

*Especially for practitioners working with preschoolers!*

# Read and Repeat

*Reading and Print Awareness*

Children love to hear their favorite books read over and over again. Repeated readings help young children master the storyline, ideas, and language of a story.

## What is the practice?

Repeated reading helps children become familiar with the vocabulary, repeated themes, and the language in the story. You can use repeated story readings to help preschool children understand, talk about, and be part of the story. Many young children, especially those with speech and language delays, are not able to grasp an entire story on the first reading. Having books read a number of times helps children understand and notice new things.

## What does the practice look like?

When you read a story to a child over-and-over, she will figure out what an unfamiliar word means by the other words that she hears. Repeated reading gives the child opportunities to notice the same sound patterns. Point out some letters and words as you re-read the book. This will help her pick out specific words that are easily recognized and specific letter-sound relationships.

## How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas that will help you make repeated readings interesting and engaging to a preschool child.

- Encourage the child to take an active part in repeated book readings. Provide chances for him to interject, predict what's next, and ask questions.
- Repeated readings are valuable because they allow preschool children to become familiar with a book. They will start to understand the story better and think more about it. A great place to start is by reading a child's favorite book. Ask questions about it as you read and help him make connections between the story and his own life.
- Let the child pick the story. Preschool children will often choose the same book over and over on their own.
- Be excited about the story even when you're reading it for the umpteenth time. Reading aloud involves much more than saying words and turning pages. When you show excitement about the pictures, story, setting, and characters, you will excite the child, too.
- Let children "read" or tell the story to you. Children get to know the words or plot to a story that has been read to them many times. They enjoy saying the words and turning the pages, just as if they were reading the book.



## How do you know the practice worked?

- Do the children bring the same book to be read over and over?
- Do they seem to have "picked up" new vocabulary words or an understanding of the story?
- Do the children share comments about the story or tell what's going to happen next?

## Take a look at more repeated reading

### *From Listening to "Reading"*

Ms. Nelson's 3-year-old class is fascinated by the caterpillars that they find on the playground. During circle time one day she reads *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, taking time to let the children enjoy each picture. When they reach the end of the story, one of the children asks Ms. Nelson to read it again. She opens the book to the first page. She begins reading to the group of children who are eager to hear the story again. This time she points out new things in the pictures. The next day, the children are happy when Ms. Nelson gets the book out. They quickly join her on the circle time rug. She reads it to them again, pausing at the end of each page to let the children enjoy the pictures. They talk about what is happening in the story and about "their" caterpillars on the playground. After a few days, Ms. Nelson hears some of the children "reading" the book aloud to each other or to themselves.



### *A Clear Favorite*

Four-year-old Zara finds a book about a bear in the reading center of her classroom. She sits among the soft pillows on the rug and begins to look at the book. Noticing her interest, a teacher's aide in the classroom joins her. They look at the book together, with Zara "reading" the book to the aide. When they reach the end of the book, Zara hands the book to the aide. "You read it," she requests. The aide reads the book to Zara. She asks questions about the bear's adventures and points out interesting things in the pictures. When they are finished, the aide places the book on the shelf where it is easy to see. This helps support Zara's interest in reading the book again. They read the book together almost every day. With each reading, Zara remembers more details and takes over more of the "reading."

### *The Sign Says...*

Three-year-old Jenny has severe language delays and uses signing to communicate. Jenny has a book about trains, and lately it is the only book in which she is interested. Jenny brings the book to her early interventionist, Ellen, while she is at their home visit. "Do you want to read the train book again?" Ellen asks as she makes room for Jenny next to her on the sofa. Jenny's mother begins to read. As she reads, she points to the pictures and engages Jenny by asking, "What is that?" Jenny smiles and gives the sign for "train." "Yes, that's the train," Ellen says, while signing and carefully articulating the sounds in the word. When they have finished the book Jenny signs, "Again!" This time, Ellen reads the story, asking other questions that Jenny can answer by signing.



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# Tales for Talking

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Children's requests that you read to them provide perfect opportunities for interactive reading. This practice guide includes ideas you can use with preschool children to make reading together enjoyable and beneficial for your children.

## What is the practice?

While reading together, encourage the child to ask questions, talk about the illustrations, and speculate about what is going to happen next. Relate a time that she experienced something similar to what is happening to the story characters. Reinforce the vocabulary in the book by using and explaining unfamiliar words. You may even use concrete objects to represent the words in the story. Interactive reading helps a child build vocabulary, develop an understanding of story structure, and become more familiar with language patterns and the reading process.



## What does the practice look like?

A child sits with an adult while the adult reads a book. The child interjects a comment about the story and the adult responds to the child's comment in an encouraging way. The adult continues with the story, occasionally pausing to ask a question about the plot (e.g., "what do you think he should do now?") or to point out something in the illustration (e.g., "the girl looks really excited!"). When the child responds to the adult's question or comment, the adult answers with another comment or question. The back-and-forth dialogue between the child and adult keeps the child actively engaged in the story.

## How do you do the practice?

Interactive reading can occur throughout your daily routine with children one-on-one, or in small groups where every child has a chance to participate.

- Start by choosing stories with topics and characters that are interesting to the child. Often, letting the child pick the book is the first step in getting her involved.
- Read during a time when you are not hurried or needing to transition to another activity. There should be plenty of time for the children to think about and respond to your questions and comments, and to make comments or ask questions of their own.
- Pause periodically and ask open-ended questions to make sure the children are following the story and that they understand its meaning. For example, ask "What do you think that word means?" or "Why do you think the character did that?"
- Expand on a child's answers, making them part of a conversation.
- Suggest alternative possibilities starting with "What if ..." or "Suppose..." to see where the children will take the conversation.
- Pose increasingly more challenging questions.
- If a child uses picture symbols or an augmentative communication device, have messages available that let her communicate about the story. For example, program a communication device with words such as "turn page," "more," "read," "stop," "yes," "no," and phrases that can be used to discuss the story.

## How do you know the practice worked?

- Is the child staying engrossed in the story until the end?
- Does the child ask questions and make comments relevant to the story?
- Does the child answer questions posed to her?
- Does the child demonstrate a larger vocabulary or better conversation skills?

# Take a look at more reading and talking



## Read and Chat

Three-year-old Paulo chooses a picture book from his preschool's classroom library and brings it to a teacher assistant at naptime. "You want me to read to you before your nap?" she asks. Paulo nods. "What book did you pick?" she asks him, showing him the front of the book. "Cars," says Paulo happily. "Yes, it's the book about cars," says the assistant. She waits while he gets settled on her lap. Then, she opens the book to the first page of the story and points at the picture. "What color is this car?" she asks. "Red" says Paulo. "That's right. It's bright red, like a fire truck." She reads a couple of pages, then before turning to the next page she pauses and asks Paulo, "What will happen next?" Paulo says, "Cars go fast!" "Let's see" she replies, "Turn the page for me." Paulo turns the page and the assistant says, "You're right! What are they doing now?" "Go real fast," answers Paulo. "You might be right," replies the assistant as she continues reading the book.

## Group Story Time

Mrs. Jones lets the 4-year-olds in her class choose one of the big books for story time. They raise their hands for the one they want her to read as she holds up their choices. The one that gets the most hands is the book about a rainbow fish. Mrs. Jones reads a couple of pages and then asks, "How do you think those fish feel when he will not share with them?" She waits patiently as each of the children call out their thoughts. "Mad!" "They're sad!" "He isn't nice." When all of the kids have commented, Mrs. Jones asks, "Was there a time when someone didn't share with you?" Again she listens to the children's comments before she continues reading a couple of pages. "Oh, now he's sad. Why is that?" she asks. "No one will play with him," answers one child. "He lost his friends," says another. "What do you think he should do?" Mrs. Jones asks. Several of the children simultaneously shout out, "Share!" "That's a good idea, let's see what he does." She continues reading the book.



## Reading and Experiences

Five-year-old Micah has a visual impairment. He sits in the library center as his teacher reads him and a friend his favorite story about animals, using a book with textured pages. As his teacher reads, she lets the children feel each textured animal on a page. She reads the first part of a sentence, then pauses to let Micah say the rest. Micah smiles as he helps "read" the book by saying the words that he knows come next. When they get to a part about rabbits, Micah's teacher reminds him about petting the class's rabbit that morning. "How did Rosie feel?" asks his teacher. "She was soft and fuzzy," says Micah. "What other animals do you think would feel that way?" "Dogs and cats," he says. "What animals do you think would feel different?" Micah thinks for a minute, then answers, "bears and snakes." "I think you're right," says his teacher, and she continues to the next page in the book.



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# One for the Books

 *Reading and Print Awareness*

Reading word books with the preschoolers you work with helps them learn word recognition, vocabulary, and print concepts. Word books help preschoolers make the connection between words and pictures.

## What is the practice?

Preschoolers make connections between picture and text by using word books that have clearly labeled pictures. Word books teach word recognition and vocabulary by labeling each picture or object in the book. The 'story' they tell is often secondary to the clear, simple images with printed labels. These books promote learning by encouraging children to "name" or "read" the picture.

## What does the practice look like?

When you read a word book with children, point to each picture and read its label. Be sure to engage the child in the activity. You can do this by asking him questions about the pictures. What do you see in this picture? Does that ball look like the one we have on the playground? How is it different? This helps the preschool children in your classroom be active participants in book-reading activities.



## How do you do the practice?

Provide the preschoolers in your class with word books to choose from and place the books in easy-to-reach places. Word books can have many different themes. Choose books that reflect the children's interests.

- Find oversized word books to read during circle time. Ask the children to help you "read" or name the pictures to which you point. Show them that the names of the objects they identify are the same as what is printed below the pictures.
- Ask questions that encourage children to use the pictures to make up their own stories. Ask the children, "What do you think is happening here?" or "What do you think happens next?" These kinds of questions help preschoolers develop their storytelling skills and increase their interest in book-reading.
- Create your own word books by taking photographs of the children in your room and writing their names under each picture. You can also make theme books. Use pictures and labels of the children's favorite foods, toys, field trips, and more. Ask the children to find things to photograph and then make appropriate labels.

## How do you know the practice worked?

- Are the children in your classroom showing more interest in books?
- Do the children in your classroom point to letters, names and words in recognition?
- Do they pretend to read books, showing that they understand the connection between words and pictures?

# Take a look at more fun with word books

## Photo Word Books

Forrest's preschool class loves using word books to pretend they can already read. Most of his children can identify the pictures and some can identify the words that go with them. Forrest decides to make things more interesting by having the whole class participate in making a word book. They walk around the school and playground taking pictures of all their favorite spots—the gym, the slide, the art room, the kitchen, and all the other classes. Forrest prints a copy of each picture out on the computer printer for each child. At group time, he holds up the pictures one at a time for the children to identify. He prints the labels carefully below the picture with a thick marker. The children use his model to print their own labels under their copies of the pictures. Soon everyone has their own word book of all their favorite school spots.



## I Can Read This Book!

Three-year-old Jaden loves to pretend he can read just like his big sister. His preschool teacher, Marie, helps Jaden by giving him several word books with bright pictures on each page that are labeled underneath. Jaden uses these books to make up stories for the dolls in the housekeeping center. He identifies each picture and then tries to string them together into a story. "Look, Miss Marie," Jaden says, showing his teacher his favorite word book with pictures of toys. "I can read this whole book!" He identifies each picture out loud, while following the text with his finger as he has seen Marie do when she reads. Other children in the class have begun using the word books, too.

## Interest-Sparked Word Book

Three-and-a-half-year-old Cassidy, who has a hearing impairment, loves animals. Naturally, her favorite field trip was to the petting zoo with her preschool class. Her teacher, Elizabeth, used a homemade word book to help Cassidy make the connection between the animals she saw at the zoo and their names. Together, they took pictures of all the animals and put them in a photo album. Using pre-printed words and manual signs, Elizabeth helped Cassidy match the words she saw with the right pictures. Now when they read the book together, Cassidy can sign cow when she gets to the cow picture. She also traces the printed word cow with her other hand.

