



When you **cuddle up**
and read together
cognitive and
language scores
go up,
behavioural concerns
go down,
kids are more
prosocial,
do better
cognitively, relationally
and emotionally.

A deceptively simple human experience that can profoundly **impact health and wellbeing**. It's good for the mind, body and spirit. Creating a connection that **protects young children** against stress, promotes heart, brain, and gut function, improves sleep, and bolsters the immune system.

And because this **connection is two-way**, adults get many of the same benefits we think of as 'for the kids'.

Shared book reading creates a bond, a shared emotional connection, allowing for common experiences, feelings and exploration of the world beyond the walls of a home.

Reading even provides a form of **effortless mindfulness**. When reading with your child you are anchored in the present moment and free of anxious thoughts. In this way, reading can be a great tool to combat anxiety and depression.

Find out more ella-wr.ca



Watch our *Marvellous Moments Video Series* on youtube - featuring parents like you with child psychiatrist Dr. Jean Clinton:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPw5rPtLvzminDNQMAzs9ag8UgYnrDx5>

Or follow us on social media [@EllaWaterlooRegion](https://twitter.com/EllaWaterlooRegion)

Reading together can be the most magical, memorable, and enjoyable part of a child's—and a caregiver's—day. Snuggle close, look at the book together; act out the voices and the noises in the stories, point to the pictures, talk about the feelings, ask each other questions or retell the story together. Reading together will build brains, create memories and impart benefits that last a lifetime.

What?

CHILDREN NEED CONNECTION. When you read aloud, you are concentrating all your attention on your child, on the book and the story — your child will understand this and feel reassured.

CHILDREN NEED PHYSICAL CONTACT AND AFFECTION. The combination of your voice and your hug will help your child feel loved and secure.

CHILDREN NEED ROUTINE. Read at the same time each day to help your child feel that the day has a predictable schedule, and give your child (and you) something to look forward to.

CHILDREN NEED ENTERTAINMENT. Read books that make your child laugh, eager to turn the page and find out what happens next.

CHILDREN NEED A SENSE OF SECURITY. Even when the world is scary, a child can find some security in a caregiver's voice and a parent's embrace.

CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL LOVED & CARED FOR. Reading is a way to show your child, every day, how much you care, and how important it is to you to spend time together.

How?:

- It doesn't matter WHAT you read as much as HOW - snuggle up together, read and talk with emotion, and be sure to ask questions and respond to your child
- Read or tell stories in your home language - it's your love language and it builds your child's brain!
- Think about connection, not just the text - you can use wordless picture books,, photos, a magazine...it's about focusing your attention, expanding your child's vocabulary and enjoying marvelous moments together.
- Consider picking a 'special' spot where you and your child feel safe and comfortable - make a bed of cushions, or put a blanket over a couple of chairs, a special spot in the yard or a local park will do too
- Try to turn off devices, really focus on your child, the story & the moment
- Make sure you are enjoying it as well - pick a story you like, or a time of day you can relax for a moment - they will sense and share your contentment and happiness