



Learning Through the Early Years: The Benefits of Repetition and Variation

What Can I Do for My Child?

For Babies to Toddlers (0–2 years)

- Let children pick their own books. Don't worry if they choose the same one over and over. It takes an adult six times to recognize a word; it takes even longer for an infant or toddler.
- When repeating rhymes or fingerplays, let children act them out as you say them.
- Play peek-a-boo and guessing games. Hide toys under different items to see if children can find them.
- Use sensory activities to allow children to feel different textures. Most things will end up in a child's mouth, so make sure there are no choking hazards.
- Use facial and vocal expression as you talk and play with your child.

For Toddlers (2–4 years)

- After reading a story or book, try to extend the learning by using real-life experiences in your child's life.
- Let children use all of their senses during an activity; for example, if you go for a walk, have them listen to the sounds outside and feel different objects. Ask them open-ended questions about what they are seeing and feeling.
- Make up a song about one of the characters in a book you read.
- When reading rhyming books, pause to let the child finish the word and tell the story.
- Find online activities that support what you are teaching.

For Older Children (4–5 years)

- Let children hold items and be in charge of an activity.
- Ask open-ended questions about what would happen if you did an activity differently.
- Use different materials, such as dress-up clothes, puppets, and pictures, to retell a child's favorite stories.
- When at the library or bookstore, find books by the child's favorite author and compare the similarities and differences.