



GOING BY THE BOOK

Get an early start in nurturing readers for life.

The simple act of reading to a young child goes beyond planting the seeds for a lifelong love for books. It promotes brain development, especially in the first five years of life. Research shows that when children listen to stories, it stimulates the part of the brain that supports mental imagery, understanding and language processing.

Besides feeding the developing brain, reading also offers other benefits, according to Ms Olive Gan, Librarian from the National Library Board (NLB). "Reading good books exposes children to new words every day. Larger oral vocabularies in the early years are associated with higher achievement in reading and mathematics as well as better ability to regulate behaviour."

Early reading habits also improve focus and attention span, which are important skills for learning. "With increased exposure and over-stimulation from using digital devices, it can be challenging for children to retain attention for longer periods," says Ms Gan. "Children who start the reading habit early on will have an easier time adapting at school. Reading facilitates learning in other subjects such as mathematics and science, and this will in turn boost their confidence. Books also open new vistas, triggering children's curiosity and desire to learn more."

BOOK SMART

Get the most out of your child's reading journey with these tips for choosing developmentally-appropriate books.

- **For infants:** Look for large, bright and bold illustrations set against contrasting backgrounds, as a baby's vision is not yet fully developed. Books featuring a single word with a big picture on each page help babies to link pictures with corresponding sounds and meanings.
- **For toddlers:** Choose books with simple sentences, songs and rhymes with repeated phrases to build up oral literacy. Interactive books such as lift-the-flap books with tactile sensory elements help to engage this age group, which has short attention spans.



Ms Eileen Yeo and her children on one of their regular trips to the library

- **For kindergarteners:** Select books with pictures or illustrations that enhance the plot, memorable and well-developed characters, and meaningful values. Books that invite audience participation, such as through physical movement, also appeal to kindergarteners who love to be involved in the story. To encourage independent reading, find a book that matches your child's interest and reading ability.



Ms Siti Nurfadilah and her family read a book together every day at home

GET STARTED

Libraries are much more than just a repository for books. Join these programmes to foster your child's interest in reading.

- Parents can register their newborns for the **Babies Can Be Members Too!** programme. Members receive a gift pack of books suitable for younger children. Ms Eileen Yeo, who signed up her 19-month-old son Darius Chow for this initiative, says, "I love it as it encourages parents to take the first step in reading books with their children. I try to read books to my boys every day as I wish to cultivate the habit of reading in them. I prefer my boys to read books and reduce their screen time."

- **A Book A Day** is a reading programme that aims to foster pre-reading skills in children up to 6 years old, and encourages parents to read with their children every day. It includes a reading journal paired with recommended reading activities. Participants are entered in a quarterly lucky draw where they can win a collection of children's books.



Ms Siti Nurfadilah bte Adnan joined the programme when her son Muhammad Asy-syafi'i bin Muhammad Alamin was 1½ years old. Now three, he has grown to love books and spends 45 minutes reading every day. "We became motivated as a family to find more books by going 'library-hopping' instead of cafe-hopping," she says. Visiting the different libraries also gave them inspiration for creating a conducive reading space at home.

To find out more and register for these programmes, download the NLB Mobile app or visit www.nlb.gov.sg.



7 WAYS TO CULTIVATE EARLY READING HABITS

- 1 **Set a good example.** When children see their parents reading, they are more likely to read too.
- 2 **Read aloud.** Reading aloud with children not only strengthens the parent-child bond and builds stronger emotional connections, but also improves language and listening skills.
- 3 **Practise reading at home and everywhere.** Read pamphlets, road signs, menus, packaging, grocery lists, recipes and more.
- 4 **Involve your child.** Children are more likely to read when they pick the book themselves. Let children choose from among age-appropriate books that you have pre-selected.
- 5 **Set a positive tone.** Do not fall into the trap of making children read as a form of punishment. This will only associate reading with something bad rather than fun and enjoyable.
- 6 **Look beyond words.** Do not focus solely on teaching language skills like phonics. This can dampen the child's interest in reading. Look for good illustrations, beautiful language and engaging plots.
- 7 **Incorporate play into reading.** Encourage your child to act out the characters. It makes reading fun and helps their narrative and comprehension skills.

HOLIDAY READS

What to do during the June school break? Check out these library programmes.

- **Online School Holiday Specials** Go on a virtual adventure with librarians Kah Heng and Olive as they explore volcanoes and the ocean. Follow NLB on Facebook at www.facebook.com/publiclibrarysg for event times and details.
- **Baby Lapsit** Designed for infants aged 0–12 months, this 30-minute session introduces parents to simple songs, action rhymes and fingerplay that allow them to interact and bond with their baby in an enjoyable way. Look out for upcoming sessions at go.gov.sg/nlb-eventbrite.
- **Storytelling For Preschoolers** These sessions introduce 4- to 6-year-olds to fascinating stories and fairytales. Look out for upcoming sessions at go.gov.sg/golibrary-storytelling.



Don't forget to adhere to **Safe Management Measures** when visiting the library!

win

→ Three lucky readers will each receive a set of five fun and meaningful picture books suitable for preschoolers.



**Simply answer this question:
Name one library programme that preschoolers can take part in.**

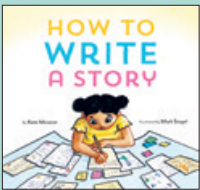
Send your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

Closing date: **21 May 2021**



More Than Words

Impart the power of the written word to your child.

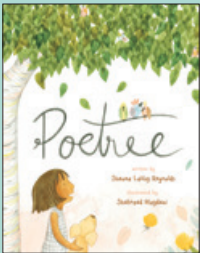


> How to Write a Story

By *Kate Messner*
OverDrive link: nlb.overdrive.com/media/5420459

This fun sequel to *How to Read a Story* guides young storytellers through the joys and challenges of becoming a writer. From choosing an idea, to creating a problem for their character to solve, to reaching The End, this empowering picture book breaks down the writing process in a dynamic and accessible way. It encourages kids to explore their creativity and share their stories with others.

Contributed by *Khirti Belani, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*



> Poetree

By *Shauna LaVoy Reynolds*
OverDrive link: nlb.overdrive.com/library/kids/media/4146665

A shy girl celebrates winter's end by writing a poem to a tree and is surprised when the tree writes back. Lyrical and sweetly satisfying, *Poetree* is a wondrous and warm picture book about friendship, nature and the power of poetry.

Contributed by *Nathaniel Chew, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*

Events @ NLB



Check out these programmes at the libraries.



Children's Puppet Castle

Find out what the talking cat gets up to in this unique puppet show.



Toddler Songs and Rhymes

A fun-filled virtual session with music and lyrics suitable for children aged 1 to 3.

Free admission. Registration is required. For more information on these and other physical and online programmes, visit go.gov.sg/nlb-eventbrite.

FOR YOUR DAILY DOSE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSPIRATION...

Grow@Beanstalk is your one-stop early childhood (EC) resource portal for inspiring stories, useful tips and activity ideas, as well as the latest happenings from the EC sector.



Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk, or scan the QR code



'Like' our Facebook page to stay updated and informed on the EC sector. You can also engage in healthy discussions with fellow educators and parents.



Connect with us at www.facebook.com/BeanstalkSingapore, or scan the QR code



It's not just work when you work with children. If you aspire to make a lifelong impact, join us as an Early Childhood Professional to shape the next generation.



Start a career in EC at www.ecda.gov.sg/ShapeOurTomorrow, or scan the QR code



Check out our Instagram page for exciting developments in the EC sector. Be inspired by what educators say about giving a good start to every child.



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