

Check It Out Column for week of August 9-15

Read to Me: The 1000 Book Club  
By Beth Anne Cox, Children's Assistant

Is it ever too early to begin reading to your children? I don't think so! My daughter came home from the hospital when she was 4 days old, and that night we sat in 'the Mommy chair', a big fat overstuffed armchair on rockers, with her in my left arm and the book, *Tell Me About the Night I Was Born*, in my right hand. We began a tradition that continues to this day.

So I take it seriously as part of my responsibilities here to inform parents of young children about our "Thousand Book Club." The premise of this club is simple and so are the guidelines: we want to encourage you to read to, or read with your child, until a thousand books have been read before they're 5. We know how children like to hear their favorite books over and over, and you can count those favorites every time you read them. If you have more than one child who fits within these guidelines, you can read to all of them at once and count the books for each child.

It isn't only moms who can read to the little ones; daddies certainly can, as well as grandparents, and so can big brother or sister. And we've got some families with wonderful daycare providers that have signed up the children they care for, which we think is a terrific thing to do.

So how do you join the Thousand Book Club? We'll ask you to fill out a card with the child's basic information— name, age, etc.—and then give you a tote bag and folder, which contains a bright red page for the first 100 books; when you've filled it all in, you bring it back and the child chooses a sticker and gets a certificate. We'll give you another page for the next hundred, and so it goes. At the end, this child will be given a book to keep, and his or her picture goes up on our wall display. We love to see children tugging someone else's hand to come 'See? See? That's me!'

Early reading often fosters a genuine love of reading, as well as easier learning. We love encouraging those, as well as helping you teach your child to love the treasures they'll find at the library. So, the next time you come in with your children under 5, ask to get started with the 1000 book club!