomatoes and strawberries. **B vitamins** enhance the immune and nervous systems, maintain healthy skin and muscle tone, promote cell growth and regulate metabolism. Sources: brown rice, bananas and eggs.

activity block

Silly Stuff

To encourage the development of humor, notice what your baby finds funny and repeat it.

1. Try shaking your head and talking in a funny voice. Generally, anything out of the ordinary will make babies laugh as long as it is not startling or loud.
2. Add props like hats, glasses, and other things that change your appearance.
3. Try the props on your baby in front of a mirror and laugh together.
4. Pretend to drink out of a baby bottle.
5. Creep your fingers up his arm and around his other body parts.

Tummy Time

Playing from the tummy position allows for a different view of the world. Although it is recommended that babies sleep on their backs as a precaution against SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), your baby can still benefit from exercise in the tummy position while awake.

1. Lay your baby on his tummy and get down on that level, making faces and noises to encourage raising his head, which strengthens the neck and upper body muscles.
2. Lay out some brightly colored toys so your baby can see them from this position.
3. Get your baby's attention with any object and move it back and forth slowly so it is tracked with the eyes.
4. Roll your baby to his side and then gently back to the tummy, saying, "Wheeeeeeee."