Did you know that reading to a brand new baby increases the chance that they will be a good reader when they are in 3rd grade? It’s true!

WIC has encouraged reading to young children for years, but recent research in brain development and language skills shows that the earlier parents start reading to their kids the better. In fact it is so important that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently announced a new policy recommending that in between dispensing advice on breastfeeding and immunizations, doctors should tell parents to read aloud to their infants from birth.

With the increased recognition that an important part of brain development occurs within the first three years of a child’s life, and that reading to children enhances vocabulary and other communication skills, AAP, which represents 62,000 pediatricians across the country, is asking its members to become advocates for reading aloud, every time a baby visits the doctor.

The new policy, said Dr. Pamela High, who wrote it, recommends that doctors tell parents they should be “reading together as a daily fun family activity” from infancy.

Over half of Oregon parents already read to their child every day. Continuing to read to kids as they get older will build on that early foundation for learning.

More at the AAP website

Adapted from OregonLive 6/25/2014

Books make great baby gifts.

Libraries are free!
Providing Books to New Moms

Yes, you can give books to WIC moms and babies. Children’s books with a nutrition or physical activity theme are like any other nutrition education material. Books can be purchased with end-of-year funds or out of your nutrition education materials budget. Here are a few ideas for getting books.

Buy from Scholastic
Scholastic Books has a partnership with the National WIC Association (NWA). You can buy specially selected nutrition related books appropriate for babies, toddlers, or preschoolers at about half price. For titles and prices go to: https://www.nwica.org/products/scholastic-books

Partner with Libraries
The Hillsboro Library recently donated 574 books to the Washington County WIC program for families to take home. The library donates books to various local agencies as an outreach to families who may not come to the library regularly or who may not be able to provide books at home for their children. The librarians were able to use their book vendor to provide books appropriate for the age group.

Other great book ideas

Bye-bye Bottle Box
Deschutes Co. WIC rewards toddlers who are ready to give up the bottle with a bag that includes a book as well as dental health materials. The book is given when they put their bottles into the box in the waiting room.

Library Story Times
Multnomah Co. WIC partners with the county library system to have group nutrition education story times at the library. The library also provides books for the agency to use in their clinics. Clatsop Co. provides WIC services at the library, which is a great opportunity to encourage parents to check out books to read to their children.

Book swaps
Consider offering a book swap as part of nutrition fairs - trade in one book for a different book.