10 Reasons Why You Should

Read to Your Kids

We all know reading to our kids is a good thing—but are you familiar with the specific advantages your toddler or preschool-age child can receive by being exposed to the merits of reading? Below are some benefits that highlight the importance of reading to your child between the ages of two and five.

1. **A stronger relationship with you.** As your child grows older, he'll be on the move—playing, running, and constantly exploring his environment. Snuggling up with a book lets the two of you slow down and recaptures that sweet, cuddly time you enjoyed when he was a baby. Instead of being seen as a chore or a task, reading will become a nurturing activity that will bring the two of you closer together.

2. **Academic excellence.** One of the primary benefits of reading to toddlers and preschoolers is a higher aptitude for learning in general. Numerous studies have shown that students who are exposed to reading before preschool are more likely to do well in all facets of formal education. After all, if a student struggles to put together words and sentences, how can he be expected to grasp the math, science, and social concepts he'll be presented with when he begins elementary school?

3. **Basic speech skills.** Throughout toddlerhood and preschool, your child is learning critical language and enunciation skills. By listening to you read *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, your child is reinforcing the basic sounds that form language. "Pretend reading"—when a toddler pages through a book with squeals and jabbers of delight—is a very important pre-literacy activity. As a preschooler, your child will likely begin sounding out words on his own.

4. **The basics of how to read a book.** Children aren't born with an innate knowledge that text is read from left to right, or that the words on a page are separate from the images. Essential pre-reading skills like these are among the major benefits of early reading.

5. **Better communication skills.** When you spend time reading to toddlers, they'll be much more likely to express themselves and relate to others in a healthy way. By witnessing the interactions between the characters in the books you read, as well as the contact with you during story time, your child is gaining valuable communication skills.

6. **Mastery of language.** Early reading for toddlers has been linked to a better grasp of the fundamentals of language as they approach school age.

7. **More logical thinking skills.** Another illustration of the importance of reading to children is their ability to grasp abstract concepts, apply logic in various scenarios, recognize cause and effect, and utilize good judgment. As your toddler or preschooler begins to relate the scenarios in books to what's happening in his own world, he'll become more excited about the stories you share.

8. **Acclamation to new experiences.** As your child approaches a major developmental milestone or a potentially stressful experience, sharing a relevant story is a great way to help ease the transition. For instance, if your little one is nervous about starting preschool, reading a story dealing with this topic shows her that her anxiety is normal.

9. **Enhanced concentration and discipline.** Toddlers may initially squirm and become distracted during story time, but eventually they'll learn to stay put for the duration of the book. Along with reading comprehension comes a stronger self-discipline, longer attention span, and better memory retention, all of which will serve your child well when she enters school.

10. **The knowledge that reading is fun!** Early reading for toddlers helps them view books as an indulgence, not a chore. Kids who are exposed to reading are much more likely to choose books over video games, television, and other forms of entertainment as they grow older.

Books have the power to benefit toddlers and preschoolers in a myriad of ways. As a parent, reading to your child is one of the most important things you can do to prepare him with a foundation for academic excellence.