

## Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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**Proposed publication date:** Mar. 28, 2022  
**Content provided by:** Alberta Health Services

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## Help your toddler learn language

Language is how we use words or gestures to communicate with each other. Books and reading play an important part in helping your child learn language. Telling stories can help your child build speaking and listening skills.

Your child is never too young to enjoy books. You can start reading to them right after they're born. Your child will more likely have a life-long love for reading if they look at and play with books from an early age.

There are many ways for you and your toddler to have fun with books. Here are some suggestions:

- Read books with simple, brightly coloured pictures.
- Read books that your child can play with. Young children enjoy books that let them participate such as lift-the-flap books, pop-up books, finger plays, books with things to feel, and books that make sounds.
- Let your child choose the book and turn to the pages they want to look at. You can read or talk about the pages they choose. This helps keep their interest. Children learn best when they're interested.
- Name things, people, and actions in the pictures. Give your child time to talk about the pictures.
- Let your child hold the book and turn the pages. This helps teach them how handle a book.
- Tell the story in a way your child will understand. You don't have to read it exactly as it's written. For very young children, you can simply talk about each page with single words or short sentences.



- Tell the story together. Take turns flipping the pages and talking about the pictures on the page. By taking turns, children learn an important skill they need to carry on conversations.
- Read a book many times so your child gets to know the story well. This lets your child help in the storytelling. One way to involve your child is to start a sentence and let them finish it (e.g., "Once upon a time, there lived three \_\_\_\_\_.")