

Power Up Story Time by Talking: Reading with Toddlers & Preschoolers in Small Groups

Choosing Books for Toddlers	
Book Characteristics	Examples
Pictures that are easy to name and talk about	
Lots of things to do, say, act out, or imitate	
Show lots of members of a category	
Simple stories with few words	
Patterns that are easy to follow	
Reassuring stories of toddler-like characters who get lost and are found, run away and return, or make mistakes and are forgiven	
Enable toddlers to pursue special interests and become “experts.”	
Spark conversations that connect to real life and hands-on play	

adapted from Bardige, B. (2009). *Talk to Me, Baby!: How You Can Support Young Children’s Language Development*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing

Our Preschool or Kindergarten Library

Book Characteristics	We need a lot more of these!	Our collection is pretty good.	Our collection is excellent!
High quality writing and beautiful, interesting, or funny illustrations			
Books with patterns that invite participation in reading			
Books with plots that pique curiosity about what will happen next			
Books for picture and print detectives: ABC's, color and shape books, "What's wrong with this picture"?			
Books about children like themselves, and those who are different			
Books in children's home languages and dialects			
Books that engage children's emotions with reassuring stories about characters who struggle with conflicts with friends, feelings of smallness or inadequacy, or feelings of being left out or different			
Books that model positive behavior and clever solutions to problems			
Books that relate to what they're studying and expand their horizons			
Books for beginning readers			
Books related to children's special interests and questions – including picture books meant for older children or adults			

adapted from Bardige, B. (2009). *Talk to Me, Baby!: How You Can Support Young Children's Language Development*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing

Choosing Books for Mixed-Age Groups

Book Characteristics	Examples
Books with a strong pattern so everyone can participate	
Classics, folktales, and old favorites	
Books with strong photographs of real objects, people, and places	
Homemade books related to children’s experiences	
Themed collections with books at different levels	

Different Kinds of Books Foster Different Kinds of Reading (and Talk)

Books lend themselves to ...	Examples
<p>Dramatic reading: Use different voices in dialog. Use gestures and facial expressions to convey emotion and meaning.</p>	
<p>Interactive play: Children name and describe pictures or find hidden details.</p>	
<p>Group participation: Children chant repeated lines, fill in rhyming words, perform actions, or supply sound effects.</p>	
<p>Finding Information: Focus on key parts and on the children's questions; you might choose not to read the whole book.</p>	
<p>Prediction and interpretation: Stop at key points to ask children what they think will happen next or to talk about what the characters might be feeling.</p>	
<p>Connections with children's lives: A child may remember a similar story or event, have shared a character's feelings, or have had experiences that contrast with those in the book. These connections will help children understand the story; discussing them will also help children go beyond the book.</p>	

-- adapted from Bardige and Segal, *Building Literacy with Love*, p 152-153

Barriers to Engaging Reading and Reading-Stimulated Conversations

Barrier	Possible Solutions
Time/coverage to read & talk with only one or a few children	
Finding a quiet space for private conversation	
Fitting multiple readings into the curriculum	

Reading Challenges: Do you recognize these toddlers?

- **The wiggler:** won't sit still for reading no matter what you do
- **The mob:** all want you to read "their" book at the same moment
- **The grabber:** grabs the book and insists "me do it"
- **The collector:** hoards all the books; won't share
- **The stickler:** Makes you read every word the right way.
- **The 2-second-page-turner:** "All done."

Reading Challenges: Do you recognize these preschoolers?

- **The fidgeter:** has to move to learn
- **The visual learner:** wants to see the pictures and the words – all the time
- **The know-it-all:** answers your questions before the others have a chance to think, or interrupts to share information
- **The watcher:** pays more attention to what the others are doing than to the story
- **The questioner:** asks so many questions you can't finish answering one before he asks another
- **The long-winded speech maker:** tells long stories until the other children get bored

What have you found works best? What else might you try?

Curriculum Planning: Book Title _____

Introducing the book: Generating interest

- Explore and predict: _____
- Preteach to: _____
- Dramatic introduction: _____
- Related concrete experiences: _____

Reading for Engagement

- Storyline focus: _____
 - Content/information focus: _____
 - Participation/entertainment focus: _____
- _____

Re-readings with: _____

- See/show/say: Highlight _____
 - Dialogic reading: Ask: _____
- _____
- Social-emotional focus: _____
 - Vocabulary focus:
 - Words: _____
 - Techniques: _____
 - Participation; choral reading; reading along: _____
- _____
- Decoding focus: _____
 - Author’s craft focus: _____

One-on-one with: _____

- Special time together
- Child-initiated focus
- “Tender Topic” conversations: _____
- Intentional teaching: _____

Curriculum Planning: Book Title _____

Extensions

- Sensory/Cooking activities: _____
- Outdoor activities: _____
- Movement and Music: _____
- Building and Creating: _____
- STEM: _____
- Cultural traditions; family “funds of knowledge”: _____
- _____
- Related books: _____
- _____
- Dramatic Play
 - Themes: _____
 - Props & set-ups: _____

Story Retelling and Variation

- Pretend reading: _____
- Participatory reading: _____
- Puppets/flannel board: _____
- Reenactment: _____
- Dictation: _____
- Making books:
 - Prompts: _____
 - Other Aids: _____

Home-School Connections

- “Juicy Words”: _____
- Family contributions: _____
- Children’s work: _____
- Reading nights & family fun activities: _____
- _____

Resources

Sources for Books

Anti-Bias, Multicultural, and Multilingual Books:

- Children’s Peace Project: www.childpeacebooks.org/cpb/Protect/antiBias.php
- Language Lizard: www.languagelizard.com
- International Children’s Digital Library: <http://en.childrenslibrary.org>

Follett Early Learning: www.follettearlylearning.com/book-collections

First Book: www.firstbook.org

If you’re an educator or program administrator, and at least 70 percent of the children in your program come from low-income families, we can help.

Eligible programs receive access to the:

- First Book Marketplace offering new books at 50 to 90 percent of retail prices
- First Book National Book Bank offering free books (pay only for shipping typically at 35 to 50 cents a book)
- Book grants through First Book’s local Advisory Boards

Professional Development Resources

Bardige, B. (2009). *Talk to Me, Baby!: How You Can Support Young Children’s Language Development*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing.

Bardige, B. & Segal, M. (2005). *Building Literacy with Love: A Guide for Teachers and Caregivers of Children Birth through Age 5*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE Publishing.

Bardige, B. & Segal, M. (2005). *Building Literacy with Love: Poems to Learn to Read By*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE Publishing.

Dombro, A. L., J. Jablon, & C. Stetson (2011). *Powerful Interactions: How to Connect with Children to Extend Their Learning*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

McCord, S. (2011). *The Storybook Journey: Pathways to Learning through Story and Play*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Whitehurst, J. G. “Dialogic Reading: An Effective Way to Read to Preschoolers.” Reading Rockets: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/400>