

Exploring

early literacy

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers



Capital District
Child Care Council

Reading to Build Community



Reading aloud to children is a wonderful way to build community within the classroom. Having children gather together to hear stories of far away places, interesting people, and new ideas can help them to build a life-long love of reading. There are a few elements to keep in mind as we foster a love of reading.

1. Select books that have interesting pictures. This will draw children's attention as you read the text.
2. Be playful and have fun while reading aloud.
3. Know the story and concepts being introduced so you are ready to respond to questions from your audience.

Children at this age are excited and like to ask questions and make comments during read-alouds. This active participation lets us know they are engaged in the story. Reading aloud to children takes us all on a journey, providing rich opportunities for discussion and overall enjoyment! Here are a few to try and our suggestions for activities:

Napping House by Don and Audrey Wood

Style: Cumulative Story with Repetitive Phrasing

Story Description: It is a cozy rainy afternoon in this quiet house and everyone is napping. There is a dozing dog, a snoozing cat, a slumbering mouse, and a wakeful flea. The flea bites the mouse, setting off a hilarious sequence of events that wakes this peaceful house.

Activity/Discussion: Notice all the synonyms for sleeping. Draw attention to this with children and count all the words in the story that also mean sleeping (dozing, snoozing, etc.) Rewrite the story with other themes such as The Laughing House, and rename the characters with synonyms for laughing (giggle, chuckle, etc.)

Benefits: Builds vocabulary and language, introduction to story writing, and having fun with language.

The Relatives Came

by Cynthia Rylant

Style: Narrative

Description: This is a delightful story about the preparation and visit of relatives from another state. This old fashioned family reunion lends itself to great discussion. The illustrations are humorous and detailed-really catching the readers' attention.

Activity/Discussion: Have children go through the book looking at the variety of patterns in the clothing the people are wearing. Make a chart listing the patterns (use wall paper, fabric scraps or wrapping paper with similar patterns on your chart). Have children count the number of patterns they see in the book and chart them.

Benefits: This is a great extension for math. Classification and attributes, pattern and numeration concepts are explored as children review for similarities and differences.

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkin

Style: A tale with repetitive phrasing

Description: A tale about a peddler, with all of his wares stacked neatly on his head, he walks about town shouting, "caps, caps for sale..." When he finally settles down for a nap some mischievous monkeys show up and his caps disappear. The repetitive refrain creates a natural opportunity for children to join in.

Activity: Use flannel circles to represent caps and have children wear them during the story, then invite them to imitate what the monkeys do. Afterwards, leave the caps in the dramatic play area for children to recreate the story.

Benefits: Story retelling is a wonderful opportunity for children to build comprehension skills.



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