

Language & Learning

Read With Me

Reading Ideas For All Children Who Are Deaf Or Hard Of Hearing

Think about the ideas in the book, not the exact wording or English grammar. We often talk about a book instead of reading the exact words to our hearing babies, so why shouldn't we do the same thing for our deaf babies or hard-of-hearing babies? "There is the baby duck. So soft." Your baby pats the same spot. "Yes, Baby duck is soft." "There is the spider. Up, up. Uh oh! That's rain. The spider goes down." Remember that being read to is a time when babies and children learn about someone else's ideas. Yes, you will pay attention to your baby's interests, but it is also okay to tell the story or talk about what is in the book.

Read the book over and over. Babies who are read to have favorite stories before they walk or talk or sign. If your speech or signs for a certain book are especially silly or interesting, your baby will want you to read that book again. If your baby likes the pictures in a book, then that is the book he will pick up and hand to you. Read it again. Every time you read together, your baby's participation will grow, and you may find yourself telling more and more of the story that is actually on the pages. You are building a basis for language, reading and having favorite books.

Find ways that you can interact. Small children and babies like books that can be handled, dropped, chewed and looked at many times. Soon, books with flaps that open to show a surprise, or with tabs to pull become very popular and a great source of communication. Books that encourage animal sounds, train whistles, or finger plays and gestures also help parents and babies interact. Babies love to copy what they see or hear, and will love to watch you introduce new games. To very small children, the stories in the book won't be nearly as important as pointing out to you all the exciting pictures, shapes and colors they notice. When you follow your baby's lead, you have plenty to say beyond the story itself.