

Adult-and-Child Shared Reading

Adult-child shared reading experiences provide rich opportunities for mutually beneficial teacher and child interactions. When teachers spend time reading with young children to encourage their active participation, they help children strengthen their listening skills, develop their language abilities, and increase their knowledge about the world.

Watch a video of
this Learning Guide

Learning Guide: Reading Together with Young Children

- Observe children in their everyday classroom activities to identify their interests; that is, the objects, materials, actions, and people that they prefer, make them smile and laugh, activities they work hard at doing, and the things that capture their attention.
- Provide children access to books that match their interests. Give them opportunities to select a favorite book or choose among two or more books.
- Respond promptly to children's requests for you to read to them. Acknowledge their interests in wanting to read by making a positive statement about a chosen book, showing your shared enthusiasm for reading, or praising them for their interest.
- When a book is familiar to a child, ask the child to tell you about the story. Help the child describe the story before beginning a reading episode.
- Have a child hold the book and turn the pages as you read the story. Name or describe the objects and actions shown in the illustrations. Stop frequently to encourage the child to make comments or ask questions about the story and illustrations. Respond positively to child comments and remarks by repeating what the child says, relating an event in the book to the child's experience.
- Ask the child open-ended questions about the story and illustrations, such as "What is he doing? Where is she going?" Help the children understand the story by providing information such as the meaning of unfamiliar words or descriptions of events not in the children's own experiences.
- As the children become familiar with a story, engage them in reciprocal conversations by asking questions that encourage the children to make predictions (e.g., "What is going to happen next?"), explain the events that happen in the story (e.g., "Why do you think he did that?"), speculate about an alternate story line (e.g., "What do you think would have happened if she had not gone there?"), or relate the elements of the story to their own lives (e.g., "Have you ever been to a place like that?").
- Keep the interactions going by repeating what the children say or responding to the children's answers with positive comments, new vocabulary or information, or questions that show your interest. Continue to provide many opportunities for children to participate in shared reading.

A Quick Peek

When Jamari and her friends Haley and Tasha brought one of their favorite books to their teacher, Becca, for the second time that day, Becca was happy to read it again. "I think you three love this book," Becca said. "Do you remember what it's about?" "It's about a beautiful fish," said Jamari. "It's about sharing," said Tasha. "That's right, a beautiful fish who learns to share," responded Becca. As Becca read, she paused often to ask the girls why the fish did not want to share his shiny scales, how they thought the other fish felt, whether they had ever felt the way the fish felt, or what they would do in a similar situation. As Becca turned one page, Haley said, "This is my favorite page." Becca responded, "Why is that your favorite page, Haley?" "Because he finally shares one of his scales with all the fish. They all look pretty now," said Haley. Becca asked, "What do you think is going to happen now that he shared?" Smiling, the girls answered in unison, "They're friends!!" "You're right!" said Becca. "The other fish ask him to play." The girls were delighted and settled on the couch together to retell the story to one another.



You'll know the practice is working if...

- Children actively participate in and enjoy reading opportunities with you
- Children make comments about and ask questions during reading experiences
- Children use new vocabulary and more complex language during reading experiences

Additional ideas about interaction through shared reading:

- "[Shared Reading](#)," a *WW Intervention Report* from What Works Clearinghouse
- "[Engaging Young Readers with Text Through Shared Book Reading](#)" available through Digital Commons