



Reading Together.



A handy guide for storytime at home.

Welcome!

Reading with a child is a special experience. It's a time to learn, laugh, and discover stories together. Storytime at home is also the best way to set your child up for early reading success.

You are your child's first teacher.

Reading to children regularly helps them develop better language, vocabulary, focus, and social emotional skills. **It's never too early or too late to begin.**

This guide is designed to provide fun tips and ideas to help you create meaningful storytime moments at home.

Read on!

Before we begin...

When you read with your child, you're already making a difference. There's no right or wrong way to do it! Here are some tips to add to your bag of storytime tricks.

Routines: Children love predictability. Try to make storytime part of your daily routine. It can be at bedtime or whenever works best for your family.

Movement: Got a wiggly reader? Let them move around, grab a snack, or use a small toy, crayons, or paper while you read.

Keep it short: It's okay if you don't get through the whole book. Just do a few pages and come back to it another time.

Picture Walks: Sometimes you may just look at the pictures and talk about what you see. Ask open-ended questions (questions that require more than a yes or no answer) and explore the illustrations together.

STEP ONE

Choose a Book

There are so many books to choose from! Look for books that have interesting pictures and fun language like rhymes, sounds, and repetition. Let your child's interests and curiosity guide you in selecting books.

- **Let kids take the lead:** Allow them hold the book and to turn the pages.
- **Try interactive books:** Look for books with flaps, textures, or sounds.
- **Remember:** It's okay if your child wants to read the same book again and again! Repetition is healthy—it helps build vocabulary and strengthens comprehension.

Need help choosing a book? Talk to your local librarian, or browse our Booklists by visiting:

islandreadersandwriters.org/booklists-resources

STEP TWO

Act It Out

Acting out a book helps children better understand the story, build language skills, and explore emotions.

- **Encourage participation:** Kids love joining in! Can they move like an animal on the page, make noises, or repeat phrases with you? Chant or sing repetitive words together—like the classic line: *“I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house down!”*
- **Be playful:** Add excitement with different voices or turn a page slowly to build suspense. Try out different sounds—vehicle noises, animal sounds—and most of all, have fun and enjoy yourself!

When you read together...

...your child learns words they may not hear in everyday conversations. Each new book is an opportunity to build vocabulary and future reading skills.

STEP THREE

Talk Together

Kids are naturally curious! It's okay if they interrupt or ask questions. Talking to your child supports vocabulary development which helps them learn to read. Below are some questions to get started.

- **Before Reading:** As you look at the illustrations on the cover ask, "What do you see in this picture?" "What do you think this story will be about?" For younger children, point to things in the pictures and name them or ask your child to name them.
- **During Reading:** "What do you think will happen next?" "How is the character feeling?" "Why do you think the character is doing that?"
- **After Reading:** "Tell me your favorite part of the story." "What did you like or not like in the story?"

STEP FOUR

Time to Play!

Reading and playing together go hand in hand. Together, they spark creativity, fuel imagination, and create memorable moments to share.

- **Sing and rhyme:** Use songs, nursery rhymes, or fingerplays that relate to the story. Props can also bring the story to life!
- **Play games:** Try simple games like *I Spy* or make up stories based on the pictures.
- **Act it out:** Use toys, puppets, or household items to act out scenes from the book.
- **Get creative:** Use the story as inspiration to scribble, draw, and write together.

RESOURCES

More to Explore

We hope you've enjoyed this guide and will use these tips the next time you read together! To continue supporting you and your child on your reading journey, we've compiled more resources below:

Storytime Guides

Our Storytime Guides include rhymes to sing, crafts to make, and games to play for some of our favorite books.

IRW's Booklists

Twice a year, IRW publishes a list of recommended new books!

The Maine Storytime Finder

This online map allows you to find a storytime at a library near you.



To find these resources & more, scan the QR code or visit us at: islandreadersandwriters.org/forever-books



About IRW

Our mission is to inspire a passion for reading & learning.

Island Readers & Writers (IRW) is an educational nonprofit based in Southwest Harbor, ME, established in 2007. We bring book-based experiences—including author and illustrator visits—to our 26 partner schools, offer professional development for educators, and host community programs.

Forever Books is IRW's early childhood initiative, supporting children and families as they build literacy skills and prepare for school.



In 2020, IRW was honored by the Library of Congress Literacy Awards for best practices. To date, IRW has given more than 35,000 personalized books to Maine children.

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