

The Most Important Twenty Minutes of Your Day

ALL OF US love our children more than anything in the world. In their first years we feed them so they grow. We bring them to the doctor so they are healthy. We strap them in car seats so they are safe.

But the most important thing in the first years of life is the growth of the mind and spirit. This is when a child learns to love and trust, to speak and listen.

After a child turns two years old, these things are very difficult to learn or teach ever again. Trusting, singing, laughing, and language are the most important things in a young child's life.

And so they must come first for mothers and fathers, too. Because we can never have those years over again.

Every day, make a quiet, restful place for twenty minutes. Put your child in your lap and read a book aloud. In the pages of the book you will find a tiny vacation of privacy and intense love. It costs nothing but twenty minutes and a library card.

Reading to your little one is just like putting gold coins in the bank. It will pay you back tenfold. Your daughter will learn, and imagine, and be strong in herself. Your son will thrive, and give your love back forever.

- Rosemary Wells

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**McCowan
Memorial Library**
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Infant Storytime: Books for Bright Beginners (0-2 years)

Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.
Wednesdays, 1:15 p.m.

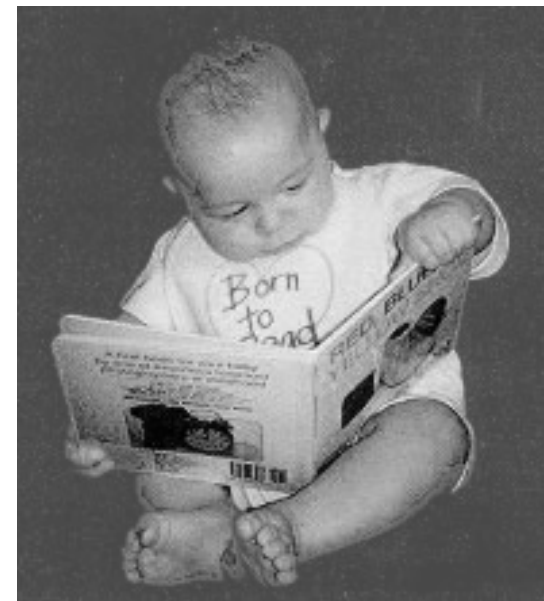
"Books for Bright Beginners" takes place every Tuesday and Wednesday during the school year.

Age-appropriate programs, revolving around weekly themes, consist of books, stories, crafts, rhymes, songs, and fingerplays which make a multi-sensory experience for children.

No registration is required.

Babies and Books from the Beginning was made possible by a grant from the **New Jersey State Library.**

Read to Your Baby: *Babies and Books from the Beginning*



Choose the Right Books for Your Baby

Books should have bright, bold, uncluttered pictures, because babies can only distinguish between bright colors and simple shapes. Stories should be short.

Board books—made of heavy laminated cardboard—are best for babies, because they are small and sturdy. They can even be chewed on without too much damage, and can be cleaned (with non-toxic cleaners) if they get dirty!

Five Tips for Reading to Babies

1. Choose a good time for reading

You and your baby should both be in a good mood—not tired, hungry or upset.

2. Use the pictures in the book

Read in a natural voice and point to each picture as you read about it.

3. Get in contact with your baby

Hold, touch, and cuddle your baby while you're reading.

4. Take cues from your baby

Let your baby play with the book if he/she wants to. If your baby gets tired or upset, stop for now and go back to the book later.

5. Read to your baby every day

A few minutes a day is all you need to start your baby on the path to learning.

What's This Program All About, Anyway?

"Babies and Books from the Beginning" will provide **every new baby** born to a Pitman resident or a McCowan Library patron with a child's **book bag** containing information about the importance of reading to babies; a **book** entitled *Rock-A-Bye Baby Reader*; and a **bib** with the logo of the project.

Each baby will also receive his or her very own **library card**. Caregivers can use this card to check out books they will be reading to their babies.

Both "Babies and Books from the Beginning" and *Rock-A-Bye Baby Reader* stress family involvement in reading. The book's pages combine brightly illustrated classic nursery rhymes with photographs of real parents reading to babies.

Starting with this first book, caregivers can read to their babies, visit libraries, and continue to read together as babies grow.

Reading aloud can provide an additional bonding time for the caregiver and child.

Reading aloud can also help babies learn new words; it can help preschoolers become good listeners; and it can prepare children for learning to read and for future success in school.



Some Books to Share with Babies

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*. Illustrated by Clement Hurd. (EE Brown)

Cousins, Lucy. *Maisy Drives the Bus*. (EE Cousi)

George, Kristine O'Connell. *Book!*. Illustrated by Maggie Smith. (E Georg)

Hill, Eric. *Where's Spot?* (EE Hill)

Isadora, Rachel. *ABC Pop!* (EE Isado)

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Peter's Chair*. (E Keats)

Martin, Bill, Jr. *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* Illustrated by Eric Carle. (EE Marti)

The Real Mother Goose. Illustrated by Blanche Fisher Wright. (EE Real)

Wells, Rosemary. *Max's Bedtime*. (EE Wells)

Williams, Vera. *"More, More, More," Said the Baby*. (EE Willi)

Wilner, Isabel. *The Baby's Game Book*. Illustrated by Sam Williams. (E Wilne)

These books, and many more books for babies, are available at McCowan Memorial Library.
