

Reading to Young Children: A Head-Start in Life

There are significant connections between parents reading to their young children and their child's later reading and other cognitive skills.



Key Findings

The frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct effect on their schooling outcomes regardless of their family background and home environment.

- Reading to children at age 4-5 every day has a significant positive effect on their reading skills and cognitive skills (i.e., language and literacy, numeracy and cognition) later in life.
- Reading to children 3-5 days per week (compared to 2 or less) has the same effect on the child's reading skills at age 4-5 as being six months older.
- Reading to them 6-7 days per week has the same effect as being almost 12 months older.
- Children read to more frequently at age 4-5 achieve higher scores on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for both Reading and Numeracy in Year 3 (age 8 to 9).
- Reading to children from birth encourages brain connections that support their later reading development and academic ability.
- Lap reading supports a positive relationship with learning and strengthens brain development.
- Giving everything a name (labelling) helps reading development.
- Reading poetry, nursery rhymes, stories and tongue twisters stimulates every part of the brain to make reading connections.

