



PARENTS

Parents are the real experts. You know your child better than anyone. You're also your child's first—and most important—teacher. [ENTER >](#)

PROFESSIONALS

Professionals from many different fields support the healthy development of young children. ZERO TO THREE is a resource for the work you do with infants, toddlers and families. [ENTER >](#)

BrainWonders

Why does a young toddler insist on having the same book read over and over again?

As they move out to explore their world, toddlers find having predictable routines and rituals very comforting. Repetition can help a toddler feel safe and secure. Toddlers love to practice new skills and knowledge. Although adults may tire of the same book, young children need to hear the same story many times to fully understand the chain of events. Hearing a story over and over helps a toddler learn about word sounds, meaning, rhythm, and intonation, in addition to developing an understanding of connected events. At this age, practice play (doing things over and over) also helps toddlers learn. They enjoy practicing the reading of a familiar story. You may even see a toddler read a story to a favorite stuffed animal or doll.

The most important point about sharing books with toddlers is that the experience be emotionally positive. Struggling with toddlers over books or story-time can be a very negative experience for both the adult and child. Since toddlers are very active, they may only be able to stay with a story for a few minutes...but they will often want to return to the story many, many times. They may also want to just flip through the pages or go back and forth between a page or two. Exploring a book in this way is fine for a toddler.

For younger toddlers, finding out that familiar objects show up in books can make them become overjoyed and excited with each new discovery! Sometimes a toddler will play with other toys while hearing a story. Although the adult may think the toddler is no longer interested, the child will often want the adult to continue with the story. That's okay! Toddlers sometimes need to be up and about, playing with toys while listening to a story or song. As they grow, children will sit longer and longer for stories. Follow the toddler's lead for how long to read and when to take a break.

Use of question is courtesy of Zero to Three. The authors are Boston University School of Medicine, Erikson Institute A Graduate School in Child Development, ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families and located at <http://www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/EarlyLiteracy.html>.