**Healthcare Provider Read-A-Thon Information & Rationale**

**September 8th - 18th, 2025**

**Welcome to the Babies With Books (BWB) NICU Read-A-Thon!**

This event is a friendly reading competition between NICUs to celebrate and encourage shared family reading and improve the NICU experience. This multi-hospital NICU Read-A-Thon is hosted by [Babies With Books](http://babieswithbooks.org), a student-led early literacy organization promoting NICU reading, in partnership with your hospital.

**Why Read to Babies During Their NICU Hospitalization?**

Reading to babies promotes brain development by creating and strengthening brain connections that, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “build language, literacy, and social-emotional skills at a critical time in a child’s development.” Reading with babies in the NICU also provides an important opportunity for families to bond with their babies. These are especially important for babies with prolonged hospitalizations, babies at high risk of poor neurodevelopmental outcomes, and babies with socioeconomically disadvantaged families.

**How You Can Participate In The NICU Read-A-Thon:**

Engage families in the NICU Read-A-Thon!

* Talk with families about the Read-A-Thon - before and during the Read-A-Thon!
* Talk with families about how and why to read with babies in the NICU.
* Explain to families how and where to get books and other reading materials.
* Explain how families should complete their infants’ reading tickets (write their baby’s first and last names on a reading ticket).
* Explain where to place the completed reading ticket (place it in the reading ticket box located centrally in the NICU or in a cup in the baby’s room).
* Explain that a “reading session” is defined as any attempt to read with a baby regardless of duration.
* Encourage families to read with their babies every day (babies who cannot be held can be read to while in bed).

Read with NICU babies whose families are not able to do so

* Parents should read with their baby whenever possible but anyone can read with babies (ex. parents, healthcare providers and other staff, volunteers, etc)!
* Enter a reading ticket for each baby each time you read with them!

**Thank you for supporting babies and families through NICU reading and this Read-A-Thon!**

**This information was developed based on the following resources and references:**

[reachoutandread.org/](https://reachoutandread.org/)

[www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Literacy/For-Families/Sharing-Books-With-Your-Baby/booksbuildconnections\_helpingyourchildlearntoread.pd](https://www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Literacy/For-Families/Sharing-Books-With-Your-Baby/booksbuildconnections_helpingyourchildlearntoread.pdf)f

[www.zerotothree.org/resources/1833-read-early-and-often](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1833-read-early-and-often)

[www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Literacy/For-Families/The-Secret-To-A-Smarter-Baby/booksbuildconnections\_thesecrettoasmarterbaby.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Literacy/For-Families/The-Secret-To-A-Smarter-Baby/booksbuildconnections_thesecrettoasmarterbaby.pdf)

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/literacy/Literacy/For-Families/Why-It-Is-Never-Too-Late-To-Early-With-Your-Baby/booksbuildconnections_whyitisnevertooearlytoreadtoyourbaby.pdf>