



# Helping Hands for Families

## Bedtime Stories Build Brains

Most parents and grandparents know that bedtime stories are super powerful for bonding with your child. Stories also prepare children for sleeping. But did you know that bedtime stories can help your child learn language sooner and better, too? It's true! **Repeating sounds and words to babies and very young children helps to "rewire" their brains so the language comes more easily when they begin talking and reading.**

According to T. A. Gowdy, here is one example of how the rewiring works: "When you read . . . *Goodnight Moon* to your baby, exaggerating the **oooo** sound in *moon* and drawing out the word **hushhhhh**, you simulate the part of her brain that handles language sounds."

When a baby hears sounds more often, she is better able to process them in her brain. "Then, when she is a toddler trying to learn language, she will more easily be able to hear the difference between, say, the words *tall* and *doll*." And then when she is a bit older and learning to read, she will be better able to sound out unfamiliar words on the page.



One thing though, this all works best when the child has an enjoyable experience with books, sounds and parents. Peter Gorski, M.D., chair of the early childhood committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, says "More than anything, you want him to associate reading with emotional warmth and fun."

A final benefit of reading to your child is that it can help reduce stress levels and be comforting — and that is when our human brains are most receptive to learning. Start reading to your children as early as possible.

*Adapted from "The Brainy Benefits of Bedtime Stories" by Thayer Allyson Gowdy, located at <https://www.parents.com/fun/entertainment/books/the-brainy-benefits-of-bedtime-stories/>*

## Microwave-Baked Apples

Makes 4 servings

- 4 large baking apples
- Wax paper
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Wash apples and remove core, but don't poke through to bottom of apples.
1. Cut a thin slice off the bottom of each apple to form a flat surface.
2. Place apples in a microwave-safe baking dish.
3. In a small dish, mix brown sugar and cinnamon
5. Spoon mixture into center of apples.
6. Cover apples with wax paper and microwave on high power 6 to 10 minutes or until apples are soft. *Source: [http://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan\\_fresh\\_recipe\\_apples](http://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/michigan_fresh_recipe_apples)*



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### Marquette County Family Connections Coalition

Marquette County Health Department  
608-297-3135

Marquette Early Learning Center & Head Start  
608-296-2141 x 2114

Marquette County UW-Extension  
608-297-3141

Family Health WIC  
1-920-787-5514

Marquette County Human Services  
608-297-3124

Childcaring, Inc.  
1-800-628-8534

Marquette County Economic Support  
608-297-3124

WorkSmart Employment & Training Services  
608-355-4808

Westfield School District Family/School Liaison & Guidance Program  
608-296-2141

Montello School District  
608-297-7617

**Marquette County Family Adventure Day**  
**Saturday, April 27, 2019**  
**@ Montello High School For Families in Marquette County!**

#### Mission

The Marquette County Family Connections Coalition (FCC) mission is to link families with community services through communication and collaboration.

## Get Active: Play Together

- Pick a time of day when you both will be less rushed, hungry, thirsty, or tired. Set a timer for 20 minutes of play.
- Set aside your list of things to do. Temporarily ignore the messes to clean up or stack of paperwork.
- Remove distractions. Leave your phone in another room. Shut off the computer and TV.
- Go outside to play whenever possible.
- Let preschoolers lead activities by giving them the opportunity to pick the game or make up the rules. See how creative they can get playing Simon Says or Follow the Leader!
- Give encouragement. Preschoolers need to hear your positive reinforcement.
- Make physical contact. Try dancing together or "rough and tumble" play like tickling and wrestling, which can help you teach safe touch.
- Laugh and have fun!

Written by Renee Koenig. For more parenting ideas visit <https://fyi.uwex.edu/parentingthepreschooler/>



## Tips for reading to your child

Reading to your child is the most important thing you can do to help your child succeed in school! Why? Because nearly half of learning occurs by age four.

Remember to choose books at a level right for your child. All of the Marquette County Librarians can help you do this, and they love to help!

Other things to keep in mind include:

- Be enthusiastic while you are reading
- Use your voice in interesting ways to help tell the story
- Involve your child in the story by asking him questions or to point to things
- Let your child help turn the pages
- Go for it; don't be afraid to make mistakes.



## Seven Benefits of Playing Together

- 1.** Smarter children! Research shows that physical play stimulates brain development and boosts school test scores.
- 2.** Builds relationships and other friendships: Spending a few minutes playing together is an investment in your relationship. You can use playtime to teach cooperation and how to constructively channel competitive energy.
- 3.** Teaches problem-solving skills: Children learn self-control when they practice taking turns and following the rules of the game. "Oh, I see dad didn't get mad when his turn was over."
- 4.** Develops healthy habits: More time spent together playing means less time sitting and watching TV or playing electronic games alone.
- 5.** Increases emotional intelligence: Children gain empathy and learn fairness in winning and losing when you show them your emotions. Children gain confidence when they learn to recognize the emotions of others as well as manage their own emotions during play. "Mom won't like it if I push too hard; then we will have to stop playing tag."
- 6.** Promotes health and fitness: Physical activity strengthens the body, improves cardiovascular fitness, coordination and flexibility. You will sleep better, too!
- 7.** Brings joy and laughter: Physical activity reduces stress. Happiness is a great gift you give each other through play.