



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **The importance of reading to your child (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

The importance of reading to your child

Objectives

- Underline the importance and value of reading to their children from a young age
- Promote reading as an important and enjoyable experience to share with your children
- Challenge parents to encourage reading and telling stories in their families
- Generate awareness that playful, enjoyable reading experiences everyday between children and caregivers develops and stimulates children’s learning.

Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child' life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

Today we take a look at reading to your child. Read to your child as often as you can from birth. Once again it's something that many people may find strange when you consider that a baby will not understand what you are reading. Reading aloud to children encourages bonding and creates an important ritual in family life. Reading many different stories for enjoyment to your child is critical for later literacy and academic success. You can and should start reading to your child from when they are a baby. Reading aloud to your child is still important, even when you child can read themselves.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Last week we discussed the importance of reading aloud to children – and babies – can you please just tell us a bit about why this is important?</i></p>	<p>Research has shown that reading to children significantly raises their potential for academic and life-long success. As you snuggle up to enjoy sharing a story with your children, you may be quite unaware of the host of benefits of reading that your children will enjoy that contributes to this success such as encouraging family bonding, providing opportunities for learning and expanding horizons and developing vocabulary, pronunciation, attentiveness and listening skills.</p> <p>The ability to read is an essential skill for learning, and if a child loves reading, she will become more skilled at it. This lifeskill will give her an advantage: She will gain not only knowledge, but also pleasure from the literature that she is able to read.</p>
<p>2. <i>Can you say more about why it is important to read aloud to children?</i></p>	<p>Children who are exposed to books and stories are given a wonderful gift. Their</p>

world of knowledge expands beyond the routines they observe in their households and neighborhood. In the early years, the new stories and images become part of their shared experience in the family.

Here are 5 more reasons to read aloud to your child every day:

1. Reading aloud to your children helps to develop the bond between a parent and child.
2. When you read aloud to children and they enjoy the story, they see reading as a satisfying activity and this helps to motivate them to read for themselves.
3. Reading aloud to young children shows them how we read and how books work. This knowledge makes it much easier for them to learn to read later on.
4. Children are able to understand and enjoy stories that are beyond their own reading ability when they hear them read aloud.
5. Hearing new words used in a story develops children's vocabulary and gives them a rich language to draw from when they write their own stories.

3. From what age can you start to read to children?

As soon as your baby is old enough to sit on your lap and read a book with you, you can begin reading together and getting her hooked on books! At this age your child is learning all sorts of things at an amazing rate and so you can use this time exploring books to create a good first impression, which will never be erased. Even before she

<p>4. <i>But surely a very young baby can't even see the book properly?</i></p> <p>5. <i>How do you read books to babies who can't even speak?</i></p>	<p>can speak, your little one can learn that reading is a time to cuddle up on your lap and spend precious moments together with you having fun and exploring the images in the books you share. Developing a family ritual such as a bedtime story (either read or told) is a beautiful way to connect at the end of the day and ignite a love of reading in your child.</p> <p>A baby's eyesight is only fully developed by about four months, so it's good to choose books for very young babies that have simple pictures with strong contrasts (like black and white) or photographs of babies' faces. Repetition and routine makes young babies feel secure so you can read the same book over and over again in exactly the same place each day without boring your baby! You can also say different things than what is written on the page as long as you and your baby are enjoying yourselves with the book.</p> <p>You can read to a child from as young as six months (or earlier) by reading simple books with few words and lots of pictures. Until your baby can sit independently, it's easiest to put her on your lap with her back against you and to hold the book in front of her. Even from before, and definitely from about six months, your baby may enjoy books that have songs and rhymes in them.</p> <p>Some tips are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV or radio so there are no distractions.• As well as reading the story, talk about the pictures. If there's a
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picture of a dog, talk about a dog that you know. Read the words to her but also talk about what is in the pictures and name some of the objects and colours. Don't forget to make lots of interesting sounds too – for example, 'mooing' when you look at a picture of a cow. Babies love to hear different sounds!

- **Draw your children's attention to the pictures** and talk about the concepts, characters and what is happening in the book. Point to someone or something and say what or who it is and what it is doing
- Give your child time to respond to your chatter.
- Don't put any pressure on your child to name the pictures, but if she copies your words, praise her and say the words again for her.
- Don't read for too long. Young children get bored quickly so little and often is best.
- It's good to share favourite books again and again. Repetition helps children to understand and remember the language they hear.
- Remember, you're not teaching your child to read. You learn to talk a long time before you learn to read, and book sharing is a wonderful way to help your child's language development.

Don't forget to give your baby some attention as you are reading – even when you're half way through! A kiss and a cuddle

<p>6. <i>I guess that eventually they start to recognize and point to things in the book as they start to understand what is going on?</i></p>	<p>during book-sharing time help to build a positive association with reading and books. If your child seems disinterested, don't give up! Try again later, or in another way – or try another book.</p> <p>It's an exciting moment when your child recognizes and names a picture in a book for the first time! Her cognitive and linguistic skills have reached the point when she can begin to play naming games. This is not only fun with books, but she has learnt that images in books convey meaning. There are plenty of books that are aimed at just this naming stage - animal books, books about food, transport, alphabet picture books, baby's first picture book, etc. When reading these books, draw attention to the pictures and talk about what is happening in the book and what the characters are doing – “Look rabbit is sitting on top of the hill” “I wonder if rabbit is feeling happy to day?”</p>
<p>7. <i>Does how we read to children change as they get older?</i></p>	<p>Yes it does start to change – the kinds of books we read change as well as they can often start enjoying longer books and eventually books with only words (no pictures). Remember though to always have fun – this is the most important thing is for you to relax and enjoy yourselves because that way your children will learn that reading is pleasurable and interesting. When they get older you start to ask questions about what is happening in the book. Answer them yourself or allow your child to answer, if s/he can and wants to. Listen carefully to what your child says or</p>

does and respond to it. This makes the experience more interesting for both of you and helps to develop your child's language. **Point to the words** as you read them. This helps your child learn what words are and where the words you are saying "come from".

You can also **Take turns choosing books**. Remember not to **overdo it** - Read together in bite-size chunks. Younger children find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. If your children become restless or lose interest, stop reading and try again later or the next day. If your children ask you to read the same story again, do it! They discover new things about the story each time you read it. As your children become more familiar with a story or as older children are learning to read, ask them to help you read the story. Younger children often like to recite parts of a familiar story – especially if the words rhyme or a phrase is repeated. Read along with older children as they attempt to read the words on the page with you, pointing to the words as you go.

8. *You said earlier that reading aloud can help extend learning and expand horizons? How do you encourage this?*

Reading a story for enjoyment together with your child is a wonderful bonding and learning experience of itself, but you can extend and enhance their learning in many different ways, but using the story as a window into other learning activities. For example you can Sing a song or say a rhyme linked to the story, develop your children's prediction skills by asking while you are reading, 'what do you think will happen next?', encourage children to express their

feelings and opinions and get them thinking and problem solving by asking questions like, 'how would you feel if that was you?', 'do you think that was the right thing to say/do?', and ' what would you have said/done if it was you?' and ask children to look closely at particular details in the illustrations. Let them count, describe, identify or interpret what they see in the pictures. You can also follow up reading a story by doing a drawing activity – for example for younger children ask to draw a picture of the part of the story they liked best. Ask older children to draw a map of where the story is set. If children want to draw something that moves away from the storyline, like a new ending, or if they want to draw themselves as characters, encourage this too!

You can also have a lot of fun acting out the story or a portion of it together. Or, just dress up and pretend to be the story characters for an hour or two!.

9. What if I don't have any children's books in my home?

If you don't have many books in your home, magazines offer good places to find pictures to point to and talk about, telling stories, singing songs and repeating rhymes are also really important for young children.

However it is still really important that you find ways to bring as many books into your child's life as early as possible - make use of your local library to borrow books for free so that you create a home environment rich with books for your child to engage with. Additionally the project Nalibali produces reading supplements that are available for free in these:

<p>10. What about making your own books?</p>	<p>Times Media newspapers in the following languages (during term time only):</p> <p><i>The Times</i> (Western Cape) – English and isiXhosa – Wednesdays.</p> <p><i>The Sowetan</i> (KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng) – English and isiZulu – Wednesdays</p> <p><i>The Sowetan</i> (Free State) – English and Sesotho – Wednesdays</p> <p><i>The Herald</i> (Thursdays) and <i>Daily Dispatch</i> (Tuesdays) (Eastern Cape) – English and isiXhosa.</p> <p>Each week, supplements are also distributed free of charge through Times Media Education direct to reading clubs, community organisations, libraries, in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. To start a reading club, go to www.nalibali.org</p> <p>You can make books by cutting out pictures and attaching them to card, and making up your own stories. You can also encourage children to create their own books by folding a few sheets of paper to create a book. Encourage them to draw pictures. Help younger children finish their books by writing the words they tell you for each picture. Let older children write on their own. Ask them to try to spell words for themselves and praise their spelling attempts. If they ask for help, give it. Encourage your children to read their own books and to share them with others!</p>
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<p><i>11. But how does reading aloud to small children develop reading skills?</i></p>	<p>Just as with language, the rhythms or conventions of reading books are learned long before the child can "sound-out" their first word. Children learn to sit in the parent's lap to attend and listen to a story. They learn that if they point to pictures, their parents will often name the pictures for them. They learn to turn the pages of a book. Often very young children will practice turning the pages of an upside-down book while babbling. This is the beginning of reading.</p>
<p><i>12. What kind of books do babies or toddlers like?</i></p>	<p>Babies and toddlers have moods and tastes just like us! Their level of interest in a book will depend on mood, what things they like, time of day, whether they are hungry or tired. If you child seems disinterested, don't give up. Try again another day or try another book. Later as children develop an enjoyment of reading they will insist on hearing the same story over and over and over even after they have committed the story to memory. In this way, the child is an active participant in anticipating the story as it unfolds from page to page.</p>
<p><i>13. How do I select books?</i></p>	<p>Select a variety of books in your child's home language/s, wherever possible. Choose some stories that have other children in them as well as ones that are about family and familiar everyday experiences. Rhyme and flap-books are very popular with toddlers.</p>
<p><i>14. Once my child can read, I guess I don't need to read aloud to them anymore?</i></p>	<p>The practice of reading aloud, often stops as kids become more independent readers and schedules become busier. However reading</p>

15. Can you give us some tips for reading aloud with older children?

out loud to older children and teens, is still hugely important. Reading aloud to older children — even up to age 14, who can comfortably read to themselves — has benefits both academic and emotional. One of the main reason for this is that kids can understand books that are too hard to decode themselves, if they are read aloud — they can listen higher than their reading level. It can also foster learning life lessons as when you talk about a book together, it's not a lecture, it's more like a coach looking at a film with his players, going over the plays to find out what went right and what went wrong. Pure enjoyment and the physical closeness that it fosters between people are also both important reasons!

As with all books, there is no right or wrong way to use books. Although you can read anywhere it is best to relax and sit comfortably with your child on your lap or next to you. Explore the book together for as short or as long as you both want.

Some tips for reading aloud are:

1. Choose books to read that you enjoy, but also ones that match your children's changing interests.
2. Reading aloud is always a performance! Put lots of expression in your voice to create the mood!
3. Start by reading the name of the author (and illustrator) so that children appreciate that books are created by people just like them! **You can also** ask them to be detectives with a new book and use the clues on the front as to what the books is about.

	<p>4. When you read a picture book, allow time for children to look at the pictures and comment, if they want to.</p> <p>5. Books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition make good read-aloud books for young children and can help you introduce a new language. As they get to know the story, encourage children to join in as you read.</p>

<p>Learning outcomes</p>
<p>After listening to this show the audience should:</p> <p>Understand the importance and value of reading to their children from a young age</p> <p>Make time – at least 15 minutes per day – to read with their children</p> <p>Encourage enjoyable, playful and stimulating reading times in families.</p> <p>Start reading to their children from early, and continue as long as it is still enjoyable for the child (and even once they have started reading themselves)</p>