

# THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

BEING  
A TRAUMA  
INFORMED  
COMMUNITY

Reading is an important skill that can help to set a child up for life. But how early should children be read to, and how can you encourage a love of reading and learning?

Reading is a skill children will use throughout their life. It's never too early to reap the benefits of reading. Research shows that reading with babies under 6 months of age can help them learn to speak. No matter their age, any engagement with reading will help children and young people to develop their problem solving skills and improve their concentration levels and memory retention. Reading books with your child can also provide a basis for good parent-child attachment and relationships.

Reading can also help children emotionally. Through stories, children learn about differences and gain insight into other people around them. Stories can also help children learn to identify and work through difficult emotions and experiences. This is something that is especially important for children who have experienced trauma.

## Get started

Introducing reading into your child's bedtime routine is a great way to start. Bedtime reading also promotes good sleep routines and reduces habits that negatively impact sleep, such as using screens before bed. Reading before bed has also been linked to longer sleep cycles.



## What else can you do?

- ✓ Read early and often. Books don't need to have words, and you can make the story be whatever you want. Even if you struggle reading the words yourself, giving children access to books and sharing that time with them is still important. Look at the pictures, point out and name things you see. All of these things will help to develop literacy.
- ✓ Visit libraries. The libraries in the ACT are free to visit and join. They also run programs which are aimed at small children to increase their literacy skills.
- ✓ Encourage your child to choose the books that you read together. Even if you have read the same book over and over again, remember that this will still create a connection with your child. Sharing their favourite book with their carer can increase a child's love of reading.
- ✓ Consider listening to stories in the car as you travel instead of having your child watch something on a screen. There are many apps available, including free stories available on the ABC Kids Listen App. You can also borrow audiobooks from ACT Libraries using the Borrow Box app.
- ✓ No matter the issue or problem that a child is facing, there is a book that will help. Reach out to the Therapeutic Assessment and Planning Team for advice on great reads for children.



*Note: The terms 'child' and 'children' also refer to 'young person' and 'young people'.*

Here to help! Come and talk to us if you'd like more practical ways you can be trauma informed.

### Sources:

- > Niklas, Cohrssen, & Tayler, The Sooner, the Better: Early Reading to Children, 2016.
- > Mindell & Williamson, Benefits of a bedtime routine in young children: Sleep, development, and beyond, 2018.
- > Jennings, The Reading Bug and how you can help your children catch it, 2003.
- > Source images: Freepik.com

  
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