

# Big Bedtime Read



## Why Bedtime Stories are so Important

Bedtime stories are a lovely bonding experience for a parent and child. They also relax children and help get them ready for sleep **but did you know that stories also help your child's brain develop?**

### Reading to Your Child Helps Develop Their Language Skills

Research shows that bedtime stories can rewire children's brains and improve their language skills. Scientists have even found neurological differences in the brains of children who have been read to regularly and those who have not.

**But the good news is that it is never too late to start.** Brain scans of poor readers adapted quickly and changed to look like that of good readers after only 8 weeks of being read to.

### Here is how it Happens

When you are reading a story to your young child you will exaggerate lots of words and sounds. In Julia Donaldson's 'Room on the Broom' they will be hearing lots of 'oo' sounds and words such as 'spat' or 'purred' will be emphasised. This then stimulates connections in the part of your child's brain that handles language. The more your child hears these sounds, the faster they will become at processing them, which will improve their language skills and later, help them learn to read.

### Keeping Reading the Same Story

While reading the same story over and over can be frustrating for most parents, reading a book repeatedly is good for young children and helps develop their logic skills.

### Here is How it Happens

The first time children hear a book they don't always catch everything. By reading it again and again they start to notice patterns and sequences. They will also learn to predict what happens next.

Later these skills—recognising patterns, understanding sequences and predicting outcomes will help children in lots of other areas, from numeracy, science, music and writing!

### There are other Benefits Too

Reading stories can help reduce stress in children, particularly when the experience is cozy, nurturing and comfortable. If a child is upset or anxious reading a familiar book, while snuggling close to a parent or carer, will comfort a child and lower their stress or anxiety.

Remember that reading to your child will expand their vocabulary even more than talking, as books can introduce them to ideas and objects that are not part of their environment or part of their daily conversation.

**So cuddle up with your child at bedtime, with their favourite toys beside them and have fun together and let their brain fire away!**



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

# Big Bedtime Read



**Big Bedtime Read** focuses on raising parents' awareness of the importance of reading to children and on encouraging them to read regularly to their children each night.

Emphasis should be placed on establishing good bedtime routines and on maximizing opportunities throughout the day to engage children in early reading experiences.

### TIP 1: Look For Opportunities

Look for reading opportunities throughout the day at home and when you are out and about. Our environment is full of print, words and information, shopping lists, newspapers, magazines, posters, labels etc.

It is important to share these with your child to stimulate their interest in reading.

### TIP 2: Read & Share Books Together

Read regularly with your child— children love stories, try to read books everyday at home.

If you need extra books at home join your local library. All libraries have now reopened but you can also visit the website for more information

<https://www.librariesni.org.uk/>

### TIP 3: Establish A Bedtime Routine

Having a bedtime routine helps children to wind down and relax before bed. Reading a book before bed is precious time snuggling together to listen to stories.

[Click Here to check out the the Book BATH-BOOK-BED Resource](#)