

Especially for preschoolers with disabilities

It's Story Time

Book Reading and Storytelling

Preschool children like to hear stories and look at books. Children with a disability often need help to be part of book reading and storytelling. This guide tells you how you can help your preschool child with a disability enjoy stories and books.

What is the practice?

Change how you tell stories or read books so your child can take part in these activities. Vary how you read a book or tell a story so your child can enjoy being a part of things.

What does the practice look like?

Where, when, and how you read a book or tell a story can help your child to share in it. Your child will get the most from reading or storytelling if he takes part in it. Making simple changes to things will help your preschool child tell stories and begin to read.



How do you do the practice?

- Pick books and stories about topics you know that your child really likes. He'll soon know the stories by heart and will be able to talk about them. Use books with phrases that repeat (*"I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!"*). Your child can fill in the phrases that he hears again and again.
- Change the stories and books to keep your child's attention. At this age, he may lose interest in "old favorites." He will like new stories and different books.
- Choose a place where there is not a lot going on. That will help your child pay attention to the story. If it is busy at home, go to a library or book store for a cozy, out-of-the-way nook for reading.
- Pick times when you know your child is really alert. Change the time you usually read to him, like bedtime, to a different time, like after a nap.
- Young children like to help turn the pages while an adult reads them a book. You can make it easier to turn pages by putting a dot of hot glue in the upper corner of each page. Let each dot cool. The hard glue dots hold the pages apart enough for him to slip his fingers in to turn them. You can also glue pieces of a foam sponge or small bits of Velcro to the page corners.
- Your preschooler might like to read pop-up books. Help by gluing elastic ponytail holders to the book's movable parts. He can more easily grasp and pull a holder to enjoy the pop-up.
- If your preschool child has vision problems, choose books with clear, uncluttered pictures to read together. Let him hold and touch examples of some of the objects in the story.
- A great way for your child to enjoy books and stories is to ask her questions. This will help her learn to put words together. Pause a moment to let her say any repeated words in the story.
- Preschool children with hearing difficulties can use headphones with stories on tape or DVD. They can have fun hearing the story while turning the pages when they hear the "beep" on the tape.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child listen for a longer time when you read to him?
- Is your child excited to read books or tell stories?
- Does your child want to start over once you've finished a book?
- Does your child take part in the reading by filling in words or anticipating what happens next?

Take a look at more fun with reading together

Super Reading With Headphones

Auntie Mira cares for Corrie while her parents are at work. One afternoon, Corrie brings her aunt a book she brought from home for their story time. They look at the book's cover. "Oh, today we have a book about berries and making jam," Mira says. "I love blueberries! Do you?" Mira asks Corrie to get her microphone. Happily, Corrie gets the microphone and headphones. They help her hear stories better than with her hearing aids alone. She slips on the headphones as her aunt begins reading to her through the microphone. Mira acts out the dialogue as she reads.



Hot Off the Shelf!

Stevie and his father are in the children's section of the book store looking at a book display. Stevie picks up a book about fire trucks. "Let me see," says his father looking at the book. "That's a cool fire truck!" Stevie does not often use words to communicate, so he nods. His father takes the book to a nearby chair and pulls Stevie onto his lap to look at the pictures. "Let's check out this fire truck," says his father. "Show me where the flashing lights are." Stevie quickly points to lights in the picture. "You're right!" says his father. "And these are the sirens, right Stevie?" he asks as he points to the tires. Stevie smiles and shakes his head "no," then points to the sirens. "Do you think it can go fast?" he asks his son. Stevie eagerly shakes his head up and down and raises his arms in the air. "Yes, it probably does go really fast!" his father agrees.

The Cat's Meow!

David loves animals, especially cats and dogs. One day, David's mother notices him watching the family cat closely as it rests on the couch. Since David has difficulty focusing, his mother picks that quiet time to read him a book about cats. They settle in together on the couch next to the sleeping cat. Mom places the book directly in front of David so it is easier for him to focus on it. As Mom reads the book, she pauses to ask David questions about things he sees in the pictures. After a few minutes of reading, Mom closes the book, knowing that David's attention will soon start to wander.

