**Developmental Milestones of Early Literacy**  
(Reach Out and Read National Center)

### 0 – 12 Months

**Motor**
- Reaches for book
- Book to mouth
- Sits in lap, head steady
- Turns pages with adult help

**Cognitive**
- Looks at pictures
- Vocalizes, pats pictures
- Prefers pictures of faces

**What Parents Can Do:**
- Hold child comfortably, face-to-face gaze
- Follow baby’s cues for “more” and “stop”
- Point and name pictures

### 12 – 18 Months

**Motor**
- Sits without support
- May carry book
- Holds book with help
- Turns board pages, several at a time

**Cognitive**
- No longer mouths right away
- Points at pictures with one finger
- May make same sound for a particular picture
- Points when asked, “Where’s…?”
- Turns book right side up

**What Parents Can Do:**
- Let the child control the book
- Be comfortable with toddler’s short attention span
- Respond to child’s prompting to read
- Ask, “Where’s the …?” and let child point

### 18 – 24 Months

**Motor**
- Turns board book pages easily, one at a time
- Carries book around the house
- May use book as transitional object

**Cognitive**
- Names familiar pictures
- Fills in words in familiar stories
- “Reads” to dolls or stuffed animals
- Recites parts of well-known stories
- Attention span highly variable

**What Parents Can Do:**
- Relate book to child’s experiences
- Use book in routines and bedtimes
- Ask, “What’s that?” and give child time to answer
- Pause and let child complete the sentence

### 24 – 36 Months

**Motor**
- Learns to handle paper pages
- Goes back and forth in books to find favorite pictures

**Cognitive**
- Recites whole phrases, sometimes whole stories
- Coordinates text and pictures
- Protests when adult gets a word wrong in familiar story
- Reads familiar books to self

**What Parents Can Do:**
- Keep using books in routines
- Read at bedtime
- Be willing to read the same story over and over
- Relate books to child’s experiences
- Provide crayons and paper

### 3 Years and Up

**Motor**
- Competent book handling
- Turns paper pages one at a time

**Cognitive**
- Listens to longer stories
- Can retell familiar stories
- Understands what text is
- Moves finger along text
- “Writes” name
- Moves toward letter recognition

**What Parents Can Do:**
- Ask, “What’s happening?”
- Encourage writing and drawing
- Let child tell the story
Learning to Love Reading

Learning to love reading begins long before a child learns how to sound out words and read independently.

**Read to your child.**
Even before birth children learn to listen and respond to spoken words. Reading aloud can help calm a child, increase vocabulary, and increase attention span.

**Excite your child about reading.**
Listening to books is not a time for a child to sit quietly and be bored. Make reading aloud exciting (even if you are re-reading a book for the 100th time) by changing your voice, asking questions, and mis-reading.

**A rich reading environment.**
Provide a variety of reading materials (books, magazines, photo albums), comfortable locations, and dedicated time for reading.

**Do it!**
Your child not only needs to participate in reading activities, but they also need to see you reading—a magazine, a grocery list, or even a bill.

**Information supplied by:**

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Understanding Disabilities
Creating Opportunities

Additional information about reading can be found at the following websites:

US Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov

Get Ready to Read
http://www.getreadytoread.org

Reach Out and Read
http://www.reachoutandread.org

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