

A woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a green shirt, is sitting and reading a large, colorful book. A baby with light hair, wearing a brown and blue outfit, is sitting in front of her, looking at the book. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Time for a STORY

Sharing Books
with Infants
and Toddlers

Amy Brooks Read and
Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting

Time for a STORY

**Sharing Books with Infants
and Toddlers**

Time for a STORY

Sharing Books
with Infants
and Toddlers

Amy Brooks Read and
Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting

Copyright

©2015 Amy Read and Saroj Ghoting

Published by Gryphon House, Inc.

P. O. Box 10, Lewisville, NC 27023

800.638.0928; 877.638.7576 (fax)

Visit us on the web at www.gryphonhouse.com.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or technical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission of the publisher. Printed in USA.

Every effort has been made to locate copyright and permission information.

Cover photograph courtesy of Shutterstock.com © 2015.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Cataloging-in-Publication Data is registered with the Library of Congress for

ISBN: 978-0-87659-657-9

Bulk Purchase

Gryphon House books are available for special premiums and sales promotions as well as for fund-raising use. Special editions or book excerpts also can be created to specifications. For details, call 800-638-0928.

Disclaimer

Gryphon House, Inc., cannot be held responsible for damage, mishap, or injury incurred during the use of or because of activities in this book. Appropriate and reasonable caution and adult supervision of children involved in activities and corresponding to the age and capability of each child involved are recommended at all times. Do not leave children unattended at any time.

Observe safety and caution at all times.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7
Chapter 1: Getting Started	11
Chapter 2: Interactive Books	23
Chapter 3: Books That Rock!.....	43
Chapter 4: Information Books.....	65
Chapter 5: Storybooks	89
Chapter 6: Putting It into Practice	109
Chapter 7: Connecting with Parents and Families	125
Appendix A: Story-Time Planning Sheet	143
Appendix B: Flannel Boards, Story Gloves, and Story Aprons.....	145
Index	149

Dedication

To Mike, Alden, and Hadyn,
Thanks for your patience. Yes, it's done! I love you all.

—A. B. R.

For all the dedicated early childhood educators who make a difference
in the lives of young children and their families every day.

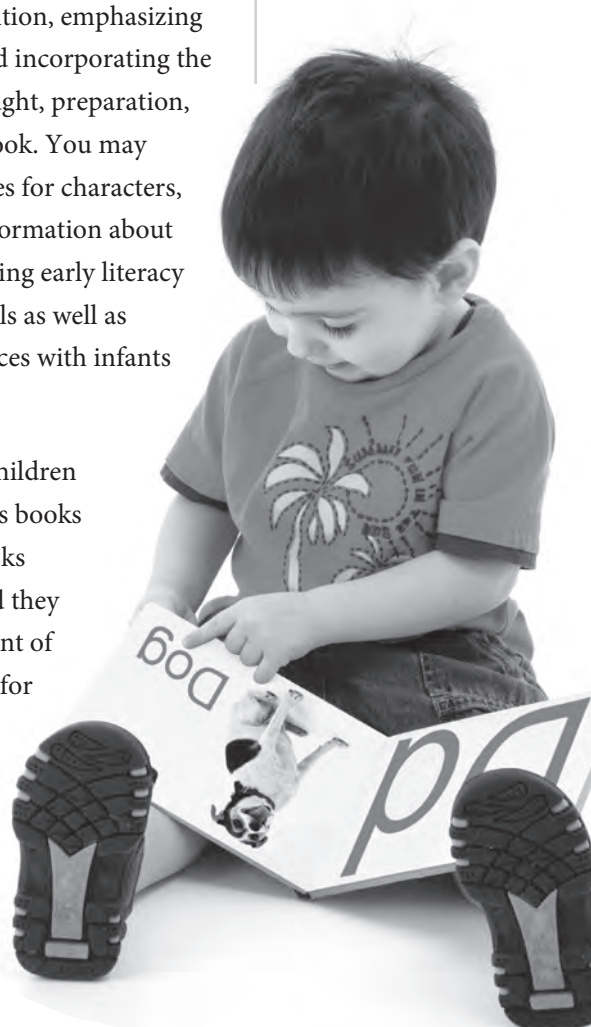
—S. N. G.

Introduction

Preparing a child for school success begins at birth. Yes, even that early they begin building skills that will prepare them for kindergarten. When a child enters an early childhood classroom as an infant or young toddler, she is beginning her journey toward kindergarten. In those few short years, every experience matters. As early childhood providers, we have a responsibility to provide high-quality care and education. Ensuring that children's care is of the highest quality includes using early literacy (prereading) activities and experiences that support their growth and development, all day, every day.

Reading with infants and toddlers is a fundamental activity, which all children should experience. In child care, when you have a full class of infants and toddlers this can be demanding. Taking a book off the shelf and reading it is a fairly easy task. But, selecting the most appropriate book, reading it in a way that captures the children's attention, emphasizing in playful ways the skills and components that children need to develop, and incorporating the practices that help build early literacy skills can be challenging. It takes thought, preparation, and planning to make the most out of every experience a child has with a book. You may already be doing some of the techniques that we suggest, such as using voices for characters, making animal sounds, or singing songs. If so, great! We will offer more information about why each activity is developmentally appropriate and how it relates to building early literacy skills. This book has been developed to support early childhood professionals as well as parents and families with all the challenges of maximizing reading experiences with infants and toddlers to enhance their early literacy development.

The most important item or tool that a teacher or parent has in preparing children for later reading success is a book. With hundreds of thousands of children's books published each year, how do you select the right ones? What should the books include? How many words should they have? What kinds of pictures should they have? This book is not a critical review of children's books or an endorsement of any particular authors; it is a guide that covers different categories of books for infants and toddlers and explains how teachers and parents can use these books to help build the early literacy foundation that will take children from the infant and toddler years into preschool. Indeed, it is the way we use books with children that makes the difference in their early literacy development. The book is the tool, but it is you who makes a difference in children's language development in using that tool.



How This Book Is Organized

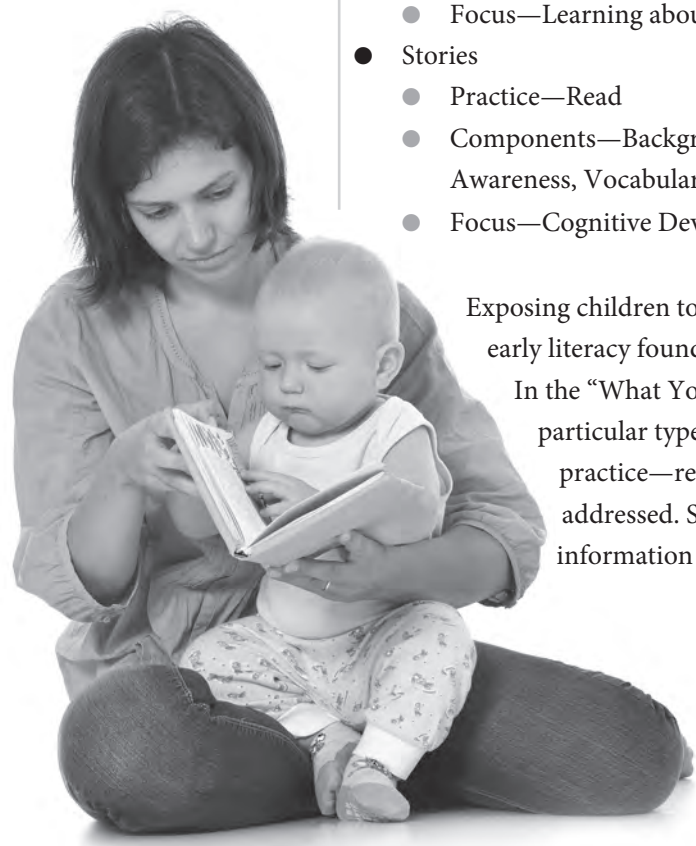
Chapter 1 explains how early literacy develops and how you can support young children as they develop the skills needed to learn to read. Chapters 2 through 6 focus on a particular type of book and how this type of book helps build on early literacy practices and components. The practices, components, and focus areas that are most closely tied to the type of book are included. The practice of “writing” is not specifically connected to any of the types of books but will be woven throughout all of the categories:

- Interactive Books
 - Practice—Play
 - Components—Background Knowledge, Print Awareness, Letter Knowledge
 - Focus—Sensory-Motor Development, Object Permanence, I Can Do It
- Song Books and Rhymes
 - Practice—Sing
 - Components—Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary
 - Focus—Rhythm and Rhyme, Action Rhymes
- Informational Books
 - Practice—Talk
 - Components—Background Knowledge, Vocabulary, Letter Knowledge
 - Focus—Learning about my World
- Stories
 - Practice—Read
 - Components—Background Knowledge, Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary
 - Focus—Cognitive Development, Sequencing, Narrative Skills

Exposing children to a variety of types and styles of books not only helps build a strong early literacy foundation it helps build their excitement and interest in reading.

In the “What You Can Do with _____ Books” sections, we explore how a particular type of book addresses specific early literacy practices. We cover each practice—read, write, sing, talk, and play—and the skill or component that is addressed. Suggestions for ways to connect with parents and families or share information with them are included with each practice.

We have included books that are good examples of particular categories. They are only examples; the tips and suggestions can be used with just about any book. Be creative. Use books that you and the children like. As long as everyone is having fun, you will be able to enhance your story time with early literacy practices and components. In each chapter, we discuss how you



can emphasize the characteristics of a particular type of book even if you do not have that specific title.

Each chapter includes sample book lists, which give a short summary or synopsis of the book and highlight features of the book. Following the book lists are examples of how to use selected titles.

Each chapter concludes with a sample story time for older toddlers and twos. Each sample includes the following information:

- Theme—for use if your curriculum is theme based
- Activity—what is happening
- Title—of a song, book, or rhyme
- Early Literacy Connection—explanation of what is happening or the reasoning for incorporating this in story time. This area includes information that can be shared with parents and families and often includes developmental information.
- Skill or Component—what area of early literacy is being targeted

Although specific titles are used for examples and sample story times, just about any book can be substituted. That way if the highlighted book is not available, you still have a stash of skills activities or techniques that can make the most of reading experiences. The information included addresses the early literacy development of children from infancy to age two. Some information addresses children who may be a little over twenty-four months since it is common for classes or family child-care homes to have mixed ages or not to move a child to another class when he is exactly twenty-four months.

The last two chapters in the book offer suggestions and tools that can be used to support early literacy in the classroom, connect with parents and families, and help teachers implement early literacy enhanced story times.

As you use this book, focus on what to do with the sample books and the early literacy connections that we highlight more than on the specific title itself. For example, we may use a book as an example and describe a particular technique for reading or an activity to use. Use those techniques and activities with other books as well. Just because you ask a particular question while reading a book about dogs does not mean you cannot ask a similar question while reading a book about trucks. Some of the suggestions may feel awkward at first; keep it up, and with practice they will become easier.

At first you may need to follow the suggestions step by step. As you become more comfortable with techniques, allow yourself to become more creative. Have fun while you are reading and talking with the children in your class. If you are having fun and enjoying literacy activities, they will also, and they will have more enjoyable experiences with books and reading. This puts children on the path to being ready for school!

DID YOU KNOW?

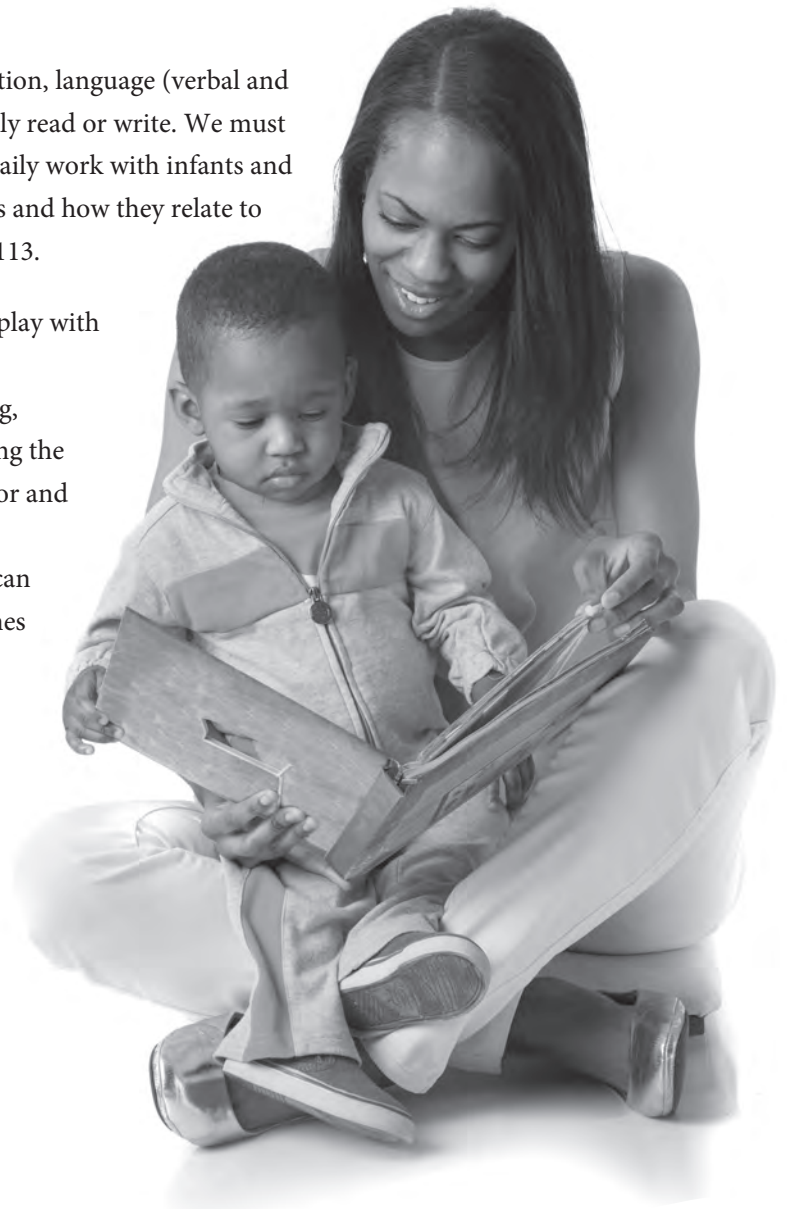
We have included books that are good examples of particular categories. They are only examples; the tips and suggestions can be used with just about any book.

Getting Started

Babies come into the world ready to learn. Every day parents and early childhood teachers should be talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing with infants and toddlers. These activities not only help children develop in all areas—physical, cognitive, and social-emotional—but they also help build the foundation for later reading success. Children need all five of these practices to be ready for school and to be ready to learn how to read. At this age, birth to twenty-four months, we are not talking about teaching children how to read. The focus is on laying a strong foundation for later reading.

Early literacy is what children know about communication, language (verbal and nonverbal), reading, and writing before they can actually read or write. We must include and address early literacy components in our daily work with infants and toddlers. More detailed descriptions of the components and how they relate to infants and toddlers can be found in the table on page 113.

- **Phonological Awareness**—the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words
- **Print Awareness**—knowing that print has meaning, understanding how to handle a book, understanding the direction of print, beginning to recognize the author and title, and noticing environmental print
- **Letter Knowledge**—knowing that the same letter can look different, understanding that letters have names and represent sounds, recognizing shapes, and understanding *alike* and *different*
- **Vocabulary**—knowing the meanings of words including names of objects, actions, feelings, concepts and ideas; learning the meaning of new words
- **Background Knowledge**—prior knowledge, what children already know, including print motivation and narrative skills



CHILDREN AND SCREEN TIME

Parents may ask you about television and using technology and apps with very young children. Here are a few points to share with them:

When a very young child is riveted to the screen, we might assume it is because she is interested. However, young children are particularly sensitive to the *orienting reflex*, which makes the brain automatically focus attention on new sights or sounds.

Studies have shown that passive screen time can take away from time that adults play with their children, which is when children learn how to interact with others and learn language.

Let's look at each of the five practices—talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing—to see how they support early literacy.

Talking: Talking is the basis for all later literacy—early literacy and reading skills. Children need a strong basis in oral language and listening, speaking, and communication skills as a foundation for later literacy. The way we talk with children makes a big difference in their early literacy development. Talking with children from the time they are born, making eye contact, watching their gestures and responses, using words they are not familiar with as we are talking with them every day are all ways to support early literacy. It is important to talk with children a lot! In an early childhood classroom, there should be conversations happening all day.

Talking *to* children is not sufficient; we need to talk *with* them. Give them time to respond, even if they are not verbal yet. Pause for five to ten seconds after asking a question. This gives them time to formulate an answer or respond with cooing or babbling. Very young infants may respond by looking at you, kicking their feet, or moving their hands.

Children need to hear a lot of words while they are young; this helps them build a strong, large vocabulary. Vocabulary and oral language are strongly connected to reading comprehension. Building vocabulary begins in infancy. Research has shown that a gap in vocabulary development can be seen as early as six months and is strongly apparent by eighteen months. Talking about things that are not present, that happened, or that will happen; explaining what we are doing; asking questions that must be answered with more than yes or no; and encouraging babies to babble and toddlers to talk are small but important ways to support language development. Children

who enter school with a large vocabulary, having heard many words and words repeated many times, will have an easier time understanding what they read. They will also find it easier to sound out words they have heard before.

Singing: Singing slows down language. It takes us longer to sing a rhyme than it does to say it. Children can hear the sounds of language more easily when we sing. Also, there is a distinct note for each syllable, so children hear words broken down into parts, which will help them later sound out words when they learn to read. Songs often have interesting words that we do not hear in regular conversation.

Reading: Reading aloud to children is the single most important activity to help children become successful readers. However, the *way* we read with children makes a difference. Reading the words in the book is important because sometimes books use interesting words we do not use in regular conversation with young children. It is also important to talk about what is

happening in the pictures of the book and to help children relate what is happening to their own experiences. This helps later with comprehension. By occasionally pointing to the pictures and words in the book, we help children develop print awareness, understand how books work, and understand that print has meaning.

Helping children enjoy books goes a long way when they are later being taught to read in school. Books are a great way for children to learn about the world around them, about other people, places, and things. Children who have had enjoyable experiences around books and reading are more likely to stick with learning to read even if it is difficult for them.

Writing: Writing may seem like an activity for older children, but writing skills start early. Even babies like to grasp your finger! Later, they will use the pincer grasp by picking up small items with their index finger and thumb. The small motor skills you do with them, from clapping to fingerplays, will help develop the finger and hand movements needed for writing. Scribbling is the beginning of writing, so encourage them to write, and make sure they see you writing, too.

Playing: There are so many ways to play. Children learn best through play and exploration. Putting words to their play—narrating and commenting on what they are doing, what they feel when they touch something, and the characteristics of items—are all ways to bring language to what they observe in their world. You can tell stories using props, follow their lead as they play, and play simple games such as peekaboo.

As they get older, they will start to have one item represent another. They will play with objects such as dolls or blocks; for example, a block may be used as a truck. This kind of symbolic thinking is also used in language development when they realize that the picture of the truck or the word *truck* is not the real truck but represents, or is a symbol for, the real truck.

Talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing, and the early literacy components—phonological awareness, print awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, and background knowledge—support each other. How we do the practices with the children makes a difference in whether or not we are supporting their early literacy development. In the following section we give some examples of how each of the practices can support the early literacy components. You can also see how the early literacy components can be put into practice in so many ways, as we talk, sing, read, write, and play with children throughout the day.



Talking

Phonological Awareness: Babies learn the sounds of the languages they hear. When we speak with them in *parentese*—using normal adult language but saying the words at a higher pitch, drawing out the vowels, speaking very clearly, and repeating words—we help them learn language. Until they are about nine months old, babies are better able to hear the sounds of language and will listen longer when we speak in parentese.

Talk about environmental sounds, such as the doorbell ringing, a cell phone beeping, a honking car, birds singing, a dog barking, and so on. Make animal sounds as a start to help babies focus on sounds. Say nursery rhymes to help children hear the lilt of language as well as rhyming words. Especially as they move into toddlerhood, specifically point out the rhyming words in nursery rhymes. Help young children notice beginning sounds of words by pointing out words that begin with the same sound, such as *disposable diaper*. Have fun playing with words and sounds.

Print Awareness: The first step of helping children understand that print has meaning is to point out and read signs, logos, and labels. For toddlers, you might hold a favorite book upside-down or start reading it backward from the last page. Encourage children to talk about what is “wrong” with the way you are reading the book. When a book shows a picture of an item, show the real item. For example, if you have a ball available and a book shows a picture of a ball and the word *ball*, take time to show the child the picture of the ball and then also the real ball. This will help the child make the connection that the picture and the text represent a real thing.

Letter Knowledge: Letter knowledge is more than just recognizing letters. Because children recognize letters by their shapes, we have lots of opportunities to talk about and to help them feel shapes. Talk about the characteristics, such as texture and color, of the items they see and touch. Talking about the characteristics of objects helps young children focus on these characteristics and, later, to compare objects—what is similar and what is different. For toddlers, you can help them make the comparisons: Which one is bigger? taller? longer? This helps them later to distinguish between similar letters. A great place to start is with the letters in the child’s name. Talk about the shapes in the letters.

Vocabulary: Helping children know the meanings of words starts young, just by hearing lots of words. Because children learn vocabulary best through situations, talking as we are doing things together helps them understand words through context and gestures. Speaking in parentese helps young children have a larger vocabulary because they listen to you longer. Be sure to add new words to baby’s babble and to toddler’s talking, using synonyms or further description. And don’t be afraid to use “big words.” Children will never know them if you don’t use them.

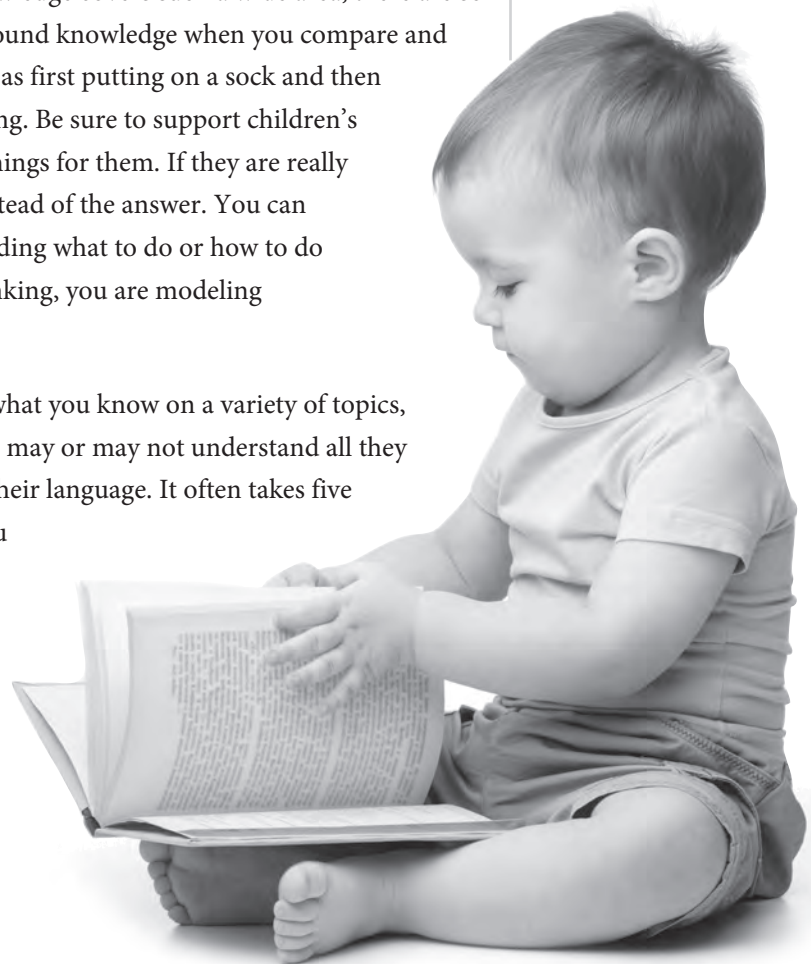
It is important not only to talk about objects but also about feelings—giving words to how they and you might be feeling throughout the day during specific situations. Use words for ideas as

well, such as *cooperation* and *responsibility*. Even if children do not know the exact meanings of these words, they will learn them as you use them repeatedly.

Background Knowledge: Because background knowledge covers such a wide area, there are so many ways to support it. You are supporting background knowledge when you compare and contrast objects. Putting processes in sequence, such as first putting on a sock and then putting on a shoe, helps children's conceptual thinking. Be sure to support children's problem-solving abilities. Don't be too quick to fix things for them. If they are really stumped on what to do in a situation, offer a clue instead of the answer. You can also explain how you are thinking when you are deciding what to do or how to do something. When they hear you explaining your thinking, you are modeling problem-solving skills.

Children love to learn about the world, so tell them what you know on a variety of topics, and encourage them to tell you what they know. You may or may not understand all they say, but your encouraging attitude helps to develop their language. It often takes five to twelve seconds for toddlers to respond to what you say, so give them the extra time they need. As they become more used to using language, they will need less time to respond.

Have conversations about everyday routines such as diapering and snack time. Talk not only about what is happening now but also about things that happened in the past and things that are going to happen in the future. As children get close to two years old, they may begin to be able to tell a little story or tell you what happened.



Singing

Phonological Awareness: Sing with children, even if you feel you cannot carry a tune. Singing helps children hear smaller sounds in words because words are drawn out. They hear each syllable because there is a distinct note for each syllable. Sing songs with animal sounds or with silly and nonsense words!

Print Awareness: When you use song books, point out words in the chorus or repeated lines. Try singing, "Oh, no! My book is upside down!" to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down." You can use song cards or print the words to songs on large paper, occasionally pointing to the words you are singing.



Letter Knowledge: If you choose to sing the alphabet song, which is usually sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” try singing it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” instead. This encourages more emphasis on saying the letters and avoids the common run-together pronunciation or mumbling of *L*, *M*, *N*, *O*. Other songs such as “BINGO” use the names of the letters. You can also sing songs that talk about shapes.

Vocabulary: Some songs and rhymes have words not heard in everyday conversation with young children, such as *fetch* in the rhyme “Jack and Jill.” Many songs help children with concepts such as opposites, sizes, and shapes. For example, “Pease Porridge Hot” and “The Noble Duke of York” feature opposites: hot and cold and up and down.

Background Knowledge: Knowing common rhymes and songs helps support children’s background knowledge; it is cultural knowledge. When we use songs that go through a sequence, such as “This is the way we . . .,” or songs with a story, such as “Mary Had Little Lamb,” we support children’s conceptual thinking. Many songs help children with concepts such as numbers and size.

Reading

Phonological Awareness: As you share books with young children, there are many ways to support phonological awareness, or hearing the smaller sounds in words. This awareness will later help them sound out words when they learn to read. Many books for babies and toddlers have animals in them. Whether or not the sounds that the animals make are actually written out in the text, you can make the sounds and have the children try to repeat the sounds. When you read nursery rhyme books, children are hearing the lilt of language and hearing rhyming words. Reading books that incorporate songs helps support phonological awareness. Books that have *alliteration*, or a repeated beginning sound, such as *Busy Birdies* by John Schindel, expose children to hearing that individual sound. When you share a book with rhyming words, tell the children which words rhyme. Repeat reading the book often—some toddlers and young twos may chime in with the rhyming word if you pause right before reading it.

Print Awareness: Knowing that print has meaning and how to handle books develops from encouraging babies to explore books and to notice the world around them. Babies explore objects with their mouths; they will chew on a book. They are getting to know what books are like. They do not have a lot of coordination with their hands and may bat at or hit the book. They may try to imitate your turning the pages of the book even though they are not yet coordinated enough to really turn the pages. This is a beginning. Be sure to have some board books around that you know will be chewed on and beaten up. At this stage, it's okay.

As you look at a book with a young child, point to the words in the title and to some of the words in the book, perhaps a repeated phrase. This is how children come to understand that it is the text we are reading, not the pictures.

Letter Knowledge: Because children learn to identify letters by their shapes, pointing out shapes in shape books is a good first step. We can see shapes all around us, but there are many books with clear and colorful pictures of the shapes. Because so many letters look quite similar, children try to notice how they look different. Of course, some differences don't matter: An *N* is an *N* no matter what color it is, but it turns into a *Z* when you turn it on its side. The difference between an *n* and an *h* is the height of the line. So, by helping children notice how objects look similar or different—even when we are not talking about letters—we help pave the way to later letter knowledge.

Vocabulary: Some books, even simple books such as *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell, use interesting words like *fierce*, *fragile*, and *danger*. These are words that we may not use in regular conversation with young children. Using informational or factual books with children offers them different words than the ones we find in stories, so be sure to use these books as well.

Sometimes books for young children have only one or two words on a page. Then, we depend upon you to have conversations around the book to add more language that builds their vocabulary.

Background Knowledge: Children learn so much about the world through observing, exploring, and hearing you talk about the things around them. Books offer opportunities to expose children to things they may not be able to see in their own environments. Books are a window to the world. Choose books on topics that the child shows interest in; offer several books and allow the child to choose. This will help the child develop an enjoyable relationship with books. As you read the book together, give the child some time to talk about the pictures in the book. This will help you to understand what the child might be thinking or where his attention is directed. Be sure to relate what is happening in the book to the child's experiences, even if the child cannot understand everything you say. This approach helps later to develop comprehension.

We want children to relate enjoyment to books and reading, so having them join in and participate as you share books together will keep them more happily engaged. When you are reading a book you really enjoy, tell the child how much you like it and what you like about it. Reading with expression is one way to keep their attention. You can use props, flannel or magnet boards, or puppets as you tell and retell stories. If the child loses interest, you can try at another time.

Writing

Phonological Awareness: You might try drawing a picture of an animal or an item that makes a sound and then talk about the sound it makes. Draw a picture and say a rhyming word or a word that starts with the same sound.

Print Awareness: You can make a simple book out of folded paper and have children write or draw in their own books. If you like, you can write down what they tell you is happening in their drawings. Make age-appropriate writing materials available, and encourage scribbling and drawing.

Letter Knowledge: Encouraging children to draw shapes and make lines and drawings are first steps to later being able to write letters. You can encourage children to write with their fingers in the air, too.

Vocabulary: Encourage children to draw pictures and tell you about them. Add a new word or two to what the children are saying, or clarify meanings of words they are using. Describe children's scribbles: "You drew a big blue line."

Background Knowledge: Have children draw pictures for a story. Ask them to tell you what the pictures are and write what they say. This will help them learn how stories work. Let children see you write, and explain what you are writing. This will begin to teach them that there are different purposes for writing. Sing and recite fingerplays and action rhymes. Learning the movements helps to develop the fine motor skills needed for using writing utensils.

Playing

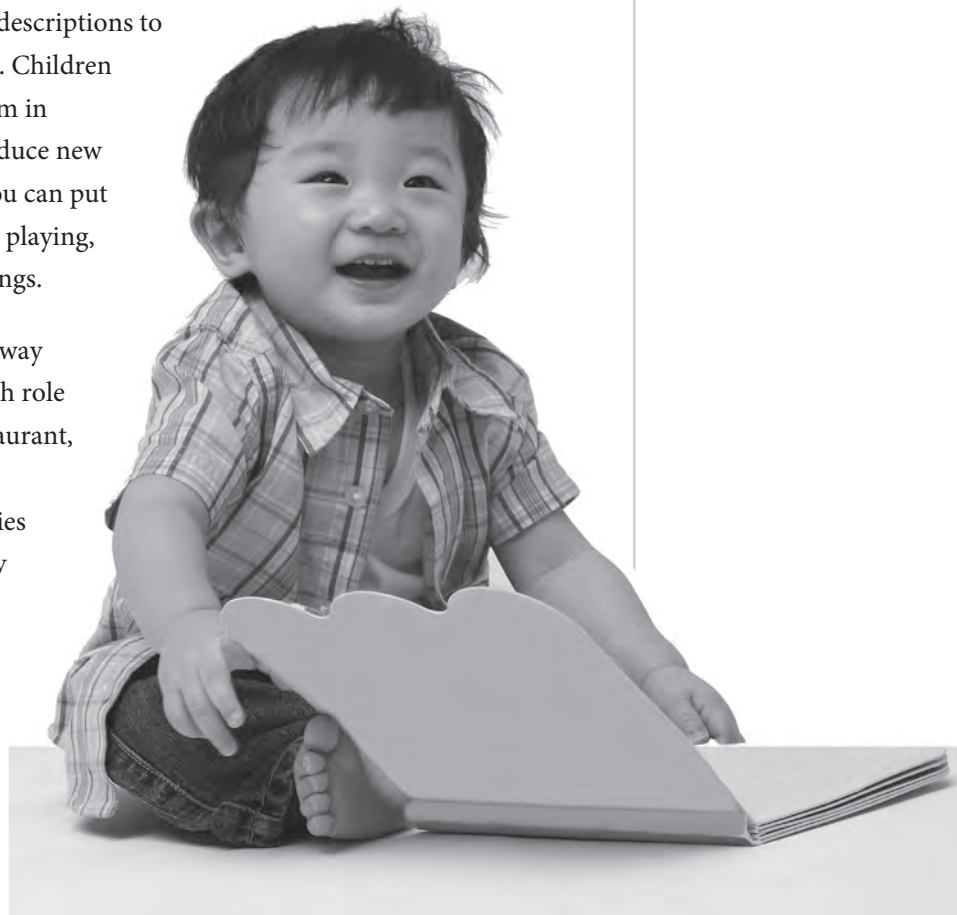
Phonological Awareness: Help children become aware of sounds as they play. Clap out words into syllables. Point out sounds that some of their toys make. Books are often a baby's first toy. Keep books with animal sounds and rhymes where babies and children can easily play with and explore them.

Print Awareness: Make books that include pictures of the children in the classroom engaging in play. Add print to play by including signs and labels for familiar objects. Use signs with blocks, label storage containers with words and pictures for manipulatives and toys, and make books available in all play areas.

Letter Knowledge: Play with puzzles and blocks—with so many shapes, colors, sizes, there are lots of ways to sort and categorize. Play matching and sorting games; notice what is alike and different and include foam, magnet, and block letters. Don't worry about having the children identify the letters. Just let them feel and play with them.

Vocabulary: As babies handle objects and toys, describe how the toys feel, what they look like, and the sounds they make. Enhance children's play by adding new words and descriptions to the words or babbles they use as they play. Children learn new words best when they learn them in context, so playing is a great time to introduce new words. Playtime allows for pretending. You can put words to feelings—the characters they are playing, the children's feelings, and your own feelings.

Background Knowledge: Play is a good way to develop background knowledge through role playing different situations, such as a restaurant, doctor's office, school, car repair shop, or library. Dramatic play and acting out stories together helps children get a sense of story structure. You can use puppets or props. Provide toys that can represent the characters in a favorite book to act out the book or extend the story in imaginative play.



Story Times for Infants and Toddlers

TIP

Remember, even when you are conducting a scheduled story time or circle time, young children should always have the choice of participating.

So, you understand the value of reading with infants and toddlers, but how can you do it effectively? Reading with very young children should be flexible. As one teacher in an infant room said, “You just have to go with the flow.” Remember, even when you are conducting a scheduled story time or circle time, young children should always have the choice of participating.

Flexibility is important, but it is essential to have purpose, intention, and structure when you are reading. If not, there will be many missed opportunities. Even very young infants should be read to throughout every day. Reading times can range from informal activities to more structured activities. Children can quickly learn and be able to predict what happens

next if there is a structure or schedule to their daily reading time. Begin your story time with a particular song, rhyme, or chant—they will know when they hear it that it is time for books!

Getting through a certain number of books does not ensure an effective story time. Sometimes just one book is enough if you include additional activities and incorporate techniques that help build children’s skills. Adjust the length, number of books, songs, rhymes, and activities to your particular group. You know the children in your class best; design the story time to fit their needs and abilities. As you are reading, observe the children. Watch for cues and behaviors that let you know if they are paying attention, interested, bored, tired, and so on. This will help as you plan which books to include in a story time.

This is a sample format that would be appropriate for toddlers. Story times with infants will be much shorter and less formal than those with older babies. Lap reading should happen throughout the day with the children. We have provided a reproducible template in Appendix A to assist with planning story-time activities.

- **Opening song or rhyme:** Use the same one each time. There are a variety of examples throughout this book, or you can make up your own, search online for songs, or use shakers or bells to signify the start of story time. If you choose to use shakers, bells, or other sounds, make sure to explain the meaning of the sound to the children.
- **Introduction:** Tell the children what is happening. “It’s time to read books!” or “Today we are going to read about ____.”
- **Two to four songs or rhymes:** Adjust the number for your age group. Repeat them a couple of times so the children begin to learn them. You can also repeat songs and rhymes from previous story times. Clap once between each song to indicate that it is over. Depending on your group’s abilities and interest, mix up action rhymes with quieter ones. Add puppets or story gloves to maintain interest.
- **Read one book.**

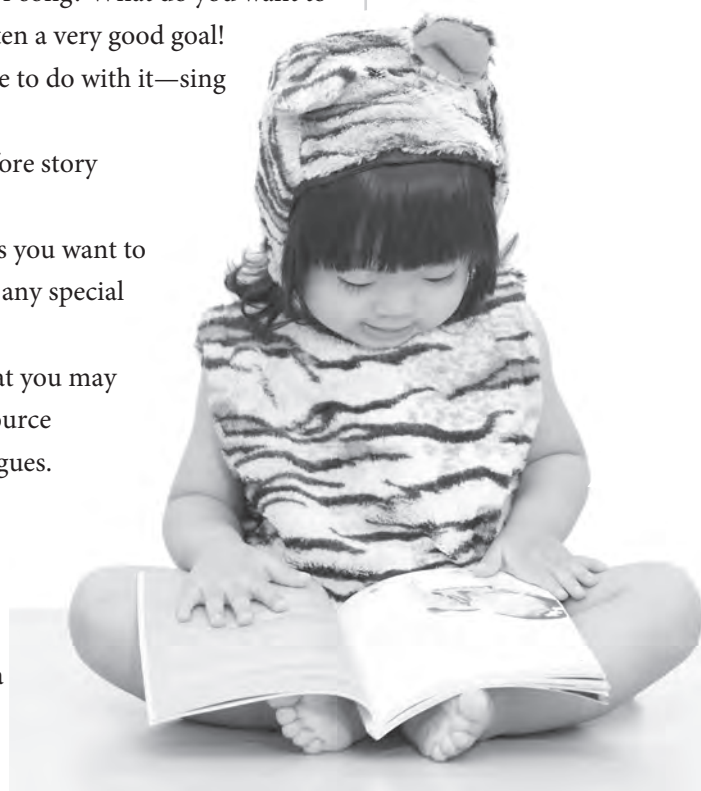
- **Two to four songs or rhymes:** Again, adjust the number to meet the needs of your group. Use this time to get your next book ready. Avoiding waiting time can save your story time.
- **Read one book.** This is a good time to switch to a different type of book, either a different format, such as a big book, a lap-size board book, or a hardcover book. Or, choose a book from a different category, such as a storybook, an informational book, a book to sing, and so on.
- **Use a flannel story, puppet, or story glove:** These can be used to tell a story, sing a song, or reinforce topics and concepts. You can use additional props such as music, blocks, items that are represented in the books you have read, scarves, or musical instruments.
- **Closing song or rhyme:** Use the same one each time.

TIP

- When children are very young, use more songs and rhymes than books. As they get older and their attention spans increase, you can add more or longer books.

Planning story times for infants and toddlers can be challenging. They are typically quite a bit shorter than story times for older two-year-olds and preschoolers. With newly mobile children who are practicing their toddling skills, sitting to listen to book after book is not going to happen on most days. Although the story times are shorter in length, that does not mean that you will spend less time planning and preparing. Keep the following in mind when you are planning your story times:

- Use books that you like to read. Repetition is good. Reread books that you and the children like.
- Determine what your purpose is—Why this particular book or song? What do you want to accomplish? Remember, having fun and enjoying books is often a very good goal!
- Practice, read the book through, and plan what you would like to do with it—sing it, add props, tell a story about it, retell it after reading.
- Gather all of the items you will need and have them ready before story time begins.
- Plan, write down vocabulary you want to introduce, questions you want to ask, the words to new songs you are going to sing, along with any special notes or reminders.
- Get more information on any topic you are going to cover that you may need additional information on—use the Internet, access resource books, contact your local library, or ask coworkers and colleagues.
- Reflect—After implementing a planned story time or literacy activity, review what worked and what could be improved. Were the children interested? Why or why not?
- Challenge yourself—Ask a coteacher or other staff person to observe your story time and give you feedback. (We provide a sample observation tool in Chapter 6.)



Reading with Infants

Ideally, reading with infants should be done one-on-one with the child in your lap looking at the book with you. This is definitely easier to accomplish for parents and families, at home or in a library story-time setting. When you have a class full of infants, it can be more challenging to read with each child individually. You can only fit so many children on your lap! Try laying a book on the floor and facing the baby while you are reading. The text will be upside down for you, but you can watch to see where baby is looking. This will give you opportunities to follow the baby's lead and interest.

Pick times of day when children are rested, and choose books about things that children are familiar with. Allow the infants to pat and chew on the books—remember, they are learning through all of their senses. Repeat simple books, songs, and rhymes, and read in a high-pitched voice to get the child's attention. Say the words slowly and clearly. As you read, look at and talk about the pictures, and point out words in the book. Allow children time to respond to the reading or pictures or to imitate you, even if they are not verbal yet.

Reading with Toddlers

Once they are mobile, getting children to sit and listen offers its challenges. Participation should always be voluntary. That being said, if you read it, they will come. When children hear the opening song that they associate with reading books, they will most likely move to the area designated for reading. If not, that's okay. Start reading, and you will soon have an audience.

Show enthusiasm and excitement about reading—your excitement is contagious! Repeat favorite books, stories, and songs, and allow the children to pick books for you to read. Use your voice; make animal sounds; change your pitch; give characters different voices; incorporate a lot of repetitive sounds, words, rhymes, and gestures; and vary your speed and volume as you read. Give the children time to repeat words or short phrases, and encourage them to make sounds when looking at the pictures. Allow the children to turn pages. Choose books about things the children are interested in and about familiar objects and subjects, such as family, food, and toys. Make a variety of books available. Tell stories to the children, and encourage them to tell stories to you.

Discover how to enhance EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT in infants and toddlers.

If you've ever tried reading with an infant or toddler, it may look something like this: you sit down on the floor and start reading, and the child pats the pages, chews on the book, or toddles away. With all the signs pointing to disinterest, is it even worth it to read to children from infancy to age two? The answer is yes!

Children's books are tools that prepare young children for later reading success—the way you use books with children makes a difference in their early literacy development. Planning story times with infants and toddlers can be challenging, but with thought and preparation, you can maximize the reading experiences of these little learners!

In **Time for a Story**, explore fun and engaging ways to talk, sing, read, write, and play with young children throughout the day.

- Explore a variety of types and styles of books to address specific early literacy practices.
- Plan story-time activities with an easy-to-use template.
- Select an appropriate book using sample book lists as a guide.
- Connect with parents and families.



Amy Brooks Read is an early literacy program manager for a public library system. She has a master

of science in child development and family relations and more than twenty years' experience in working with child- and family-related programs.



Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting has a master of library science degree and is an early childhood

literacy consultant and national trainer on early literacy with more than thirty-five years' experience as a children's librarian. She has been a consultant for the Public Library Association and the American Library Association on an early literacy initiative for the Association for Library Service to Children.


Gryphon House
www.gryphonhouse.com

GH10058

U.S. \$19.95

ISBN: 978-0-87659-657-9

5 1995



9 780876 596579