



Make book time fun and educational for children with cerebral palsy (CP)

Helping your child love books

You'll find sharing books together is a great way to bond with your son or daughter and help your child's development at the same time. **Give your child a great gift that will last for life—the love of books.**

CP affects your child's brain. This may cause difficulty with muscle tone and control. Your child may have delays speaking or have speech that is hard to understand. Reading with your child and having your child name objects in the book or read aloud to you can strengthen his speech skills.

Tips for reading with your infant or toddler

Each time you read to your child, you are helping his brain to develop. Reading to your child helps him understand that there are words and pictures on the page. **So—you've planted the seed to reading that will stay with your child throughout his life.**

Since young children have short attention spans, try reading for a few minutes at a time at first. Then build up the time you read together. Your child will soon see reading time as fun time and learning time!

Check off the things you can try:

- Buy books or borrow books from the library that have thick, sturdy pages.
- Find books that have rhymes like a Mother Goose nursery rhymes book.
- Clap your hands and help your baby clap along to the rhythm of the words.
- Read aloud. Talk about the pictures and read the text. Help your toddler point to objects you name in the book.

Some suggested books for your infant

Fisher Price makes **Stroller Strap Books**. The straps make the books easy to handle and the sturdy pages stay open and are easy to turn. Some titles include:

- **Ears, Nose & Toes!**
- **Touch and Feel**
- **I Love My Family**

Some suggested books for your toddler

E-Z Page Turners is a series of books made by **Innovative Kids**. These books are specially designed to help little ones turn the pages. You can buy them online or ask your child's occupational therapist for help finding this brand. Some titles include:

- **Trucks**
- **Opposites**
- **Mommies and Babies**

Helping your preschooler or school-age child love books

Remember, when you read to your child often and combine reading time with cuddle and play time, your child will link books with fun times together.

Check off the things you can try:

- Find books on topics that interest your child, such as books on animals or sports.
- Position your child next to you on the couch. If your child is in a wheelchair or special chair, sit close enough so he can see the book and hear you. Ask your child's occupational and/or physical therapist about special tools to help your child prop up the book.
- Find books that have buttons to press that make sounds. Buy audio books that your child can start or stop by pressing a button.
- Read aloud and talk about the pictures. Ask your child to name objects or read aloud.
- Praise your child's efforts at reading!**

Some suggested books for your preschooler or school-age child

- **Harold and the Purple Crayon** by Crockett Johnson
- **We Are Going on a Bear Hunt** by Helen Oxenbury
- **The Napping House** by Audrey Wood

How children can learn more about cerebral palsy

Read these books:

- **Brothers and Sisters** by Laura Dwight
- **Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs** by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy (Ages 4–10)
- **Views from Our Shoes** by Donald Meyer (Ages 8–12)

How parents can learn more about cerebral palsy

Read these books:

- **Cerebral Palsy: A Complete Guide for Caregiving** by F. Miller and S.J. Bachrach
- **Children with Cerebral Palsy: A Parent's Guide** edited by Elaine Geralis
- **Reflections from a Different Journey** by Stanley Klein

Contact these groups for more information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—(800) CDC-INFO or www.cdc.gov/actearly
- Easter Seals—(800) 221-6827 or www.easter-seals.org
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities—(800) 695-0285 or www.nichcy.org
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institutes of Health—www.ninds.nih.gov
- United Cerebral Palsy Association—(800) 872-5827 or www.ucp.org
- Siblings Support—www.siblingsupport.org
- University of Michigan Health System—www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/specneed.htm