

Some Good Books to Share

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The joy of sharing books is a gift you can give children from the time they are born. Chanting nursery rhymes, singing songs, and reading stories can comfort and entertain even the youngest child. Listening to language lays the groundwork for reading.



Parents, child care providers, teachers, and other adults interested in the development of young children have a wealth of good books from which to choose.

For information about how to organize a Born to Read program, contact the Born to Read Project/Association for Library Service to Children
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611

800/545-2433, extension 2163
e-mail alsc@ala.org
<http://www.ala.org/alsc>

This information is also available in Spanish.

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Association for Library Service to Children

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ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

How to Raise a Reader

Let's get started! Here are tips on how to raise a reader, along with some of our favorite reads, developed by members of the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association. We wish you Happy Reading!

What we know about early literacy

A child's brain develops at an incredible rate during the first three years of life. A child's early experiences with language contribute to healthy brain development and lay the foundation for learning to read when a child enters school. Parents are indeed a child's first and most important teachers.

Emergent literacy is what children know about reading before they can actually read.

Researchers agree that children are more likely to become good readers if they **start** school with three sets of accomplishments:

- **Oral language skills and phonological awareness:** Children are able to comprehend and to express themselves with a wide range of words. They are able to distinguish the sounds as well as the meanings of words.
- **Print awareness and letter knowledge:** Children have learned that the black and white marks on a page represent spoken words. They are able to name the letters of the alphabet.
- **Motivation to learn and appreciation for literary forms:** Children have been exposed to a wide variety of literary experiences and have learned to love books and stories.

Raising a reader

- Begin when your child is born and spend time reading every day.
- Sing to your baby.
- Repeat nursery rhymes.
- Visit the library. Ask about story-times. Borrow books to share with your baby at home.
- Choose books with colorful pictures and simple words—or no words at all.
- Read with expression—or just tell the story in your own words.
- Hold the book so your child can see the pictures clearly.
- Let your baby play with the book.
- Encourage your toddler to point out objects, repeat words, and talk about the story.
- Reread your child's favorite books over and over again.
- Use the technique of **dialogic reading** to help a child stay actively involved with a story and develop reading comprehension. Instead of reading the story straight through, ask the child open-ended questions about the story: "Why do you think Goldilocks ate Baby Bear's porridge?" "What do you think will happen next?"
- Read or tell stories in the language you are most comfortable with. It doesn't have to be English!



More tips for book sharing

- Set aside a special time each day, such as nap time, bedtime, or after meals.
- Share books when you and your child are both in a relaxed mood.
- Take advantage of "waiting" times to share books—on trips, at the doctor's office, in line at the grocery store.
- Reading even 5 or 10 minutes a day to young children helps them get ready to read on their own.

Web Sites...

We suggest the following Web sites for further information about how to raise a reader:

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/born.html> for further information on the Born to Read project; as well as the Born to Read brochure

<http://www.pla.org> for information on the ALSC/Public Library Association's Preschool Literacy Initiative

<http://www.pbs.org/parents> for public television/parenting information

<http://www.famlit.org> for suggestions on other family literacy projects

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Association for Library Service to Children

SHELLS

Storytelling for Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills

SHELLS is a Head Start program that emphasizes language and literacy skills. SHELLS was designed to support the literacy development of Migrant families, the most educationally disadvantaged group in the US. There is a joint effort between El Centro de la Familia and Utah State University researchers to develop relevant and meaningful books that will help children with childhood development. For more information on SHELLS see their website at <http://www.cpd.usu.edu/project.php?id=104>.

Instructions for creating your own book:

- You will need a camera for this project; if you don't have a camera you can borrow one from a friend or buy a disposable camera for really cheap.
- Pick a simple topic such as bed time, playing with toys, sharing, or making lunch, and take pictures of your child as you help coach them in the activity. You can choose topics that the child needs help improving or activities that your child enjoys.
- Once you get the printed pictures back its time to put your story together. You can use a little 3" by 5" photo album or zip lock baggies.
- Put the pictures in order and write your story. Write sentences that are geared to the age of your child. Try to organize your pictures and story to look like a book. If you use the baggies just put the pictures in order and staple the sides together.
- Remember these books are for your children to use and use again. If you would like to keep the pictures nice, make a separate copy of the pictures for yourself.
- Once your book is created enjoy reading the book over and over again, and remember to keep your book in a spot that is easy for your child to access.

Once Upon A Time...

A Lesson on Storytelling

Playgroup #7

Materials Needed

- A big picture for parents to practice making up short stories from images
- Printed-out copy of a story, cut into sections

Handouts

- Born to Read pamphlet
- SHELLS

Introduction

Once Upon a Time! What a beautiful and simple phrase that dives into a world of fantasy, a world of wonder, learning, and life. When children curl up with their parents to listen to a book the results are far more reaching than anyone can know.

Storytelling can occur while driving in a car, sitting on the couch, or getting ready for bed. The habits that are created between parent and child through reading will enhance children's cognitive development.

Pictures are worth a thousand words, plus they are fun for children to look at. Children love to look at pictures while you tell them a story. Stories can be as simple as a 30 second story or they can have more depth and last much longer. *For this lesson start by having a big picture for everyone to see and then ask a member of the group to make up a short story about the picture. This exercise can help parents get in the habit of telling their children stories about things that they see.*

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Learn and share different ways to implement storytelling in the daily lives of your children.
- Discuss the benefits of reading and storytelling for children and their families.

Stories have an amazing power that enables children and parents to participate in the same fantasy world. When parents read to their children, not only does it create a bond between parent and child, but it helps their child's imagination and cognitive development. This development is essential in preparing your child to learn in school.

Reading to Your Child

When reading to your child, make the book and pictures exciting. Change your *voice patterns* for different characters and emotion. Also talk to your child about the pictures and the story by *asking questions*. Researchers have coined a new term called *dialogic reading*. Dialogic reading involves having a discussion with your child about the book. Ask open ended questions about

who, what, and where, and then expand upon the child's comments. This will help your child learn vocabulary, while also encouraging them to engage their imagination.

Reading to a young child can be hectic. Children do not always have the attention span to sit still during a whole book. On average, if you add **2 minutes to your child's age** that is the amount of time that you can expect your child to pay attention, but be flexible and don't make reading time something that they will not like.

Making Time for Story-Time

There never seems to be enough time in the day to complete your to-do list, and adding another 5 to 10 minutes in reading to your child can seem impossible. Find the moments where you can "read while you work." One mother mentioned that she would read to her children while they were in the bathtub, another mother would tell stories while she was driving with her kids. Bedtime is also another popular time to read because it helps to calm children down and get ready for the night. It doesn't matter when you find the time to read, how you find the time, or how much time you have, just that you find an opportunity every day.

Activity

Story time is wonderful because there are so many ways to have fun and accomplish the desired goal. Share the following activities with the mothers in your group and choose one to do as a group.

Circle Stories

Circle Stories are created by every member in the group. Together choose a theme for your story and someone to start the story. Go around the circle and allow each person to add a little to the story at a time. It is up to you whether you switch off at every word, sentence, or allow the individuals to stop when they want. If possible, you can use a tape recorder to record the story and later type up the story so everyone can keep a copy of the story.

Puzzle Tale

Copy a folktale from a printed anthology and cut it up into sections or scenes. Paste each section on a separate page. Give each mother a section and have her prepare to retell her piece of the whole story. Assemble the story by having each mother retell her part in the plot's sequence. Have mothers keep the flow going as the story is told so that the performance moves along as though one person were telling it. Do a second round by giving mothers different sections to retell. Notice how differently parents retell the same sections!

Life Stories

Allow everyone to pick an interesting story from their life and take turns telling each story. The following is a list of ideas so you can create a theme throughout the stories, or to help them pick their favorite story.

- Most embarrassing moment
- First day of school
- Family vacations
- Family pets
- Holiday stories
- Favorite stories from Grandma and Grandpa

SHELLS

See handout for instructions on making your child's own story book about him/herself!

Suggested Reading

Creative Storytelling: Choosing, Inventing, & Sharing Tales for Children

by Jack Maguire

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