

Reading Aloud to Infants: A Tried and True Practice

The infant was a fighter. Abandoned by his father, his mother, Flora, found herself unable to bond with him. His doctor approached Mrs. Jennie Prentiss, a nurse/midwife, who had recently lost her own baby. Mrs. Prentiss took the infant into her home, folding him into her routine with her older children. She often read aloud to them with the infant on her lap.

The child in this story had a tenuous start to his life, but early on he is supported in ways that even his grieving mother could not have imagined. Mrs. Prentiss' willingness to read aloud to the infant changed the quality of Jack London's life.

Over the years, Jack was a sailor on a sealing ship, a gold miner in Alaska, a journalist, and he is best known as a novelist. In his late-twenties, he became famous for his adventure story, *Call of the Wild*, which has been translated into numerous languages.

More than 100 years later, parents hear the message of the value of reading to infants and young children in our medical clinics in Solano County. Jack London's story is an example of the impact of this practice.

