



Press Release

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### **Book Month inspires family reading**

The Children's Commissioner, Dr Russell Wills, says Book Month is a great idea and a novel way to promote the benefits of reading.

"Reading to your children is a fun way to spend time together and it has positive benefits on your child's learning," says Dr Wills.

"No child is too young to be read to. In the first three years of a baby's life lots of brain development happens. This brain development is encouraged by one-on-one time with a caring adult doing things like talking, singing and reading.

"For older children, being read to is a great way to get ready to be a reader. Reading needs a good vocabulary, the ability to break words down into sounds and the ability to understand written symbols have meaning. Being read to by an adult helps children develop all these skills.

"The effects of being read to are long lasting. Our OECD data shows children who were read to before they started school did substantially better on international reading tests at age 15 than their peers who weren't read to.

"Reading has the added benefit of helping you develop a close relationship with your child by spending special time together.

"It is great if parents can be reading role models for their children. Show your kids you enjoy reading by showing them you enjoy reading by talking about what you're reading and having books around your home," says Dr Wills.

Ends

#### **Some tips for reading together:**

- Your child is never too young to be read to.
- And, it's never too late to start!
- Cuddle up with your child to read, or sit in a position so that she can see your face.
- Let your child choose the book he wants to be read, and be prepared to read the same one over and over and over again...
- Don't just read the words. Stop to comment on the pictures, ask questions, and connect the story to your family's daily life.
- Read with expression, have fun, and don't be afraid to "do the voices".
- Let your child decide how long she wants to be read to. A few minutes is fine.

- For older pre-school children, you can point to the words as you read them, and explain that they usually go left to right, and top to bottom.

Useful websites:

[www.bookmonth.co.nz](http://www.bookmonth.co.nz)

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/EarlyYears/SupportingYourYoungChildsLearning.aspx>

For more information or to talk to Dr Wills please contact Victoria Parsons, Principal Media Advisor, Office of the Children's Commissioner, **027 696 5101**