

# Story Time Adult Guidance

## What Does Story Time Look Like for Babies?

It is never too early to start reading books and enjoying story time with babies. Reading lays the foundation for learning how to talk as babies are introduced to new words and sounds, make connections between words and pictures and are introduced to new concepts, such as colours and shapes. In addition, spending time sharing books will help babies to listen and respond. As babies develop, they will use gurgles, babbles, gestures, wiggles and facial expressions to react to words and sentences.

Providing a language-rich environment is essential to introducing babies to the world of talk and communication. Therefore, when participating in story time with babies, activities can involve storytelling, sharing books, talking, singing, sharing rhymes and using puppets and objects. Using varied approaches provides sensory engagement which will stimulate babies' imagination and tune them into the spoken word.

It is important that when preparing for story time, you find a quiet place with less distractions and ensure that all babies are able to see the book clearly. Story time shouldn't feel hurried and time should be given to listen to babies as they babble, clap or gesture towards the pages, as this is their way of communicating and responding to the text. Make sure that story time follows babies' interests and is fun and engaging. Never be afraid to use funny voices and sounds - babies will love this!



## What are the Best Types of Books to Read with Babies?

There are so many wonderful books available nowadays and therefore it can be hard to make decisions about which books are best to read to babies.

Ideally, offer a range of books and language-rich experiences, choosing books which have some of the following features:

- ★ a strong rhythm, rhyme and lots of repetition
- ★ strong, high-contrast coloured pictures, such as black and white books with simple shapes and patterns that babies can learn to focus on
- ★ pictures that are different textures for babies to explore
- ★ interactive elements, such as different textures, mirrors to peer into, sound buttons to press or have lift-the-flap or peek-a-boo style pages – babies find these exciting to interact with
- ★ photos of their lives - babies will love to engage with their own personal books with photos of familiar and significant people as well as seeing themselves featured on the pages
- ★ relatable storylines or images, such as toys, bath time, animals and home life
- ★ easy-to-handle, sturdy and waterproof - bath books, soft cloth books and board books are brilliant for very young children
- ★ simple images of babies, animals and faces that show emotion

## What are the Benefits of Story Time?

Story time can help to:

- ★ engage babies' senses by looking and touching the pages as well as hearing rhythmic sounds of an adult's voice;
- ★ develop brain development as babies learn and absorb new information about the world;
- ★ spark curiosity and imagination;
- ★ develop many early communication and literacy skills, such as listening, focus and attention, sound awareness, talking, acquiring new vocabulary and exposure to a wide range of language;
- ★ learn simple concepts, such as colours, shapes, size and numbers;
- ★ build relationships both with the storyteller and characters in books.

# Story Time Activity Ideas

**Vocal Sounds:** Enjoy story time by finding different ways to engage babies. Change the tone as you read - using funny voices and noises as well as facial expressions and gestures can encourage babies to focus and tune them in to the story. Try using vocal sounds for different objects in stories, such as animal sounds or vehicle sounds, as you point to the different pictures.

**Songs and Rhymes:** Place little puppets or objects linked to favourite songs in a singing basket or bag. Choose one from the basket to enjoy singing together. Try to choose songs which involve actions and repetitive words, such as 'The Wheels on the Bus' or 'Wind the Bobbin Up'. You may even like to incorporate singing babies' names into the songs to tune them in.

**Black and White Images:** Use simple, black and white contrast images and add them to strips of strong card to make a simple zigzag book. Place the book propped up on the floor during tummy time to stimulate babies and to help their developing eyesight. You may like to use these [Shapes and Patterns Pictures](#) to create your own book.

**Nature Books:** As you head out on outside adventures throughout the seasons, gather seasonal treasures, such as leaves, feathers, lavender and bark, as well as taking photos of your time together. Attach these photos and items securely to large cardboard pages. Regularly share them during story times to connect babies with the natural world as they gently run their hands over the textures to evoke memories.

**Ready, Steady... Action:** Use books which have a strong rhythm and find ways to move to the beat! For example, patting knees or bouncing up and down. Often, animal books are a great choice for encouraging movement as you move like ducks, snakes or elephants.



**Photo Albums or Books:** Create your own special memory albums or books to share with babies, including photos of family, friends, pets and other faces that babies will recognise. Encourage babies to flip through the pages, pointing and responding to the photos. Support by naming people and objects that they see.

**Sensory Stories:** Babies make connections, engage and find it easier to focus when their senses are stimulated. Using sensory stories is the perfect way to make story time really engaging and interactive. This [Under the Sea Sensory Story](#) is a perfect resource to download and enjoy with babies.

**Simple Story Treasure Baskets:** Choose favourite stories and create simple story treasure baskets for babies to explore themed objects. Including puppets and props will bring stories to life! Take a look at this [The Three Little Pigs Treasure Basket](#) for inspiration.

**Reading Spaces:** Enjoy story time in different places, responding to how children are feeling. If they are calm and quiet, find a cosy place to read together with dimmed lighting, pillows and blankets. Alternatively, if children are lively and energetic, enjoy participating in story time adventures in the great outdoors!



You may also like to take a look at our [Twinkl Original Stories](#) suitable for ages 0-3.

**Disclaimer:** As this resource refers to sensory activities, sometimes including food items/ingredients, you must ensure that an adequate risk assessment is carried out prior to using this resource. Sensory activities can engage children in their play and learning, but supervising adults should check for allergens and assess any potential risks before the activity and only proceed if it is safe to do so. Twinkl is not responsible for the health and safety of your group or environment. It is your responsibility to ensure the resource and the information/activity it contains are safe and appropriate to use in your situation. Please be aware that children under the age of three will need to be supervised at all times due to potential hazards with handling and exploring sensory objects.