

Toddlers learn about life through pictures

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Reading picture books to toddlers can help them learn about the real world, psychologists from the United States and Australia said.

Researchers studied the group of toddlers to see if they could learn how early the children begin relating symbols and pictures to the real items, WebMD.com said.

University of Queensland, Australia, and the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., researchers tested boys and girls ages 18 months, 24 months and 30 months. One group was read to from a book with photographs, a second group from a book with color drawings of the photographs and a third group wasn't read to at all.

The pictures showed a child building a rattle, putting a ball in a jar, attaching a stick to the jar and shaking the toy to make it rattle, WebMD.com said. Researchers read the simple, how-to text and pointed to the pictures. Children then were given a ball, jar and rattle and urged to build a rattle.

Those who had been read to, particularly when they could see pictures, could at least start the project, the researchers said.

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