



Minding the Baby®
home visitation program

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October 2013

Greetings from Minding the Baby®

Fall is here! We hope you had a great summer. Fall transitions can be tough as many moms and children go back to school. We hope you are back into your routines and enjoying watching the trees as the leaves change color. Point these changes out to your child! Talk about how the weather is changing. Take a walk and pick up leaves, and talk about the differences in color and size. Enjoy these beautiful Fall days!



Brain Food: Reading, Talking, and Telling Stories

**“Does it really matter
if I read to my child?”**

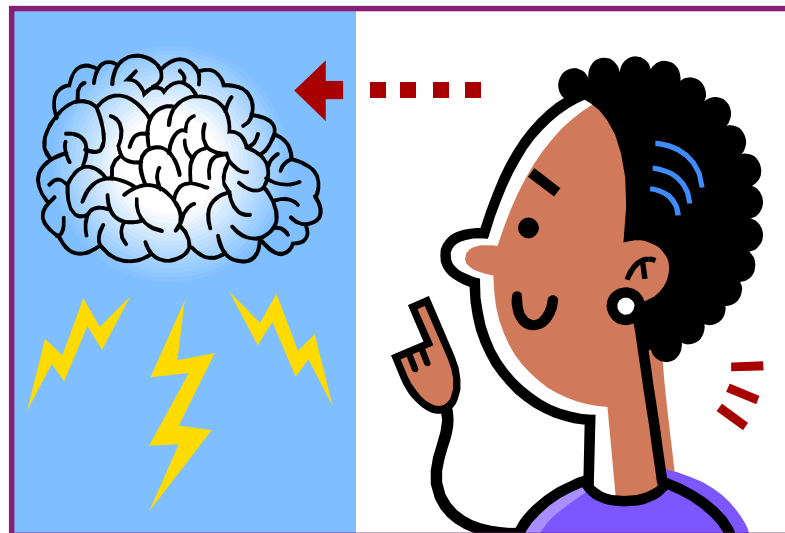
YES!!

If you read to your child for **30 minutes each week** from birth to age 5, that adds up to **130 hours**.

Sounds like a lot, right?

Well think about this...with just **30 minutes each day**, your child will get **900 hours of brain food** by age 5.

That's a difference of 770 hours!



Think your child's teachers will be able to make up the difference? There's just no way, no matter how good teachers are. It's never too late to start good reading habits though! When children are older than 5, books and talking still provide important brain food!

You might be thinking, "that's great but **I don't have time** to read for 30 minutes with my child every day." You want your child to have

the best possible start in school and life, so think about it this way: "reading" can really just mean **talking, singing, naming** things, and reading or **telling stories**.

Break it up into chunks throughout the day and it's really easy to find 30 minutes for this every day.

Turn this page over for lots of great tips to help **feed your child brain food** during the morning, afternoon, and evening!

Why don't families read together?

Have you heard yourself making these excuses?

"My schedule is too busy."

"I don't have time to sit and read."

"I'm too tired."

"I can't fit one more thing in today."

"Reading is work. I want to have fun."



Combat the Excuses: Tips for a Few Minutes of Brain Food Each Day

- Sing a good morning song, or play *"This Little Piggy"* while putting your child's socks on.
- Talk about your child's outfit for the day. *"What will you wear today?"*
- Ask your child about a favorite song and why. Sing it together!
- Give some breakfast choices and talk about food. *"Do you like strawberries?"*
- For older children, have them read to you while you make breakfast or cook dinner.
- Talk about the weather. *"It looks like it's going to rain today!"*
- Tell stories, real or pretend -- for example, about a cat who makes friends with a mouse.
- Sing *"Old MacDonald"* while walking or driving to school.
- Read signs everywhere you go. Ask older children about their favorite characters in a book.
- Ask your child's babysitter or teacher to read to your child.
- Cuddle with your child while looking at a book.
- Point to pictures in books and name the things you see. *"Look at that cow! Cows say moo!"*
- Name parts of a book like the front cover, back cover, title, etc.
- Play and sing during bath time.
- Read a goodnight book or sing a lullaby at bedtime.



Adapted from: US Dept. of Education, America Reads Challenge, Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader.



Minding the Baby®

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