

Especially for parents of young children! 

Baby's First ABC Book

Stories and Listening

Learning the alphabet starts long before a child is able to say the whole alphabet. ABC books are one way of turning story time into a fun time filled with sounds, words, and letters.

What is the practice?

Parents can use store-bought or homemade ABC books to involve their babies in learning to enjoy books and storytelling.

What does the practice look like?

You can use ABC books to show your child pictures of familiar or interesting objects and the first letters of words as you read or tell your child a story, recite an ABC rhyme, or use a book as part of a made-up story. ABC books will introduce your child to letters as part of having a story read or told to him. The more your child hears the sounds of words and letters of the alphabet, the more he will learn to notice the differences in sounds.



How do you do the practice?

There is no right or wrong way to use ABC books with your child. The main idea is to read your child a story with pictures of familiar things matched with letters of the alphabet.

- Start by finding or making ABC books that include things that are interesting to your child and that he likes and enjoys.
- Read to your child when he is alert and interested in sitting on your lap or lying on the floor next to you.
- Show an ABC book to your child and read or talk about what is on each page. Read to your child in an expressive manner.
- Introduce the ABCs through storytelling. There is no need to go through the whole book at one time. Start with a few pages and add one or two pages each time you and your child read the book.
- Encourage your child to be part of the storytelling by letting him touch, hold, bang, and yes, taste the book!

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child look at or touch pictures that are familiar to him?
- Does your child make sounds or try to repeat things you do or say?
- Does your child point to books he wants you to read to him?

Take a look at more first alphabet books

ABCs Just for Me!

Nick's father has been collecting pictures of his 15-month-old son's favorite toys, people, animals, and other things. He chooses eight of the pictures for Nick's first ABC book. He writes the first letter of each person's or object's name on the picture and uses a small photo album to make the book. He introduces the book to his son by saying, "Daddy has a special treat for Nick—your very own ABC book!" He and Nick find a comfortable place to sit and look at the book together. Dad sits on the floor with Nick sitting between his legs. Dad shows Nick the book with the title on the cover: *Nick's ABC Book*. He reads the title while pointing to it. "Let's read your book!" Dad says. He opens the first page which has a picture of Nick's big sister. Nick reaches for and pats the picture while Dad says, "You see Abby! Look, Abby starts with an A." They continue looking at the ABC book where Nick and his father go back and forth pointing, "talking," getting excited, and just having a fun time.



"Chicka, chicka..."

Jada's mother is sitting in a chair with 9-month-old Jada seated in her lap. They are going to read what has become a favorite story of ABCs racing up a coconut tree while playing a game of tag. "A tells B..." Mom reads, and asks Jada, "What comes next?" Mom recites the book's rhyming chant, pausing between verses to ask her daughter to "guess what happens next." This excites Jada, especially when she hears the names of the letters she remembers. At the end of the story, Jada chirps along as Mom reads, "Chicka, chicka, boom, boom, they all fall down!"

My Favorite Things

Megan has both a physical disability and some visual difficulties. This, however, does not stop her from loving to hear her father tell stories. She especially enjoys stories about herself that her father "makes up." Dad has collected digital photographs of some of Megan's favorite activities. He has added an initial letter in large print to each photograph of a person, object, or action. He has even added sound clips describing the photographs (for example: "Megan's favorite toy is a bear. Bear starts with a B"). Dad holds Megan in front of the computer screen seated on his lap. He shows her how touching any of the keyboard keys "starts the story." Megan becomes excited and starts vocalizing and smiling each time she makes the computer "talk." Dad introduces new photographs each time he and Megan "read the book," which especially captures Megan's attention and interest.

