

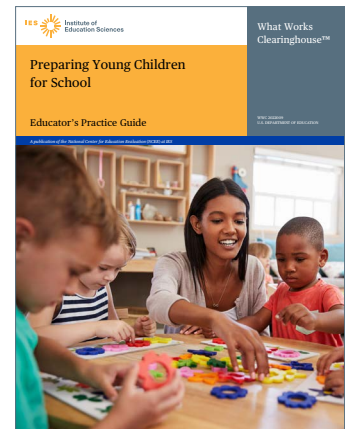
Recommendation 7: Use shared book reading to develop children’s language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world



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Shared book reading—sometimes called interactive read-aloud—involves the teacher reading a book and encouraging children to be actively engaged in responding to the book. As the teacher reads the book aloud, children can participate by either retelling or connecting to parts of the story, asking questions, or answering questions. Shared book reading can be used to build knowledge about the social and natural world and to teach components of literacy, such as vocabulary, print features including letters, and phonological awareness. The panel recommends reading books to children multiple times a day, using either the same book or different books, and including at least one shared book reading a day.

The recommendation from the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide *Preparing Young Children for School* presents steps on how to use shared book reading time to teach literacy concepts effectively. The first two steps detail how to prepare for reading. The last three steps provide more guidance on how to carry out shared book reading with young children.



How to carry out the recommendation

1. **Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds.** Choose books that touch on topics of interest to children or that relate to something they may have experienced such as books about making friends with a new child who just moved to their block. Also choose books that align with the focus of the literacy lesson for the day or week or books that showcase target letters. Ensure that children regularly see people like themselves in the books that are read, as well as people from other cultures. Consider reading narrative books and informational books on the same topic in succession, to reinforce learning about a topic.
2. **Prior to the lesson, plan the purpose for reading the book and determine when to discuss certain topics with children.** Children can learn more from the books when they are read multiple times. Plan a different focus for each time a book is read, including some review of previously covered topics. The focus of each reading can be discussed before, during, or after shared book reading. It can be helpful to write discussion points on sticky notes and place them in the book as reminders of when to stop to focus on something.
3. **Prepare children for listening to and discussing the content of the book before reading the book aloud.** When children know something about the topic of the book, they can accurately connect the information in the book to something they know or have experienced. Ask children what they already know about the topic of the book to determine whether they need more information about the topic.
4. **Engage in conversations with the children while reading the book.** While reading, stop periodically to encourage children to actively engage with the book. Ask questions that encourage multi-word answers and encourage children to justify their answers. Remember to also discuss questions children ask about the book.
5. **Align literacy activities with the focus of the shared book reading.** Plan interactive small-group activities that provide children opportunities to use or rehearse what they learned from the book. Consider using puppets, figurines, or role-play to act out a story. This will help children “see” and think about what happened in the book. After reading a book multiple times, leave the book in the classroom library or at a center aligned with the content of the book so children can look through the book independently.