

# HOW TO GET A BUSY TODDLER TO SIT STILL FOR STORYTIME VIDEO

Reading aloud to your child every day, even when they're little tiny babies, is one of the most important things you can do to help them grow their listening, talking, and reading skills, especially if they're a child with hearing loss.

But what do you do when your curious and active toddler has a hard time sitting still for story time? Don't give up. It's so important that you reach that goal of reading aloud together for 15 minutes every day. And I've got some tips you can use to read with that busy little toddler.

Hi, I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway with Hearing First. We're here to help and support families just like yours, who have a child with hearing loss, and we want to empower you as your child learns to listen, talk, read, and thrive, just like kids with typical hearing.

Trust me, as both a speech language pathologist, a mom, and a grandmother, I know how hard it is to read to an active toddler who has no interest in sitting still for story time. But I have some good news. There are certain tricks you can try that will spark their curiosity and make reading time more interesting.

In this video, I'll explain why reading is so important and share five tips to help your family make reading part of your everyday routine with your busy baby or active toddler.

Books and stories are a wonderful way for your child to better understand the world. They take us places where we otherwise can't go. And reading aloud to your child builds their listening comprehension skills. And listening comprehension is the foundation for vocabulary development, talking, reading, and writing, which are all important skills for your child to do well in school. It all starts with listening. Think about it this way. Children first need to hear words before they begin to use words. Books often use words that we don't use in everyday life, which helps your child's vocabulary grow. And children who have larger vocabularies grow up to be better readers. And in fact, there's a quote that I love from Jim Trelease, a well-known educator and author. He said, "Readers don't grow on trees. But they are grown-in places where they are fertilized with lots of print, and above all, read to daily." So, no baby is too young to hear you read aloud. Early and often is the right approach when reading aloud to your baby or toddler. Plus, reading aloud together is a wonderful way to bond as a parent and a child, there's emotional and mental benefits for both of you. And if you haven't been reading aloud every day to your little one, well, it's not too late to start. This is such an important habit for parents to build. According to the recent Kids and Family Reading Report from Scholastic, only 37% of families read aloud to their child every day. Let's change that together.

Okay, so we just talked about why reading is so important to little one, so let's talk about five tips to make daily reading happen for your active toddler.

**Tip number one, find what times work for you and your family.**

You might want to try to read before bedtime. It's a great way to take advantage of a calm time to cuddle up together and read together. Have your child choose three to four books they'd like for you to read together. This offers them a sense of independence and helps limit that negotiation for, "Just one more book, please," when they're trying to stay up for maybe a little bit later.

Maybe try reading during mealtime or on the go, in the car or on the bus. This is a good time for little busy bodies with the security of the high chair or car seat. And I should note this is much easier with only one child. I know when I have my three grandchildren, mealtime is not the best time for me to attempt to share a book and read together, but after bath time makes everyone happy. So, find those easy and quiet moments that work for your family.

**Tip number two, keep books everywhere.**

Toddlers' interests shift frequently, so keep books nearby in case you find a quiet moment where you can read together. Keep a book in your bag so you can bring it out while perhaps waiting for appointments or in places active toddlers get bored easily. Have books scattered in different locations all over your house, so there's always something to read nearby.

**Tip number three, make it more than books.**

Use props and toys to keep your toddler engaged. Give them something to hold, maybe a toy that accompanies the story. Pause your reading and use the toy for your child to act out what's happening in the book. So for example, if you're reading "Little Blue Truck," grab a toy truck and have fun acting out the story. Or, have a snack ready to accompany the book.

You can also try acting out the actions of a story. You don't have to be sitting to read aloud. Read books that have different characters doing different actions, like wiggling and dancing, swinging and running.

**Tip number four, reading can be about the books.**

A win doesn't require reading every word. If there's just too much text to hold your child's attention, well, you can talk about pictures or what's happening in the story instead of reading word for word.

**Tip number five, be persistent.**

I know that toddler years can be magical and sometimes challenging. You are not alone in this phase. Make reading aloud an everyday habit. The more you read aloud, you'll find that your child is more interested in reading for longer and longer periods of time. And the more you read aloud, the more comfortable you'll get too. Jim Trelease said, "Reading aloud comes naturally to very few people. To do it successfully and with ease, you must practice." So, stay the course, and I promise the rewards will pay off.

I hope these tips make reading aloud every day a little easier. It's so important for us to make time for meaningful face-to-face interactions with our little ones. And reading aloud every day is one of the best things you can do to prepare them for school.

Don't miss part two of this video, I'm going to share some tried and true tips to make reading more fun for busy toddlers.

And we've got all kinds of helpful resources for you linked in the description below. Check out the handouts of our favorite books with tips on how to use them to grow your child's listening and talking skills.

Thanks for tuning in today. Wherever you are on this journey and however you may be feeling, you are not alone. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Don't forget to subscribe to the YouTube channel for more helpful videos. And visit [hearingfirst.org](https://www.hearingfirst.org) to find more resources and support on this journey.