

Your Library Today



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

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Today's Storytimes: Dialogic Reading

Traditional story times emphasize listening skills and promote an understanding of the continuity of a story (beginning, middle, and end). Developing a "sense of a story" in this manner is important, but so are other early literacy skills.

Dialogic reading builds vocabulary and narrative skills. It helps children relate a story to their life experiences. To get the most of story times, children should hear stories in different ways. As always, the book should be fun for the children and for the reader. We motivate children to read when they see us enjoy great books.

Try incorporating dialogic reading into story times. It may take some practice to feel comfortable, but it is fun for both the children and adults. Children enjoy being part of story telling. You will enjoy the creative ways children share ideas about books.

Dialogic story times probably take more time. It is probably harder to plan how long a given book will take to share, but with practice, you will become comfortable using this interactive approach, adopting it to fill whatever time constraints you have to work with.

Please think of dialogic reading as another tool in your early literacy toolbox. It is much easier and feels more natural when reading to one-on-one.

It can work with groups. Try to find ways to use different styles and formats when you share books with children.

Choosing Books To Share With Children

Turning storytime into a conversation might sound difficult at first, but you will find it natural once you get started. Perhaps we cannot all read books like actors with dramatic expressions and a different voice for each character, but we can all learn to use a picture book to talk to a child.

- Please give it a try – you will find it's FUN!
- Have clear, attention-grabbing pictures.
- Present a simple story, one that children can follow.
- Use a short story written with short sentences.
- Have pictures about familiar things that children will recognize.
- Use the pictures to tell important parts of the story.
- Choose themes or characters that children are interested in.
- Repeat phrases so that children can "read" along.

Some good choices to start would include:

- **Bear Snores On**, by Karma Wilson, and the rest of her bear books.
- **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus** and other books in the Pigeon series by Mo Willems.
- **Jump, Frog, Jump!** by Robert Kalan.
- **Let's Go Froggy!** and the other books in this series by Jonathon London.
- **Mama Cat Has Three Kittens** and other books by Denise Fleming.
- **Moose Tracks**, and other books by Karma Wilson.
- **The Big Honey Hunt**, by Stan and Jan Bernstein.

Kids Become the Storyteller

Getting children actively involved with stories can be done in steps.

1. **Read books as written**, asking children to identify parts of the action illustrated by the pictures and having children repeat any phrases that are used repetitiously in the book.
2. **Choose a page from the book with an attractive picture** that illustrates action. Ask children "what" questions (what they are seeing, what is happening, what will happen next, etc.). Be prepared to give children time to answer - they are still developing these skills.

3. **Extend the answers** they give you. For example, if they say, "the pigeon found a hot dog", you could say, "yes, the pigeon found a hot dog, a hot dog in a bun that is half eaten."

4. **Ask children to repeat** your extended answer. Be prepared to give children time to restate the extended answer - they are still developing these skills.

5. **Be careful asking yes/no questions.** There's little chance for dialog, however, in groups they may be effective.

Alborough, Jez. *Where's My Teddy.*

This is a great story where kids will think about "what happens next." Fun rhymes make this a wonder book to read aloud.

Anderson, Peggy Perry. *Time for Bed the Babysitter Said.*

Not even his babysitter's most strenuous efforts can convince Joe the frog to go to bed. This is a funny book, kids can "read" along, and it has a surprise ending.

Berenstain, Jan and Stan. *The Big Honey Hunt.* A fun adventure story that presents wonderful opportunities to ask children if each step of the "big hunt" sounds like a good idea.

Child, Lauren. *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato.* A fussy eater decides to sample the carrots after her brother convinces her that they are really orange twiglets from Jupiter.

Cronin, Doreen. *Dooby Dooby Moo.*

All of her books are fun, but this one is my favorite. It features Farmer Brown and his animals – the same characters in Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type. This book can be a springboard into many ideas that children can relate to.

Fleming, Denise. *Alphabet Under Construction.* My favorite alphabet book with many ways to share early literacy skills. We can narrate a story, develop letter awareness, and enrich vocabulary with all the action words as **mouse build an alphabet.**

Fleming, Denise. *Momma Cat Has Three Kittens.* The artwork in all of her books is outstanding. Denise makes the pictures by "pulp painting" – making a picture by making a colorful piece of paper. When sharing, ask children how they are alike and how they are different from brothers, sisters, or friends. There's a great surprise ending too!

Freeman, Don. *A Pocket for Corduroy.*

The second and last book that Don Freeman wrote about his famous bear, children love the way this bear wonders aloud at the marvelous things he sees on his adventures

Freeman, Don. *Corduroy.* A timeless classic and a touching story. Generations of young children have enjoyed this book. It is just as fresh today as ever.

Gravett, Emily. *Orange, Pear, Apple, Bear.* Great story to share – we can narrate a simple story with these four words.

My Favorite Picture Books: Please Try Them, You'll Like Them Too

Children need to see that we love the books we share with them (print motivation). Here are my absolute favorites. Please remember – any book can be used in different ways to support any of the 6 early literacy skills. In some cases, I have provided some ideas here, but please look through these books yourself, decide if you will love them as much as I do, and then try different ways to share them with children.

Grey, Mini. *Traction Man is Here!*

Traction Man, a boy's courageous action figure, has a variety of adventures with Scrubbing Brush and other objects in the house. Kids will love watching the adventure unfolding and the story ends with them asking for more.

Henkes, Kevin. *Kitten's First Full Moon.*

When Kitten mistakes the full moon for a bowl of milk, she ends up tired, wet, and hungry trying to reach it. This is a Caldecott winner with wonderful pictures – be sure to ask children about what they see on each page.

Hopkins, Jackie. *Goldie Socks and the Three Libearians.*

A humorous adaptation of the folktale Goldilocks and the three bears, which portrays the bears as "libearians" and Goldie Socks finds just the right book and the perfect place to read it. Start by asking students to talk about Goldilocks and the Three Bears (narrative skills).

London, Jonathan. *Froggy Goes to School.*

Kids wonder what school will be like. Here's a book that shows how fun it can be. Like the other froggy books, uses repetition and nonsense words to get children involved as the storytellers.

London, Jonathan. *Froggy Plays in the Band.*

What fun, a parade! And there will be a contest for the best marching band too. Join froggy for the fun – like the other books in this series, a great book with a lot of repetition to get kids involved repeating what they hear.

London, Jonathan. *Let's Go Froggy.*

These books repeat parts of the text and fun nonsense words too. Kids will love helping you share it.

Meddaugh, Susan. *Martha Speaks.*

Ever wish your dog or cat could speak? Maybe it's not a good idea. Funny story – there are more "Martha" books too.

Murphy, Stuart. *Spunky Monkeys on Parade.*

What is more fun than getting ready for a parade? Counting everyone getting ready for a parade – especially if they are all monkeys. Wonderful story

that can be used to introduce skip counting and narrative skills.

Numeroff, Laura. *Give A Mouse A Cookie.*

This is the circle story that Launched Ms. Numeroff's career. They present a great introduction to beginnings, middles, and ends. The end comes back to the beginning!

Numeroff, Laura. *If You Give a Moose a Muffin.* This is my favorite circle story by Ms. Numerouff, but children will love them all. They love the silly images of a moose.

Stadler, Alexander. *Beverly Billingsly Borrows a Book.*

Beverly is thrilled to finally check out a book with her own library card, but when she accidentally keeps the book too long she worries that she'll have to pay a huge fine or go to jail.

Terry, Sonya. *"L" is for Library.*

What better way to teach letter knowledge and a love of books than going through the library, A through Z.

Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.*

An award winning animator and now author/illustrator, Mo Willems writes stories that naturally follow a dialogic format. If this is new to you, I suggest starting with this book.

Willems, Mo. *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog.*

An award winning animator and now author/illustrator, Mo Willems writes stories that children will all want to talk about and share. It is easy to get kids involved with the storytelling with all of Mo Willems' books.

Willis, Jeanne. *Tadpoles Promise.*

This story has an amazing plot twist that is sure to grab children's attention and catch them by surprise. To fully appreciate the story, review how tadpoles grow up to frogs and caterpillars become butterflies.

Ziefert, Harriet. *Two Little Witches: A Halloween Counting Story.*

Sharing books with numbers is important because counting is a narrative skills. For a fun Halloween story that can't be beat. There is a surprise ending that will leave your little darling's mouths open!