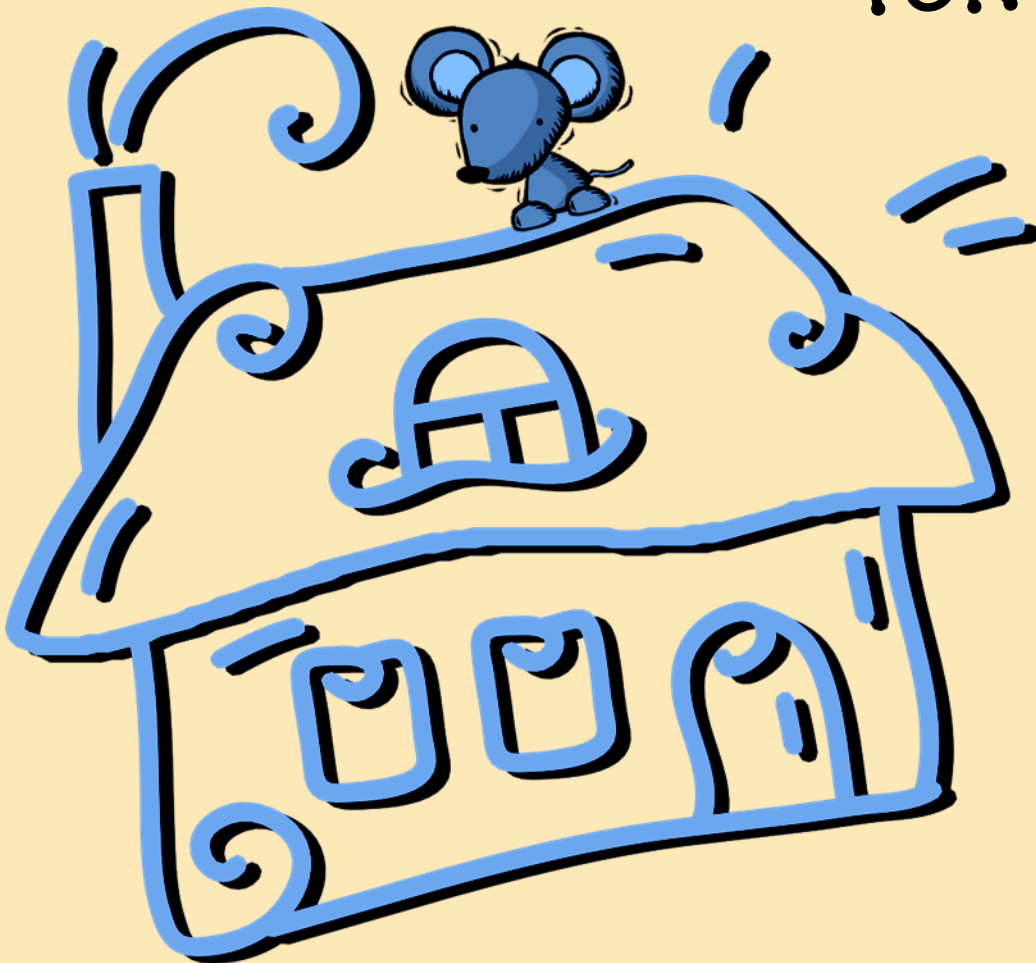


the
Literacy Pages
for Families



THE LITERACY PAGES FOR FAMILIES

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The [SPAN Parent Advocacy Network](#) is committed to engaging parents and professionals as partners in improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth in New Jersey.

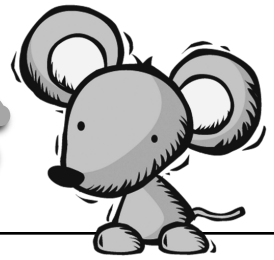
We offer programs that address parent involvement, child care, general and special education, dropout and bullying prevention, child welfare, healthcare, mental health, youth leadership, transition to adult life, incarcerated youth, military family support, violence prevention, and more!

SPAN offers training and professional development for educators and other individuals interested in the healthy development of children. Our [Workshops & Trainings](#) page provides easy access to a complete listing of offerings that before you could only get by attending a SPAN workshop. You can learn about special and general education, health advocacy, parent leadership, public policy and much more—whenever it is convenient for you. [Contact us](#) to customize a presentation for your group or organization's needs.

Get connected and stay informed. Go to spanadvocacy.org to subscribe to our newsletter and ensure great articles, resources, and information get delivered right to your inbox.

SPAN empowers families, professionals, and communities interested in the health, well-being, and education of children.

EMPOWERED FAMILIES: EDUCATED, ENGAGED, EFFECTIVE!



Introduction

Literacy Activities for Families

Students do better when families work together with schools to promote reading and writing. On these pages, you will find activities to do with your child that encourage important reading skills and are fun to do together! We hope you will try these fun activities at home as you spend time together with your child to promote reading, writing, and listening skills.

These activities work best when you child is happy and rested. Choose an activity and enjoy some reading time together.

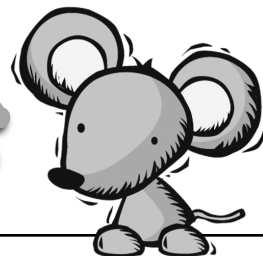
For each activity we have included:

- the **Skill** focus for each activity — Reading, Writing, or Listening;
- the **Materials** that you will need to do the activity;
- the step by step **Directions** to follow with your child; and
- **Ways to Make It Work for Your Child** — additional suggestions that address your child's interests and strengths.



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Purpose

Helping Your Child Listen

Rhyming is an important skill and helps children learn about end sounds (such as sand and hand). It also helps children develop their listening skills.

Materials

Books rich in rhyme, such as Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham* and *One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish*

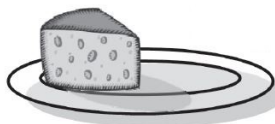
Making it Work for You & Your Child

Finding the right book is important. Visit the children's room in your local library and ask about picture books that are rich in rhyme.

Create silly rhymes and plays on words. Nonsense words may be accepted, such as mouse/pouse. The idea is to make your child aware of what a rhyme is and how some words have the same end sounds.

Consider having your child identify rhyming words while taking a walk, listening to the radio, or watching television.

You might have your child use their hands as a stop sign while reading, putting up a hand when they hear a rhyme.



Rhyme Time

What to Do

Read the book *Green Eggs and Ham* with your child. After reading, explain that rhyming words are words that have the same end sound. Point out examples from the book, asking them to, "listen for rhyming words," and "listen for words that have the same ending sound."

1. After reading the book, reread to find rhyming words from the story. If your child gives a pair that rhymes but is not in the book, accept the answer.
2. If your child gives an incorrect answer, take one of the words and model a rhyme. Say a word that would rhyme with it (end with the same sound).
3. Talk about the pairs of rhyming words that your child is able to find. You might write the words or draw pictures of words that you have found.
4. Before reading this book again, review the list of words your child has created. This time, be listening for the rhyming words that you found last time and any others to add to the list. A signal such as your child raising their hands as a stop sign while reading the book together will help you to talk again about the rhyming words that you find.

Additional Books

Guarini, D. *Is Your Mama a Llama?*

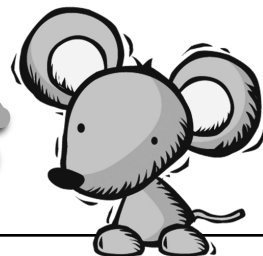
Seuss, Dr. *The Cat in the Hat*

Raffi, *Down by the Bay*

Barchas, *As I Was Walking Down the Road*

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Purpose

Helping Your Child with Reading & Writing

Being able to write words quickly and accurately is key to being able to write stories. If a child has a large group of words they are able to write without help, they will find writing to be easier.

Do you know how many words your child can write on independently? By playing this game, children can increase the number of words they can write on their own. Doing this activity on a regular basis will add to this word list over time that you can all watch grow!

Making it Work for You & Your Child

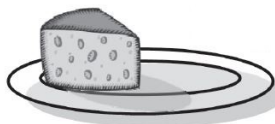
Keep in mind that children learn words at different rates. Avoid comparing children to each other. Each child is always working to improve their own word total; they are not in competition with others.

This game may be played anytime or anywhere. Adjust the time you give your child to write based current ability. Usually giving one minute per grade level is a good idea of a time frame. Add more time as your child gets used to this game.

If your child has difficulty with holding or writing with a pencil, use a crayon and large paper or use chalk on a blackboard.

If your child has difficulty thinking of words to write, you may suggest color words, or the names of friends, classmates, or family members. Names are good ways to add to your child's dictionary. These words will help your child become a more fluent writer! Other possible words may include favorite foods, places, simple words, number words, word family words (bat, cat, rat), or signs that may be in the daily environment.

Keeping track of the number of words your child reads each time will motivate them to read more words.



Word Race

What to Do

1. Give your child a piece of paper and a pencil
2. Tell your child that you are going to play a game in which they will write all the words they can on their own in a four minute period. The amount of time may be adjusted to meet the needs and abilities of individual children. It is important to make this a fun activity, just like it is titled: *Word Race*.
3. Set a timer for four minutes.
4. When told to begin, have your child write all the words they can without looking at signs or other printed materials that might be posted on the walls.
5. At the end of the four minutes, have your child read all the words that were written, and help circle all the words that were written and read correctly what they are thinking. Remember that writing without lines encourages speed.
6. Tally the number of words your child is able to write correctly. Keep track for next time.
7. Help your child with any words that were spelled incorrectly. These will not be circled, but as you go over them together, they may learn some new words.
8. Play the game over and over and praise your child for any additional words they can write in the four minute period.

Materials

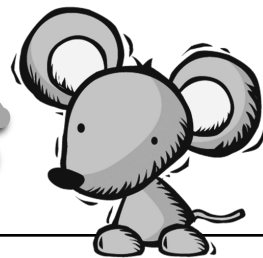
- Pencil or pen, crayon if this is easier to grip
- Writing paper without lines (paper without lines makes writing faster)
- Timer, such as a wristwatch, egg or kitchen timer

Note: Why no lines?

It is important to do this activity with unlined paper because when children do not have to stop to think of how to write within the lines, they are usually faster at writing the words that they know.

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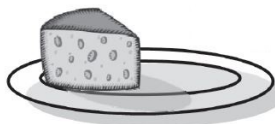
Purpose

Helping Your Child Listen

As children play this game, they will develop an awareness of word parts (syllables) and will gain an understanding of how many parts (syllables) are in a word.

This activity is a physical way to help children identify how many parts are in a word.

Knowing how many parts are in a word makes it easier for children to divide words into syllables and assists with spelling by letting them work with smaller parts of words.



How Many Parts?

What to Do

1. Say a word to your child, such as "table," and ask how many parts are in that word.
2. If your child is unable to tell you or cannot tell you how they figured out the answer, demonstrate how to discover the answer. Extend your hand under your chin and say the word slowly. Each time your chin touches your hand, it counts as one part (syllable).
3. Demonstrate how many parts are in the following words:

can-dy al-li-ga-tor
can bub-ble por-cu-pine
4. Use longer words to demonstrate more parts (syllables).
5. Be sure to keep your hand under your chin as you say each word. Say the word slowly or in parts to show your child how to listen for parts of the word.
6. When driving in the car, ask your child to name some things you can both see. Work together to figure out how many parts are in each word, saying each word slowly, noticing how many times your child's chin hits their hand.
7. Have your child draw pictures of objects they choose. Work with them to determine how many parts are in each word, asking them to label each picture while holding a hand under the chin to count the parts of the words.

A resource for you: Words are separated into syllables in the dictionary. Use this as a resource to find "parts" of words with your child.

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Talk a walk around your house or neighborhood. As you walk, identify objects in your environment. As you say the name of each, have your child place one hand under the chin and determine the number of parts (syllables) in each word.

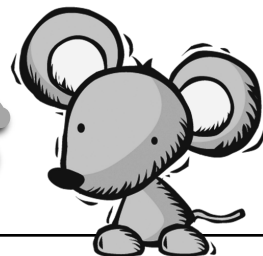
You may want to make a list of which words have one part, two parts, three parts, or more parts than three.

Have a contest. Ask your child to find words with many parts, such as elephant, refrigerator, dishwasher, alligator, bathtub.



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Purpose

Helping Your Child
Write and Read

This activity has children use talking and writing to tell about their favorite stories.

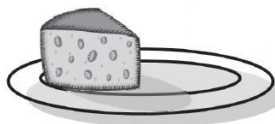
Talking about books helps children understand that stories have a beginning, middle, and ending. Most stories have a problem and a solution or conclusion. This is called story grammar.

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Your child may not be able to write about the events in the story. In that case, you write down what your child says as they tell the story. The encourage them to decorate the book brochure.

You can use bigger paper or turn the paper sideways. This will give your child more space to draw and write. Instead of drawing, use stickers to tell story.

This is a good opportunity to explore new books that may be potential favorites. Visit your local library to borrow and read new books. Read them with your children and then let them tell you the story by making the book brochure. New books will offer a good opportunity to explore new stories that may become favorites.



Book Brochure

What to Do

1. Talk to your child about a favorite book.
2. Ask what makes that book so special.
3. Talk about the characters in the book, a major problem in the book, and what happened in the story.
4. Divide an 8½ x 11 horizontal sheet of paper in half to make a booklet. Label the cover, "Title." Label the left inside page, "Beginning." Label the right inside page, "Problem." Label the back, "Solution."
5. Be sure to have your child draw and color a picture for each page. Each page should also be labeled: Title, Beginning, Problem, Solution.
6. Have your child share this new book with family, friends, or classmates by retelling the story in their own words.

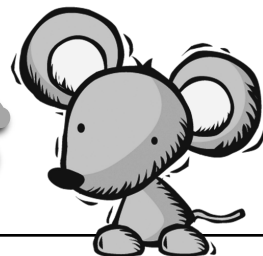


Materials

- Pencil and paper
- Crayons or markers
- Stickers (optional)

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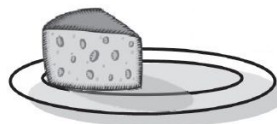
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Purpose

Helping Your Child Listen

Children need to learn new describing words. It will help build vocabulary.



I Say, You Say

Materials

- A favorite candy or food
- I Say, You Say chart
- Pencil

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Be sure to select a food that you both enjoy for this activity. Your child will be more able to talk about something if it is enjoyable.

If your child uses just a few words, suggest other words that may describe. Remember, if they are not aware of other words, they will not be able to use them! You are modeling for your child.

Use these new words again and again. This will help them build a stronger vocabulary.



What to Do

1. Give your child a food that is fun to eat; for example, a pretzel.
2. Encourage your child to give descriptive words for the food by playing the game, *I SAY – YOU SAY*.
3. Use the chart below to record your answers. See how big you can make the word web.

Parent:

I say it tastes creamy. You say it tastes _____.

I say it smells sour. You say it smells _____.

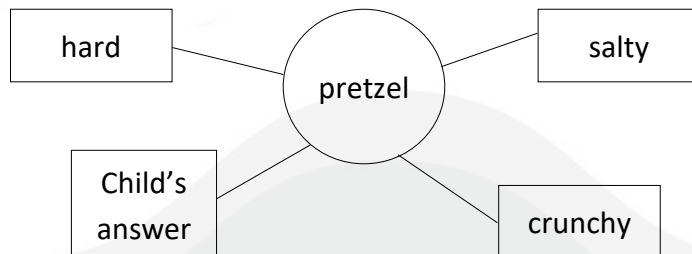
I say it sounds crunchy. You say it sounds _____.

I say it feels smooth. You say it feels _____.

I say it looks shiny. You say it looks _____.

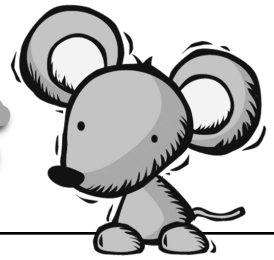
4. Put the words your child has said on the web below. Review them. Suggest other words that may describe as well.

I Say, You Say Chart



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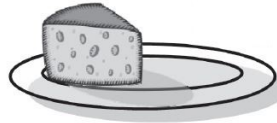


Purpose

Helping Your Child with Writing & Spelling

In order for children to read books and stories, they need to be able to find and read simple words such as the, is, are, and. These are known as sight words. By searching for these simple words, children will be helped to read basic sight words quickly in their reading.

The ability to read these words quickly makes the reading experience easier and builds self-confidence.



Junky Letters & Words

What to Do

1. Everybody gets junk mail. When junk mail arrives, go through the mail with your child.
2. Separate the important mail from the junk mail.
3. On a piece of paper, write down simple sight words, one at a time, such as: the, was, is, you. Note the list of sight words at the bottom of this page for more examples. Use a black marker and write in big print.
4. Using the word you have written as a guide, tell your child to, "find the word," in the mail and circle the words as they are found. You might use a highlighter instead of circling.
5. Once the child has finished, have them point to each word and attempt to read it. If they do not know the word, have them repeat it after you.
6. You might want to find words one at a time. Add more words when your child is ready.

Materials

- Junk mail; the bigger the print, the better!
- A marker or crayon
- Sale ads also work well and have larger print

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Select words that are short and are often used in print. Refer to the list of sight words at the bottom of this page. As your child gets better at identifying the words, add new words one at a time.

If your child has difficulty finding words, begin with just one word. You may even want to write a list of words on a piece of paper and have them circle the target word when they see it.

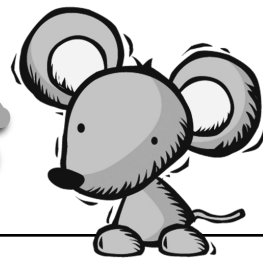
List of Sight Words

Here is a list of basic sight words children may find in ads and books.

the	I	was	for
to	you	said	on
and	it	his	they
he	of	that	but
a	in	she	had

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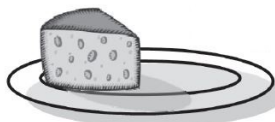
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PURPOSE

Helping Your Child with Reading

Knowing how to read a great deal of words is important to overall reading success. Children need many opportunities to reread words. By seeing words over and over, they begin to make the words their own.



Puzzle Words

What to Do

1. Ask your child to draw some favorite things. Give an index card or piece of light cardboard and have them draw a picture on the left hand side. On the right hand side, write the word that labels the picture for your child.
2. Using a scissor, cut the cardboard in half like a jigsaw puzzle. Make sure the pieces lock together. Sample puzzle pieces are at the bottom of this page.
3. Put the puzzle pieces, the picture side and the word side in a paper bag or small box that your child designed and mix up the cards.
4. Choose some pieces and read the words that match the picture as you work together to make the puzzles.

Materials

- Paper or index cards
- Scissors

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Remember your child may not know how to spell a lot of words, so you may have to help by writing the words for them.

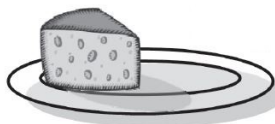
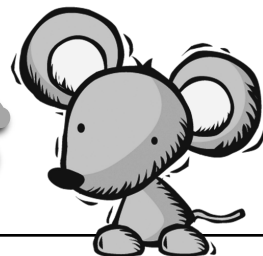


Puzzle Pieces



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Picture Walk



Purpose

Helping Your Child with Reading

Parents can help children to understand what they are reading by asking good questions when reading a story together. This is a way to help your child to be able to better predict what will happen next. You can do this by talking about the beginning, middle, and ending of a story as you focus on the pictures in a favorite story and look for clues together. We call this taking a “picture walk,” through a story.

Materials

Good storybooks with rich pictures.
Folktales, such as *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Gingerbread Man* work best.

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Select stories that have a simple story line. Folktales like *The Three Bears* and *Goldilocks* are probably the best type of story to use. There is much repetition, the characters are few and children will experience greater success when they have some idea of what the story is about.

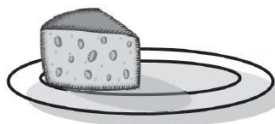
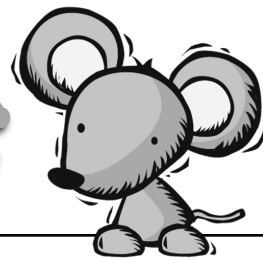
Your child may not be able to retell an entire story, but may do so by reviewing the pictures and talking about each page. Taking a “picture walk” with your child will boost self-confidence and encourage them to read more books.

What to Do

1. Firstly, visit the public library and select books that full of good pictures. You might want to look for books that are easy to hold, large-in-size. Tell your child you are going to read a book and play a guessing game.
2. Tell your child this is a picture walk. Say, “You are going to look at the pictures and tell me what the story is about.” Let them know that they will need to look really closely at the pictures for clues about what will happen in the story. NOTE: Your child’s predictions may not be correct, but that is O.K. They will adjust predictions as they continue to read the story with you.
3. Ask your child to select one of the books for you to read to together.
4. After your child selects a book but before opening it, say to your child, “What do you see on the cover? What do you think the book will be about?” Read the title. “Now what do you think the book will be about?” Be sure to pause and give your child enough time to answer the questions.
5. Have your child turn to the first page. “Let’s look at the pictures together.” Model for your child. Say, “I see a little boy walking through the woods. He is looking for something.” Ask, “What do you see? What is happening? What do you think will happen next?”
6. Continue by having your child focus on the pictures and have them continue to predict what will happen next. Once you reach the end of the book, ask your child to tell the story in their own words. Also ask him, “Did what you think would happen actually happen? What surprised you in the story?”
7. Praise your child for a job well done. Let them draw a picture of a favorite part of the story. Tell them to be sure to include clues about what came next in the story.

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Picture Walk



Purpose

Helping Your Child Listen

The ability to listen is key to success in school and in life as well. Children need to learn how to attend through listening and recall what they have heard.

Materials

- Suggested book, *The Listening Walk*, by Paul Showers.
- Crayons.
- Stop Sign. Cut it out and glue it to a ruler or something that can act as a handle for use during your walk.

Making it Work for You & Your Child

Take your child to a favorite place for this activity. You may even consider going to a place you have never seen before. Visit different places at different times of the day, like after a rainstorm when different sounds might be heard.

You may want to create small booklets by stapling together pages showing what your child heard after the rain, in the early evening, etc.

What to Do

1. On a bright and sunny day, invite your child to go on a walk with you. Bring the stop sign at the end of this page to use when you walk.
2. Tell your child, "We are going on a listening walk. When I hold up the stop sign, we will stop and LISTEN to what we hear."
3. While walking, hold up the stop sign and say, "Stop and close your eyes. Listen to what you hear." Model what you hear with your child. "I hear a bird singing in the tree." Write down what your child says. Ask your child to try to make the sounds they hear. List the sounds.
4. When you return to your home, read through the list with your child. Try to remember and make the sounds that you heard on the walk.
5. Have your child draw pictures and color what they heard.
6. Walking the same path at different times, in the morning, in the evening, after a rainstorm, in the snow will give you and your child an opportunity to hear new sounds.

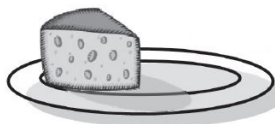
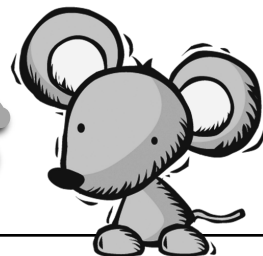


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Co-developed by New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education (NJOS) and Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN),
Funded by IDEA Part B funds

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Make a Book



PURPOSE

Helping Your Child with
Reading and Writing

This is an activity that you can use to practice reading with your child at home and ensure immediate success with reading! Have your child read their book to siblings, friends, and other family members



Materials

- 2 pieces of paper 8 1/2 x 11
- Markers, pen and crayons

Making it Work for You & Your Child

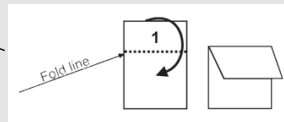
By reading their story a number of times your child will recognize the words by sight and develop reading fluency.

Children like to feel that they can accomplish a reading task, so it is important that the pattern repeat.

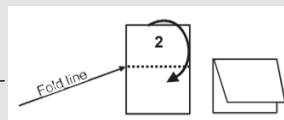
Once your child is able to read this book independently, think about making another book for their collection with another pattern. Books can be written after a field trip or event, in preparation for a holiday, to introduce new people or topics.

What to Do

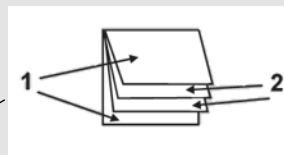
1. Lay an 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper on the table. White paper works best for this activity.



2. Fold this piece of paper with three inches at the bottom of the paper.



3. Take a second piece of paper and lay it on the table.



4. Fold this piece of paper with one inch at the end of the paper.



5. Place page two inside of page one. You will have a layered book.

6. Use this book to write a pattern story with your children. At the end of each page, write a pattern sentence starter:

I see a...

I hear a...

I like...

7. Then have your child fill in the blank and color a picture of the word used to finish the sentence.

This book will be easy for your child to read as they refer to the pictures they have drawn to read each sentence.

FAMILY LITERACY RESOURCES

National Center For Family Literacy ~ www.famlit.org

The NCFL inspires and engages families in the pursuit of education and learning together.

Literacy Assistance Center ~ www.lacnyc.org

The LAC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the expansion of quality literacy services in New York.

Reading is Fundamental ~ www.RIF.org

RIF is a children's literacy nonprofit. They deliver free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most and inspire children to be lifelong readers.

International Reading Association ~ www.reading.org

The IRA promotes reading by continuously advancing the quality of literacy instruction and research worldwide.

¡Colorín Colorado! ~ www.colorincolorado.org

CC is bilingual site for families and educators of English Language Learners.

International Children's Digital Library ~ www.icdlbooks.org

The ICDL is a library for the world's children.

READING GLOSSARY

Automaticity	fast, effortless word recognition
Blending	combining individual sounds into a word, or combining syllables to make words (for example: /b/i/g/ is big or /rab/bit/ is rabbit)
Decode	ability to make out a word by correctly recognizing the different letter sounds in the word
Fluency	ability to read a text accurately and quickly, often with expression
Multi-Syllable	(also called poly-syllabic) a word containing two or more syllables (for example computer, raining, supported)
Oral Language Difficulties	poor vocabulary, listening comprehension, or grammatical abilities for one's age
Phonics	an understanding of the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds
Phonemic Awareness	ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words (for example, orally producing rhyming words, isolating letter sounds in spoken words and blending sounds)
Reading	ability to independently read and understand the meaning of
Comprehension	sentences, paragraphs or entire texts
Sight Words	(also called high-frequency words) common words that a reader should recognize on sight, such as I, a, and, am, at, on, me
Syllable	a unit of spoken language consisting of a single uninterrupted sound (for example: tree)
Visual Perceptual Abilities	ability to recognize and visually distinguish between the letters in words



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