



## BOOKS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

**“Book! Book!” or “Read me a story!”**

As parents of young children you probably hear words like these several times a day. Young children enjoy being with their parents and storytime is the perfect opportunity to be in Mom or Dad's lap and have their full attention. Here in the classroom, the book corner is an opportunity to have Mom or Dad's attention amidst so many other distractions. For other children, it's a “safe haven” until they're ready to join the group.

What does a child gain besides the attention of a beloved parent or a quiet moment of solitude when she is being read to? The idea that reading is pleasurable and that you value books and reading is transmitted to the child. He hears how our language works...the structure, and how words are pronounced. His imagination is stimulated and thus his creativity will grow. There is growth also in his awareness of others and through this comes self-awareness as well.

Saying yes to your child's request for a story may also make for a more peaceful day. Studies have shown that as little as 10 minutes a day of child-directed activity, one on one with a parent, will reduce attention getting conflicts. Why not make part of this 10 minutes a storytime?

Some suggestions:

- Start reading to your children when they are babies. Chanting or singing nursery rhymes is a good way to begin.
- Books with large, colorful pictures will capture a toddler's attention.
- Keep storytime short and lengthen it as the child's attention span grows.
- It helps to choose a regular time every day to read to your child. Before bed or nap work well and helps create a “routine” that toddlers enjoy.
- Turn off the TV during storytime. Either turn off the phone or tell callers you'll call them back.
- Ask preschooler's questions about the story--what will happen next? What if they did it this way? et cetera...
- Encourage preschoolers to act out their favorite stories.