



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Building Literacy Through Dialogic Reading

Sharing books with your child can be one of the most important moments of the day. In fact, results of a recent Ohio State University study found that reading five books a day to your child exposes him to about *1.4 million more* words by kindergarten than children who do not have books read to them (Grabmeier, 2019).

These moments with books develop language and teaches your child important early literacy skills which support school readiness and future success. Reading specialists who focused their research on effective strategies for storybook reading have discovered the powerful impact of book sharing. In book sharing, the reader actively involves the child in the story by giving him opportunities to respond to and talk about a story – before, during and after the story is read. Book sharing is recognized as a valuable strategy for:

- ♥ building background knowledge;
- ♥ fostering language development;
- ♥ learning the meaning and function of print;
- ♥ developing a sense of the structure of a story; and
- ♥ building positive attitudes about books and reading.

In this newsletter, we will offer tips for book sharing with children at each age level — infants, toddlers and preschoolers. We will also introduce *dialogic reading*, a book sharing technique especially suitable for toddlers and preschoolers. Dialogic reading, developed by the Stony Brook Reading and Language Project and based on a strategy established by Dr. Grover J. Whitehurst, has been documented in academic literature



as having a significant impact on children's vocabulary and pre-literacy skills.

This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Start book sharing as soon as your baby is born! Long before a child can understand the words or stories in a book, he can learn that a book is an opportunity for pleasurable interactions with the adults in his life. Your baby will hear the emotion and rhythm in your voice. Once baby starts smiling or cooing, make an immediate response such as “You think so?” or “Yes, it’s so colorful.”

Here are ideas for book sharing with infants:

- ♥ **Have fun together!** Your enjoyment of books will nurture the same love of books in your child.
- ♥ **Follow your child’s lead.** It’s okay if baby wants to skip pages or put the book down.
- ♥ **Allow exploration by providing sturdy books.** Babies love to touch, grasp, and mouth everything, even books!
- ♥ **Point to pictures, repeat what you see, and expand on it.** For example, say, “There is a kitty. A kitty says meow.”



- ♥ **Ask “where” questions for older infants.** For example, “Where is the dog? Yes, you see the dog. Let’s pat him.”

Activity for Infants: *Baby’s Bath Time*

Adapted from Little Angel Nursery Rhymes

What You Need:

- Vinyl waterproof book
- Baby soap and washcloth
- *Optional bath toys

What to Do:

1. Place your baby in the tub safely, ensuring that you are within arm’s reach.
2. Sing the following song to the tune of *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*.

Let’s get you in the tub, tub, tub
 Let’s look at books and scrub, scrub scrub
 There’s lots of bubbles, blub, blub blub
 It’s fun, fun, fun to rub a dub, dub, dub

3. Allow baby to splash and play as you read to him.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

Continue to read and share lots of books with your toddler throughout the day. Let him pick the books he wants read to him and follow his lead. If he is interested in a certain subject such as animals or trucks, visit the library and borrow picture books on that subject. He may want to look at the same ones over and over again. Since language explodes during the toddler years, this is a good time to begin *dialogic reading*.

Here are some tips for supporting your toddler's language development using dialogic reading:

- ♥ The first time you read a book together, do most of the talking yourself by reading the words of the story and making sure that you point out the names of things your child may not know.
- ♥ The next time you read the **same** book, do the following for each of the pictures/objects you named in your first reading.
 - Ask "what" questions: "What is this?" Or "What is this called?"
 - Follow answers with another question: "What is the dog doing?"
 - Repeat what your child says: "Yes, the dog is eating."
 - Expand upon what your child says: "The dog is chewing on a bone."
- ♥ Encourage your child to say more by asking, "What else do you see?"
- ♥ Let him start to fill in words as you are reading familiar books. For example, "The spider didn't answer, she was very busy spinning her..."
Pause to have the child fill in the missing word.



Activity for Toddlers: *Stick Book*

What You Need:

- a stick
- thin cardboard (e.g., recycled cereal boxes)
- art and writing supplies (e.g., scissors, paint, crayons, markers, pencils)
- photographs or magazines
- hole puncher
- rubber band



What to Do:

1. Take your child on a stick hunt! Choose a stick to use as the spine of the book.
2. Cut recycled boxes into same-sized pieces for the cover and pages of the book.
3. Allow your child to decorate the cover using paint or other craft materials.
4. Cut out photographs or pictures from magazines and glue them to the pages of the book.
5. Write words to the story or let your toddler dictate the words to the story.
6. Punch holes along the left side (1 inch from the top and bottom of each page).
7. From the back of the book, pull the ends of a thick rubber band through the holes.
8. Place the stick over the holes and loop the end of the rubber bands around each end of the stick to tie the book together.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

As your child enters the preschool years, you will be able to have longer and more complex conversations around a book. Expand book sharing by using the following dialogic reading strategies. In dialogic reading, you become the active listener allowing the child to take the lead. You can start implementing dialogic reading by choosing a picture book containing rich illustrations. If possible, choose a physical book that encourages person-to-person interaction rather than an e-book in which the child is focused on the screen. Begin by reading through the book with your child using the P.E.E.R. strategy:

- ♥ Prompt your child by asking a question
- ♥ Evaluate your child's response
- ♥ Expand on what your child said
- ♥ Repeat your child's response

In addition, use C.R.O.W.D. prompts to help you remember different types of questions you can ask your child when book sharing.



- ♥ Completion prompts
- ♥ Recall prompts
- ♥ Open-Ended questions
- ♥ Wh-Questions (what, when, why, where, or how)
- ♥ Distancing prompts

Remember, the goal of dialogic reading is to have a conversation about a book. It can be a fun and engaging experience as you follow your child's interests.

Activity for Preschoolers: *The Reading Puppet*

Adapted from Get Ready to Read

What You Need:

- Puppet or Stuffed animal
- Picture book

What to Do:

1. Place the book upside-down where you and your child can see it.
2. Bring out the puppet and introduce it to your child. Explain that the puppet is going to read the book, but will need some help. Encourage your child to interact with the puppet.
3. Begin the activity by having the puppet look for the title, author and illustrator of the book. Since the book is upside-down, have the puppet ask for help. For example, "I want to read this book, but first I need to tell you the title. I can't find it! The book is upside-down. There's the title! What does 'title' mean?"
4. Continue the activity with the puppet asking for your child's help. For example:
 - "Where should I start reading?"
 - "Please help me turn the page."
 - "Can you help me find the picture of _____?"

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles, e.g., fingers, hands and toes
- ♥ Learn to use his body with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop a close bond with you
- ♥ Feel important and good about himself

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Develop early reading skills and a love for reading
- ♥ Learn the meaning and function of print

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop his creativity and imagination
- ♥ Develop his thinking and problem-solving skills



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show him how to handle items safely and allow him to do as much as he is capable of. Praise his efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Green Eggs and Ham

*Try this recipe after reading *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups baby spinach
- salt and pepper
- butter or nonstick spray
- 4 slices ham



Directions:

1. Break the eggs into a blender.
2. Have your child add in the spinach.
3. Blend on high, then scrape down the sides and sprinkle salt and pepper. Pulse until the spinach is fully blended.
4. Coat a small non-stick pan with butter or oil and heat over medium low.
5. Pour in the egg mixture and ask the children, "Will you eat green eggs and ham?"
6. Stir the eggs with a spatula and remove from heat when fully cooked.
7. Heat the ham until it browns slightly.
8. Serve and read *Green Eggs and Ham* as the children enjoy their meal.

Resources

Roots of Reading Video Series

<https://www.readingrockets.org/shows/launching/roots>

The *Roots of Reading* hosted by Fred Rogers includes short video clips of key areas within the earliest stages of literacy. Click on the videos such as *Reading as Dialogue* to help get your child on the road to reading.

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/part5.html>

This publication includes language-building activities for parents and care providers that you can do with your child to help him build the skills he needs to become a reader. Each activity is given an age span that suggests when children should try them.



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Hands Can by Cheryl Hudson

Hands can do all kinds of things! The rhyming text with eye-catching color photos are perfect for a shared reading experience.

Clip-Clop by Nicola Smee

Bounce along as Mr. Horse gives a ride to his friends, Cat, Dog, Pig, and Duck. Faster, they beg...faster!

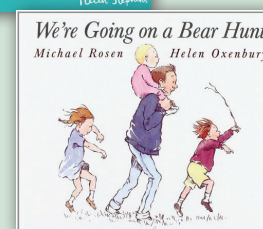
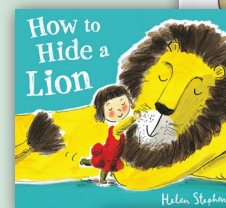
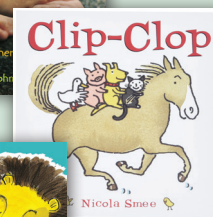
Preschoolers

How to Hide a Lion by Helen Stephens

Join Iris on her mission to hide her large furry friend in a variety of places—behind the shower curtain, in her bed, and even up a tree.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen

Using repetitive text, this story encourages movement and participation. Cross a field of tall, wavy grass and wade through a deep, cold river. What's in the cave?



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii