

READING TO YOUR BABY



READING TO YOUR BABY HAS MANY BENEFITS

It's no secret to most people that reading is great for our brain development and our mental wellbeing.

What may not be quite so well-known are the benefits of reading to babies. Talking, reading or even singing quietly to your baby will soothe and reassure them. It also helps them to develop good language and communication skills.



Our tiniest babies, those who are born early or unwell, benefit from being read to. Your baby has heard voices and sounds from inside the womb and continuing this will help both you and your baby. Even the smallest babies recognise the tone of voice and speech patterns of their families.

Talking and reading to your baby while Kangaroo cuddling is especially good as the vibrations through your chest assist with bonding and relaxation. This bonding is important for both parent and child as many parents are unsure what they can do to help but this is the one simple thing you can do and has great benefits.

If your baby is not yet ready for Kangaroo cuddles, then you can still read to them in the incubator. It doesn't matter what you read, just choose a couple of books you feel comfortable with.

Reading to your baby:

- ✓ Is a great bonding tool, your baby feels reassured and calm hearing your voice and allows you to be engaged in a positive way
- ✓ Helps with early brain development. Early reading gives your baby's brain a boost in terms of hearing and processing human sounds
- ✓ Saturates your baby's brain with language which is critical for human development
- ✓ Allows parents, siblings, grandparents the chance to enjoy an activity with baby
- ✓ Promotes future positive reading habits.

Remember:

- Your baby loves to hear your voice as it makes them feel calm and safe. However, please remember to speak softly as loud noises can be scary and the volume has previously been muffled in the womb.

Most brain development occurs from birth to age two, so babies and toddlers need stimulation. The best way to stimulate babies' brains is to talk to them more. When a child is born prematurely, they might spend a few days, weeks or months in the neonatal unit. Talking and communicating with your baby from day one will help the two of you get to know each other, and gives your child a great start in life. The stimulation of your voice and contact will help your baby develop and bond with you in the early days.

Refer also to the PDF on [Kangaroo cuddles](#) available on The Neonatal Trust website.