
What is the Books for Bubs program?

As part of the Queensland Government's commitment to give every child a flying start to their education, every newborn child will receive a picture book from 1 July 2010.

The book, *It's Bed Time*, is specifically aimed at children aged 0-5 years and will be given to parents to get them into the habit of reading to their child from infancy.

By giving parents this book, it is hoped it will encourage them to make reading with their child a part of every day.

This book will get them started on their reading journey and encourage parents to seek out other books suitable for young children from their local library or bookstore.

In addition to the Books for Bubs program, the Queensland Government has launched a statewide awareness campaign to encourage parents and families to read to their children every day to develop early literacy skills.

Sporting and entertainment personalities have joined the campaign presenting public service announcements online and at sporting events to encourage parents to read to their children.

How will parents receive their free book?

Books are being distributed to new parents through maternity wards and birthing centres from 1 July 2010.

Parents should receive their new book when they are leaving hospital, along with the Queensland Health "Personal Health Record" booklet for their baby.

If you have not received a copy of the book with your Personal Health Record, you can request a copy by sending an email to corporatecommunication@deta.qld.gov.au or telephoning (07) 3237 1363

Why was the *It's Bed Time* book selected as the book to be given to new parents?

The *It's Bed Time* book was developed by the not for profit association The Little Big Book Club – an organisation dedicated to the promotion of reading and encouraging parents to share books with their child from infancy.

It was developed as a resource for parents and caregivers of children aged between birth and five years to assist with bedtime routines and to get parents into the habit of reading to their child every day.

To develop the book, the Little Big Book Club worked with the Pediatric Sleep Unit at the University of South Australia and a focus group of parent and early childhood specialists.

Australian authors and publishers were asked to submit a unique lullaby or short story for inclusion in the book and five were chosen to be part of the book.

The *It's Bed Time* book has previously been used successfully in South Australia as a resource for new parents.

It includes tips on how to establish good bedtime routines and suggested books for further reading.

Are any Queenslanders involved in the *It's Bed Time* book?

Queensland author Tania Cox has written the lullaby "Time to say 'goodnight'" for the *It's Bed Time* book.

From Ayr in north Queensland, Tania is the successful author of several children's books aimed at very young children.

Many of her titles have been recognised as Children's Book Council of Australia Notable Books and her most recent book *Alberta* was also shortlisted for the 2008 Bilby Awards.

The Bilby Awards are Queensland's children's choice book awards. They are run by the Children's Book Council of Australia (Queensland Branch).

The 2011 edition of the *It's Bed Time* book also includes rhymes from Queensland authors Kerry Brown - "Goodnight, garden" - and Nadie Sunde - "Little boat".

Kerry Brown, a qualified primary teacher with a Masters Degree in Education, is dedicated to developing early literature skills in children and enjoys helping children tap into their own magical worlds and words.

Singer/songwriter, early childhood music educator, ABC radio presenter and mother-of-two Nadie Sunde plays real music for children and adults who want to enjoy something a little more organic.

What are the benefits of reading to children from a very young age?

You'd be surprised how much babies and young children can benefit when you read to them.

Research shows that the simple act of reading regularly to children has a positive impact on their literacy and learning and helps prepare them for school.

Education starts at home and parents and families are their children's first teachers.

Children's brains develop rapidly in the early years, and there are chances to learn something new at almost every turn.

Introducing children to books at an early age can help give them the pre-literacy skills they need to get off to a flying start in their education.

It gives them the greatest chance to develop their vocabulary and a love of reading.

It stimulates their imagination and mental development, and puts them on the path to lifelong learning.

Reading together is also a great way to spend time with your child.

Just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with young children builds strong relationships, encourages listening and language skills, promotes attention and curiosity, and establishes a strong reading foundation.

Why are Queensland parents being encouraged to read to their children more?

An Australia-wide survey of teachers of five-year-olds in 2009 showed more than one-third of Queensland children are not regularly read to at home.

In this survey, teachers reported that only 61.7 per cent of Queensland children are regularly read to or encouraged in their reading at home, compared with the Australian average of 69.8 per cent.

Queensland ranked seventh out of Australian states and territories on each of the five areas of childhood development assessed in the survey.

For language and cognitive skills, only 61 per cent of Queensland five-year-olds were classified as on track, compared with an Australian average of 77 per cent.

Children who haven't had the chance to develop early literacy skills can start their formal education at a disadvantage.

Early setbacks are hard to make up, and gaps widen as children progress through the school years.

International research has found there is an almost 90 per cent chance that a child who is a poor reader at the end of Year 1 will remain a poor reader at the end of Year 4.

Children who start school lacking basic literacy skills are more likely to have behaviour problems later on in primary school, disrupting their learning and that of other students in the classroom.

How can parents help their children develop a love of reading and be prepared for school?

The Department of Education and Training has a range of resources to help parents and carers read to their children and prepare them for school.

Tips on how to help your child learn to love reading and a list of books suitable for children aged 0-5 years can be found on the [reading awareness page](#).

There's also a range of [fact sheets](#) and tips for parents on developing their child's literacy and numeracy skills from early childhood through to senior schooling.