Reading to Build Brains

The back-and-forth conversations and interactions that happen when you read together build a young child’s brain. Here’s how to make everyday moments Brain Building moments, too!

Explore the book before reading it aloud.

A. Look at the front cover.
B. Talk about what you think is going to happen in the book.

Pay attention to pictures.

Young children use the clues in pictures to help them understand, process, remember and retell stories as a foundation for learning to read. Do a “picture walk” and discuss what you see on each page. Look at the pictures and ask them to tell you what they think is taking place.

Express yourself!

The excitement in your voice is an invitation to become part of the experience.

A. Have an ongoing conversation about what is going on in the story.
B. Ask and answer questions about what is happening in the book.
C. Point out things on the page and encourage observations.
D. Connect what happens in the book to your child’s experiences.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER!

★ Choose books that match interests – whether it’s dinosaurs, trucks, puppies or princesses, they’ll be more engaged.

★ Relax! If a child is wiggling or fidgeting, it doesn’t mean they aren’t listening. For some children, moving their bodies helps them to concentrate. It’s okay if a child doesn’t sit for a whole story.

★ Be prepared to read the same book over and over again. Memorizing stories can often be an early step to becoming a reader.

Tell us how you used these ideas or share some of your own at BrainBuildingInProgress.org

Learn more and find other activities, events and resources at BrainBuildingInProgress.org

United Way

Department of Early Education and Care