

# Study: Daily dose of reading good for kids

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

Books are like medicine, and pediatricians should prescribe their daily use to build up the brains of their youngest patients, according to a policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Parents should read aloud to their infants every day and continue to do so at least until their children enter kindergarten, the academy's Council on Early Childhood advised on Tuesday. Pediatricians should emphasize the importance of daily reading during routine health checkups and dispense books to their patients, especially those from low-income families, the experts said.

Asking pediatricians to act a little more like librarians may sound strange, but many studies have documented that literacy has lifelong benefits for health. For instance, adults who have trouble with reading are less likely to get preventive healthcare, are not as good at managing chronic diseases, are more likely to wind up in the hospital and are more likely to die prematurely, the policy statement noted.

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