

Characteristics of Books and Book Sharing for Each Early Literacy Skill

Ask staff at your local library to help you find good books for your children.

It is possible, really, to take any book and to connect it to any of the six early literacy skills. It is also true that some books lend themselves to one skill more than another.

Below are some guidelines for characteristics of books that lend themselves well to a particular skill.

Book Sharing notes interactions and activities you and your child can do to support the skill. These suggestions are a sampling; use your own ideas, too!

It is important to remember the critical role you play in sharing books with your children. Keep the interaction around the book enjoyable. Use these activities sparingly—not all at one sitting! Use your imagination and your children's interests to build books and skills together.

Print Motivation: a child's interest in and enjoyment of books and reading

Books:

- Choose books you enjoy.
- Choose books your child enjoys.
- Let your child choose books.
- Follow your child's interests, including non-fiction books.

Book Sharing:

- Keep the interaction around the book reading/sharing positive and enjoyable.
- Keep the child involved, even if it means not reading the book word for word.
- Remember that your child's age, stage and personality affects how they interact with books.
- Respond to your child and his/her mood.

Phonological Awareness: the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words

Books:

- Books with rhyme
- Books with alliteration
- Books with sounds of animals and other things (drum goes boom)
- Song in book format
- Books of Mother Goose rhymes
- Poetry books
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- Whether or not the book rhymes, you and your child can make up rhyming words for any word in the book.
- Choose a long word from the book and clap out the syllables.
- Choose a word and say the first sound very clearly. You and your child can think of other words with the same starting sound.

Vocabulary: knowing the names of things—also feelings, concepts, ideas

Books:

- Choose books with words not used in daily conversation.
- Use non-fiction books—different words from those used in stories.
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- Explain an unfamiliar word, do not replace it with a familiar one.
- When one word has several meanings, talk about the different meanings.
- Pick out a word from a book, rhyme, or song. For an unfamiliar word, explain it. For a familiar word, tell your child a less familiar word.
- Add descriptive words or more information to what is in the book.
- Have children repeat unfamiliar words.
- Encourage children to talk about the pictures and add information and ideas to what they say.
- Talk about the feelings characters in the book might be feeling, even if those words are not used in the book.
- Talk about ideas in the book even if the words for those ideas are not actually used in the book.

Narrative Skills: the ability to describe things, to tell events in sequence and to retell stories

Books:

- Books with a repeated phrase
- Books that tell a cumulative tale
- Books with repetition in the plot
- Books with a sequence based in the natural world
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- Encourage participation, saying a repeated phrase together.
- Re-read books so that your child can become familiar with the story, making it easier to retell.
- Have your child retell the story.
- Have your child tell you something that they remember related to what happened in the book.
- Retell the story with props or other aids that will help your child remember the order of the story.
- Have your child use the props/aids to retell the story.
- Use dialogic reading: follow your child's lead as you have your child talk about what is going on in a picture.
- Talk about the pictures in the book and let your child tell you his/her thoughts and experiences.
- Have your child draw his/her own pictures of the story and retell it, or make up his/her own story.

Print Awareness: includes knowing that print has meaning, how to handle a book, recognizing environmental print

Books:

- Some books have writing as part of the story (*My Splendid Friend; Bunny Cakes*)
- Some books have writing as part of the pictures (*Hi Pizza Man*)
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- Point to the words of the title as you say them.
- Let your child turn the pages of the book.
- Point to the words in a repeated phrase as you say them.
- Play around with the orientation of the book—start with it upside down. Tell your child you are turning it around to be able to read it.
- Encourage drawing. Your child can draw a picture of what is happening in the book.
- Encourage scribbling. Your child can “write” the words to the story on another piece of paper.

Letter Knowledge: knowing that letters are different from each other, have different names, and are related to sounds

Books:

- Books with shapes
- Books where you have to find things (*I Spy Books*)
- Alphabet books
- Any book!

Book Sharing:

- With any book, not necessarily an alphabet book, you can point out a letter.
- Trace a letter from the title with your finger and let your child do it, too.
- Alphabet books do not necessarily need to be read from cover to cover. Let your child choose what letters to talk about.
- Show your child the first letter in his/her name. Look for that letter in the book.
- Encourage scribbling, drawing, and writing.