Feed Me a Story!

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I READ TO MY CHILD EVERY DAY?

Yes, if daily reading for **30 minutes a day** begins at birth, by the time the child is 5 years old, he or she has been fed roughly **900 hours** of brain food!

Reduce that to just 30 minutes a week, and the child enters kindergarten with just 130 hours. The child’s hungry mind loses over 770 hours of nursery rhymes, songs, and stories.

No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours of mental nourishment.

You want me to read to my child for 30 minutes a day. How in the world can I do that? I don’t have time!

The good news is that much of what you already do every day can be brain food. See the reverse for good ideas on how to fit your child’s 30 minutes in every day.

30 minutes of brain food everyday

The thought of reading to your child for 30 minutes can feel overwhelming. But “reading” for infants and small children involves talking, singing, naming things, telling stories out loud as well as reading books. Here’s how to fit it all in:

**In the morning...**
- Sing a good morning song to your child 1 minute
- Talk about the clothes that your child will wear 2 minutes
- “Read” a thermometer to see what the temperature is 1 minute
- Play “This Little Piggy” while putting on socks 1 minute
- Name parts of your body or things in the room 1 minute
- Read the cereal box (milk carton, etc.) at breakfast 2 minutes
- Think of all the words that rhyme with “milk” or “egg” 2 minutes
- Read the bus schedule/school schedule to get information 1 minute

**TOTAL** 11 minutes

**During the day...**
- Sing “Old MacDonald” while walking to school 2 minutes
- Read all of the store and street signs on the way to school 5 minutes
- Bring a book to read while riding on the bus 3 minutes
- Ask your child’s teacher/caregiver to read to your child 5 minutes

**TOTAL** 15 minutes

**In the evening...**
- Read the TV Guide to find out when your shows are on 1 minute
- Cuddle with your child and point at the pictures in a book 2 minutes
- Sing a lullaby to your child at bedtime 1 minute

**TOTAL** 4 minutes

This gives you a total of 30 minutes of reading activities a day!

**Other ideas:**
- Tell your child about what it was like when you were little
- Make up a story about a bunny who loves to make friends
- Have your child “read” a book to you

Source: Annie Atwood, Middletown Even Start, Middletown, CT.