

Frequently Asked Questions

● When is the best time to start the *Your Baby Can Read!* program?

The best time to begin is when the baby develops visual tracking; the ability to follow moving objects with the eyes. About half of babies have visual tracking at two months of age, and around 90% of babies have visual tracking at three months of age. Since there is more neuroplasticity (the ability of the brain to change or modify based on the environment) early in life, it is possible the brain will develop more efficiently for reading, so the child could read as naturally as the child understands spoken language.

There are numerous reasons why parents should start using the *Your Baby Can Read!* program with a young baby:

- The most natural time to learn language skills is during infancy.
- It is fun to read.
- This can be a great bonding experience for babies and parents.
- It is easier to learn language skills at a high level in the first few years of life.
- The earlier a child is taught to read, the better the child generally reads.

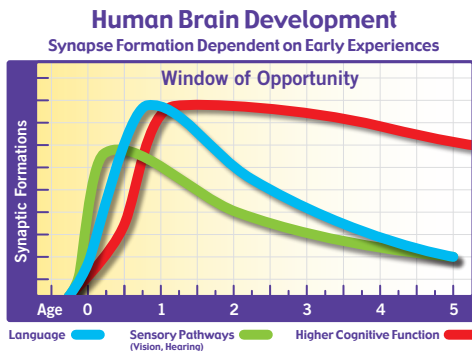


While the most natural window of language development is during the infant and toddler years, many older children have benefited from the *Your Baby Can Read!* program. It is ideal to start a child on the *Your Baby Can Read!* program early in infancy, but if you are finding out about the program and your child is older, please know that learning to read at a younger age is better than learning at age five or six, or older.

Also, please remember that this program should not take away one second of traditional play. We want your baby, toddler, or child to play with toys, play with you, and play with words. Have fun no matter when you start the program!

● How does the *Your Baby Can Read!* program work?

Since children learn language faster and easier during infancy than at any other time, we take advantage of this window of opportunity to have them learn written language as well as spoken language. Not only are infants able to see and hear words instead of only hearing them, we also encourage children to participate by doing physical actions that help them learn the meanings of the words. We encourage babies and toddlers to clap, wave, point, touch body



parts, and so on. This kind of interactive, multi-sensory learning has been shown to be superior to simply presenting the information in one sensory format (or modality)—and it's more fun!

● Does the *Your Baby Can Read!* program also teach phonics?

Yes. *Your Baby Can Read!* teaches phonics as well as whole words. We have sections of the videos that teach phonics. Many infants have learned to read phonetically at very advanced levels with this system because they picked up the patterns of the written language all by themselves. Remember, infants and toddlers naturally learn the patterns of spoken language by listening to people talk.

Children can learn phonics naturally like they learn the rules of grammar. Children figure out to add an “-s” onto words to make them plural, or an “-ed” onto words to make them past tense. They learn this by listening to language. For example, a child may say “I sitted in that chair,” instead of, “I sat in that chair,” because they learned the pattern of adding an ‘-ed’ onto words to make them past tense. Young children who watch our videos may begin learning the patterns of the written language, or phonics, after they learn to read several dozen words, but it will likely take learning to read a couple hundred words before the child masters phonics.

In contrast, when people learn English later in life, they learn by rules, instead of easily figuring out the patterns of the language.



Generally, when people learn the patterns of language early in childhood, they learn the language at a higher level than people who learn by rules later in life. The same is true with learning to read. If a child learns to read later in life, the child will most likely have to learn using traditional rules of phonics.

● Isn't reading to your child enough?

Reading to your child is a fun, positive activity; however, reading to young children doesn't teach them to read. Some studies have shown that many children spend only about five seconds focusing on words when a parent reads to them. Most of the rest of the time



was spent looking at the pictures. Therefore, parents should not expect that reading to their children will teach them to read.

● Aren't children only memorizing the words?

At first, children are memorizing the shapes of the words. They have to be taught that the shapes of words are more important than the colors of the text, the background colors, or the particular fonts used. For example, the word “clap” appears many times throughout the *Your Baby Can Read!* program. The text color, the background colors, and the fonts vary. This makes it more likely that the child will recognize the word “clap”—whether it is handwritten or written in a different font or color. We also have many different ways of illustrating the meaning of the word “clap”—a group of children, a baby, and even a gorilla clapping. In addition, the child should have a clearer understanding

of what the word means than if only one example of “clap” had been used. In addition to memorizing the shapes of the words, children who watch our program also learn phonics.

● **Do babies and toddlers like your program?**

In general, children enjoy watching our videos, playing with our word cards, and reading our books. We have many thousands of comments from parents saying that their children prefer our DVDs over other entertainment-based programs with little educational value. Our videos are interactive, which makes them more fun for babies, toddlers, and young children.

● **How long do you recommend that children watch the video?**

That depends on many factors—how many words the child already knows, the child’s interest in learning new words, the child’s age, and so on. Beginning readers should watch about twice a day, or about one hour total. Your child can watch while riding in the car or while you are busy around the house, so that watching the DVDs won’t take time away from other important activities such as playing. Unfortunately, there are many babies who are not getting attention for several hours over the course of a day while the parents are busy working, on the phone, on the computer or attending to other children. Our DVDs can help those parents by providing a language-rich environment alternative for their children!

● **Do I need to watch the DVDs with my child?**

No, though it is recommended that you watch the Volume 1 DVD with your child about half of the time. When you have time, you can

join your child in interacting with the DVDs. If you are busy, your child can interact with the children on the DVD.

● What should I do if my child is “active” or not focused on the DVDs?

Many people have successfully taught their babies and toddlers to read even if their children were very active or initially not focused on the DVDs. If your child is not watching the videos, try the following strategies:

- Make sure that your child is in an upright position, comfortable, and close enough to see the television screen. It usually helps if someone sits with the child and says the words and does the actions with her. You could have your infant seated on your lap and gently encourage your child to participate in the activities presented in the video. It's okay if your child doesn't watch the entire DVD in one sitting. You could let your child watch for several minutes many times throughout the day. It helps to remove distractions (toys, etc.) from the environment at least several minutes before you begin. Also, if you dim the lights in the room, the TV will appear brighter, which can help your child focus. Additionally, this should make the other objects in the room less distracting.
- Another strategy that many parents have used is showing the DVDs early in the morning, before or after a nap, or upon returning from being outside. Some parents show the DVD after doing physical activities with their active toddlers. Depending on the



age of your child, you may want to have your child seated in a highchair and feed your baby while he is watching the DVDs.

- Often, if adults play fun word games with their children, their child's interest increases for the videos. For example, hold up two word cards (such as "clap" and "wave") and say, "Which word says 'clap'?" Next, say, "Can you find the word 'wave'?" Or, play a matching game where the child matches the words with toys: write down the word "car" and let your child put the word by the toy car.
- One more activity to try is using a white board with colorful markers to show your child words that he is interested in. Stop when your child loses interest. Make it all as fun and interactive as you can. Stick with the program! You'll be glad you did! We have received letters from parents saying their active children didn't focus at first, but after using similar techniques their children later focused and learned to read.



● Should I let my child watch any TV?

In general, children should not be viewing TV or baby videos; however, there are times when certain programs are appropriate. If one looks at the variety of different baby videos, it's easy to see that many are passive, entertainment-based DVDs designed to only occupy the baby while parents are busy.

That being said, children's DVDs can be helpful if all of the following conditions exist:

- The DVD should be multi-sensory and interactive. This means what children see and hear on-screen must go together logically. In addition, babies and toddlers should be encouraged to say the words they hear, and do the physical actions they see. This multi-sensory approach is very important because many of the child's new brain connections go from the visual cortex to the auditory cortex. If what the child sees and hears does not match, then parents should probably avoid showing that program to their child.
- The DVDs should be designed to teach children language skills in addition to teaching other topics. For instance, the DVD could teach children about shapes, but at the same time there should be words spoken that describe the shapes. This will help the child learn language skills. Certain popular children's DVDs have very little spoken or written language. If you are showing your baby a DVD that uses limited language, then you should expect your baby will not learn much language while watching the DVD.

If used properly with the right content, one can successfully use television as a learning tool. While most programs and videos likely have little or no value, the TV itself can actually be a tool for multi-sensory, interactive learning.