

CONTENTS

<i>About the Authors and Illustrator</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>viii</i>
PART I: OVERVIEW	1
1 Overview of Emergent Literacy	3
2 Differentiating Emergent Literacy Instruction	9
3 How to Use this Book	21
PART II: CODE-RELATED LESSON PLANS	31
4 Phonological Awareness	33
5 Print Awareness	49
6 Alphabet Knowledge	69
7 Emergent Writing	89
PART III: ORAL LANGUAGE LESSON PLANS	109
8 Inferential Language	111
9 Vocabulary	131
<i>References</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>157</i>

Chapter 1

Overview of Emergent Literacy

In recent years, our nation's policymakers and educators alike have expressed concern regarding the preliteracy experiences of our youngest children. State departments of education have worked to create frameworks outlining the literacy skills children should have in place before entering kindergarten. Indeed, much focus has been placed on how to effectively implement research-based preliteracy practices in our nation's preschools. For example, federal support under the Early Reading First Initiative seeks to create centers of excellence by providing schools with funds for literacy coaches, curricula, and ongoing training for teachers. This focus on preliteracy abilities is particularly crucial for children who live in poverty. These children are less likely to have rich literacy encounters at home and are more likely to experience reading difficulties in the later grades (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

There exists a body of research that addresses the following question: What kinds of encounters with literacy do children need *before* formal reading instruction commences to allow them to make a smooth transition into reading? In this chapter, we provide an overview of emergent literacy and focus on the foundational skills associated with later reading success.

What Is Emergent Literacy?

Traditional conceptions of children's earliest encounters with literacy involved the idea of reading readiness. It was widely believed that young children were either "ready" or "not ready"

to learn to read. Many educators held the view that children should not be explicitly introduced to literacy-related activities until a level of maturation had taken place and until they were deemed cognitively ready to learn. This notion has largely been replaced with the idea that children develop a host of written and oral abilities prior to formal reading instruction during the emergent phase.

The *emergent literacy* perspective departs from reading readiness in two important ways. First, this perspective specifies no clear boundary between prereading and reading. Rather, literacy learning begins early in a child's life, with the recognition that important literacy accomplishments emerge prior to formal instruction (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; van Kleeck, 1990). A second way in which emergent literacy differs from reading readiness is the belief that reading, writing, and oral language develop in an interconnected fashion within informal social contexts (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). As children in a literate society learn about the world around them, they glean knowledge of how print works.

It is important not to confuse emergent literacy with early literacy or beginning reading. Children in the emergent stage of development are not beginning readers; they are emergent readers. As emergent "readers," children are not decoding words. Rather, they are reading logographically, as they identify environmental print based on visual cues (e.g., stop sign says "stop"; golden arches for McDonald's). When the same words are written without the visual cue, children can no longer read the words (Ehri, 2005; Ehri & Wilce, 1985). Consequently, individuals who work with children in the emergent literacy period of development are

not teaching reading per se; rather, they are helping children to develop a foundation of precursory understandings about sound, print, and oral language that will ease their transition into the formal rigors of reading instruction.

Near the end of the emergent literacy period of development, children may be using their rudimentary knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to partially decode and inventively spell some words, representing the salient sounds heard in speech (e.g., B for *baby*, V for *elevator*).

However, once children are systematically using letter sounds to decode words and invent spellings, they are beginning readers in the stage of early literacy development who need very different instruction, particularly in the code-related realm. They are beginning to grasp the *alphabetic principle*, which is the understanding that oral and written language connect in systematic ways (see Snow et al., 1998). This book, while focused on the emergent reader, contains some lessons suitable for children who are just beyond the emergent stage (i.e., children just entering the early literacy stage). For example, lessons involving inventing spellings and phonemic awareness activities would be appropriate for beginning readers. As children move into the conventional literacy stage of development, the instructional focus shifts to developing comprehension and appropriate rate and expression of reading. The lessons in this book do not fully address the instructional goals of children in the early and conventional literacy stages. Essential instructional components for children in the early and conventional stages involve phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). Figure 1-1 depicts the progression from emergent to conventional literacy.

In sum, emergent literacy encompasses the skills, attitudes, and environments that precede formal reading ability. In this book, we focus on

emergent literacy skills, which are the written and oral abilities children develop from birth to approximately age 5. These precursory skills form a foundation on which formal reading instruction can build when a child enters kindergarten and first grade.

Key Emergent Literacy Skills

The National Early Literacy Panel (2004) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 234 studies and identified several strong predictors of later reading and spelling achievement during the emergent period. From the work of this panel, we may identify key predictors of later reading and spelling achievement to include:

- Phonological awareness
- Print awareness
- Alphabet knowledge
- Emergent writing
- Oral language
 - Inferential language
 - Vocabulary

These predictors can be broadly conceptualized as two interrelated domains: code-related skills and oral language skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). *Code-related skills* are those that lay a foundation to help children “break the code” of reading. These skills include phonological awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and emergent writing. These emergent literacy skills are strongly related to children’s ability to decode in the early reading phase (NELP, 2004). *Oral language skills* comprise both expressive and receptive language abilities, to include inferential language and vocabulary knowledge. These skills are predictive of children’s

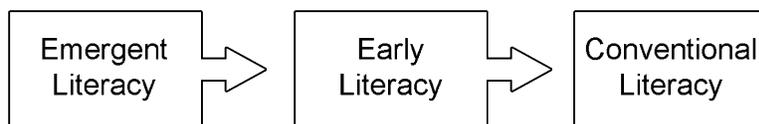


Figure 1-1. Stages of Literacy Development.

reading comprehension during the conventional reading phase of development. Although they are distinct categories, both code-related and oral language skills are interconnected during the preschool period (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Below, we provide information about each of these key emergent literacy skills.

Code-Related Emergent Literacy Skills

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term that refers to children's metalinguistic understandings about the sound structure of language. Phonological awareness appears to develop in a general sequence: rhyme, alliteration, words, syllables, onset-rime, and phoneme. However, this sequence is not "lock-step" and preschool children can develop sensitivities to many areas concurrently (Anthony, Lonigan, Driscoll, Phillips, & Burgess, 2003).

Phonemic awareness is the most complex level of phonological awareness in which children are able to manipulate individual sounds in words (e.g., D-O-G can blend to form the word *dog*). A level of phonemic awareness appears to be necessary for reading acquisition and is considered an essential component of reading instruction in the early grades (NRP, 2000). Thus, phonological awareness skills should be incorporated in preschool instruction to include rhyming, alliteration, word and syllable segmentation, and if appropriate phoneme manipulation. It is important to note that many preschoolers have not yet developed sensitivity at the phoneme level, and therefore instruction in phonological awareness should be tailored to meet the specific needs of children.

Print Awareness

Print awareness refers to children's early understandings of how print works in a book. This knowledge includes: print conventions (e.g., print is read from left to right and top to bottom on a page); print functions (e.g., print carries meaning); and print forms (e.g., letters make up words). As children gain more experience with books,

their knowledge of how print works increases in sophistication. These early understandings form the necessary foundation for later reading acquisition.

A child's print awareness reflects a growing ability to interact with print in meaningful ways (Justice & Ezell, 2001). For timely development in this area, young children benefit from immersion in print-rich classrooms, with adults mediating their interactions with print. Educators should provide children with many opportunities for learning about print as they explore print within books as well as in their environment (Adams, 1990).

Alphabet Knowledge

General consensus exists regarding the importance of alphabet knowledge in emergent literacy development (Adams, 1990; Snow et al., 1998). Alphabet knowledge includes children's understandings of the shapes, names, and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. This includes knowledge of upper- and lowercase letters. Among kindergartners and preschoolers, the ability to identify letter names is one of the strongest unique predictors of later reading achievement (Adams, 1990; Badian, 2000; Scarborough, 1998).

Research has not yet established a specific sequence in which children learn the letters of the alphabet. In general, children are more likely to learn uppercase letters before lowercase ones, and they are likely to know the first letter in their names more than any other letter of the alphabet (Justice, Pence, Bowles, & Wiggins, 2006). Some argue that a causal relationship exists between letter name knowledge and subsequent reading achievement. In particular, solid knowledge of letter names can help children more readily learn letter sounds, because many names contain their corresponding sounds. Treiman, Tincoff, and Richmond-Welty (1996) found that letter-name knowledge facilitates letter-sound knowledge, particularly when the letter name contains its sound and the phonological structure of the letter name is /Ci/ (e.g., B and D).

Emergent Writing

Young children actively explore their knowledge about how print works through emergent writing.

Writing becomes a method of testing hypotheses about print as children experiment with various forms and functions. Children's earliest writing attempts may include drawing and scribbling. As their knowledge about print grows, they write using letterlike forms. Then they begin to include letters in their writing, usually from their name. In fact, the first stable string of letters that children are able to write is usually their name (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). Evidence suggests that preschool children initially view their names as logograms, or pictures, and therefore children are able to write their names without knowing letter names or letter sounds (Bloodgood, 1999; Cabell, Justice, Zucker, & McGinty, in press; Treiman & Broderick, 1998). As children's understanding of the alphabetic principle grows, they begin to use a different strategy to write (Levin, Both-De Vries, Aram, & Bus, 2005); they invent spellings based on their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and phonological awareness. Salient sounds heard in the speech stream are represented (LFT for *elephant*), including initial sounds in words (B for *ball*).

Educators should keep a few things in mind regarding children's emergent writing. Development of emergent writing may follow a general sequence, but it is not necessarily linear. For example, children may go back and forth between scribbling and writing with letters depending on the task (Bus et al., 2001). In addition, it is important to keep in mind the reality that children learn through active exploration of writing. Although copying from a model is acceptable, teachers should encourage children to write freely at their level of emergent writing. This experimentation with writing helps to build early understandings about print. Finally, emergent writing does not take place in a vacuum; educators must understand that writing often takes place in a social context as children interact with peers while writing (Rowe, 2008).

Oral Language Skills

Children's ability to effectively use and comprehend language is an essential precursor to reading. Children who do not develop adequate oral

language skills tend to lag behind their peers in literacy. It is important that children have structured opportunities to develop these skills. Indeed, children's language is heavily influenced by the richness and complexity of the language they hear around them (e.g., Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2002). Children should be given ample opportunity to engage in rich conversations with their teachers as well as with peers, developing both inferential language and vocabulary knowledge.

Inferential Language

Children's ability to comprehend language can be viewed as a continuum spanning from the literal to the inferential (van Kleeck, Vander Woude, & Hammett, 2006). Often, interactions with preschool-aged children focus on literal language (What color is this? What is Sally doing?). While building literal language is important, it is critical to later reading comprehension that inferential language is also developed that requires children to focus beyond the "here and now." Inferencing skills can be developed in preschoolers long before they begin to read. Inferential language includes language to problem solve and reason as well as discuss cause and effect. Talking beyond the here and now can be accomplished through engaging children in discussion of the past/future; helping children to take another person's perspective; and using language to imagine (Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002). Teachers can also model this behavior through thinking aloud about things that are puzzling, thereby making their thought processes explicit to children. The storybook reading experience is a useful context in which to develop children's inferential language (see Chapter 3; van Kleeck et al., 2006).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is critical to reading ability (NRP, 2000) and is therefore an important part of emergent literacy instruction. Some may think that children will gain enough vocabulary knowledge from daily conversations or TV-watching. However, even a preschool child's book has more instances of rare words than a nighttime sitcom (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003)! Written lan-

guage, or the language of storybooks, is different from and more complex than the language we use while speaking. Therefore, reading books aloud to children can be an important vehicle for the development of vocabulary knowledge. Children learn words incidentally while listening to a book, but an explicit focus on preselected words can enhance word learning further (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005). It is also important to develop children's knowledge of the subtle distinctions between words (e.g., *stomp* versus *march*) as well as the multiple meanings of words.

During the preschool years, it is imperative that a firm foundation of emergent literacy skills be laid for all children. Classroom teachers, speech-language pathologists, reading specialists, and other educators can work together to accomplish this goal. Each child is unique and comes to school with a different knowledge base. Therefore, we must move beyond a "one size fits all" approach to teaching and learning. In Chapter 2, we discuss how educators can effectively differentiate emergent literacy instruction to meet the needs of all children.

Chapter 4

Phonological Awareness

Within the toddler and preschool years, children begin to be aware of the sounds units comprising spoken language, including rime units (hat/bat) and beginning sounds shared between words (hat/hill). At the same time, children begin to recognize that words vary in syllable length,

in that some words are “short” (noon) and other words are “long” (afternoon). The 15 activities presented here can be used repeatedly as presented or with the variations suggested to build these important sensitivities in young children.

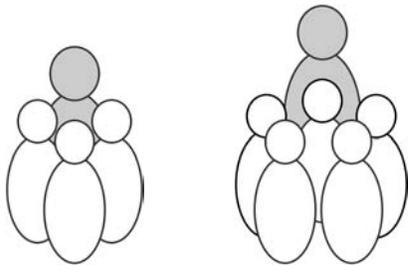
	Activity	Objective
1	Do You Hear What I Hear?	Children listen to and identify sounds in their environment.
2	Are Those Sounds the Same?	Children discriminate between sounds.
3	Rhyme along with the Song	Children listen to, sing, and identify rhymes in songs.
4	Fill-in-the-Rhyme	Children recite nursery rhymes and complete rhyming verses.
5	Take the Sentence Apart	Children segment individual words from sentences.
6	Long Words, Short Words	Children differentiate words as long or short based on number of syllables.
7	Change Two Words into One	Children blend parts of compound words into words.
8	Leave a Sound Out	Children recognize which segments are missing from spoken words.
9	Move to the Syllables	Children segment words into syllables.
10	Tell Us How It Begins	Children identify the beginning sounds of words.
11	Beginning Sound Scavenger Hunt	Children associate beginning sounds with words.
12	Allow Me to Introduce You	Children recognize when several words begin with the same sound.
13	Blending Words Back Together	Children blend individual sounds to form words.
14	Invent a Word	Children invent words by substituting sounds in familiar words.
15	Last but Not Least	Children identify the final sounds in words.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Objective

Children listen to and identify sounds in their environment.

Grouping



Materials Needed

A bag containing a bell, small musical instruments, and other common items that make sound

CD player (optional)

Recording of sound effects on a CD (optional)

Lesson Description

Have children sit in a circle on the floor and ask them to close their eyes. Turn off the classroom lights to better eliminate visual distractions. Ask the children to sit very quietly and tell them, “We are going to listen very carefully for all of the sounds around us. When you hear a sound that no one has mentioned, raise your hand quietly and I will have you tell everyone what sound you hear.” Begin by identifying a sound that you hear (e.g., a fan blowing, rain hitting the windows, people talking in a nearby room) and describe what it sounds like. Encourage children to discuss how the sounds they identify are alike and how they are different from one another.

After children have identified all of the sounds in the classroom, have them take turns making sounds using the items in your bag. Remind children to keep their eyes closed so that they can focus on the sound each object makes. Say, “Now we are going to take turns making sounds using some of the items in this bag. Keep your eyes closed and raise your hand when you think you can guess what is making that sound.”

Variations

Take children outside in small groups and have them sit down, close their eyes to better eliminate visual distractions, and try to identify environmental sounds (e.g., traffic, birds, doors opening and closing).

If you have an audio CD with sound effects, play the sound effects and have children try to guess which sound they are hearing. Remind everyone that it is important to listen quietly and to focus on the sounds that they hear.

Research Evidence

Kindergartners randomly assigned to a phonological awareness intervention including a focus on identifying, manipulating, and remembering environmental sounds (among other activities) made significantly larger gains than their peers in a business-as-usual control group on measures of phonological awareness, word reading, and letter naming speed (Nelson, Stage, Epstein, & Pierce, 2005).

Connection to State Standards

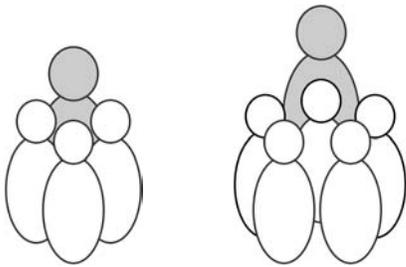
Listens to and identifies sounds that are in the environment. (West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten Standards)

Are Those Sounds the Same?

Objective

Children discriminate between sounds.

Grouping



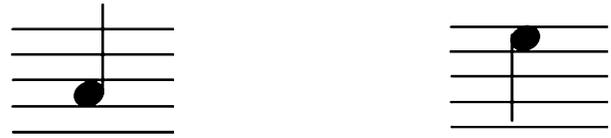
Materials Needed

Keyboard or xylophone

Lesson Description

Play two notes on the keyboard or xylophone and have children guess whether the sounds are the same. Next, play short segment pairs (two notes in length) and have children guess whether the pairs are the same. For example, begin by playing notes C and D followed by notes C and D and ask children whether the pairs were the same. Next, play notes C and D followed by notes G and F and ask children whether the pairs were the same. Increase the difficulty of the activity by playing three or four notes per set.

Are these two notes the same?



Variations

Have children determine whether spoken sounds in word pairs are the same. Call out either the same word twice or two words that differ by one sound and have children guess whether the words are the same. For example, after saying, “rake, rake,” children would guess that the sounds in the word pair are the same. After saying, “rake, lake,” children would guess that the sounds in the pair are different.

Research Evidence

Learning to focus on differences among sounds may pave the way for accomplishments in phonological awareness, which is an important facilitator of children’s later reading and spelling abilities (Bird, Bishop, & Freeman, 1995).

Connection to State Standards

Discriminates sounds in spoken language. (Wyoming Early Childhood Readiness Standards)

Are these two notes the same?

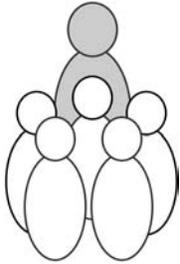


Rhyme along with the Song

Objective

Children listen to, sing, and identify rhymes in songs.

Grouping



Materials Needed

CD player

CD with rhyming songs

Rhyming book

Lesson Description

Have children listen to songs that have rhyming patterns and encourage them to sing along once they know the lyrics. Emphasize the rhyming words as you teach children the lyrics. For example, when singing the song “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” you might say the words *star*, *are*, *high*, and *sky* loudly and stretch the words out so that they are longer than the other words in the song. As another example, when singing the alphabet song, you might announce to the children that you are going to clap your hands when you say each letter that rhymes with *B* (C, D, E, G, P, T, V, Z). The next time through, you might instead let the children know that you are going to listen for letters that rhyme with the letter *A* (J, K) and that you are going to raise your arms above your head when you hear them.

Variations

Have children modify their voices each time they encounter a rhyming word or pair of words, either by singing louder or singing more quietly. For example, when singing the song “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” have children stand up each time they hear a word that rhymes with *star*. Sing the song slowly enough so that they have enough time to stand up and then sit back down again before they sing the next rhyming word. As another example, when singing the alphabet song, have children choose an action that they would like to do each time they hear a letter that rhymes with *B* (or *A* or *I*). Adjust the speed of the song so that they can complete the actions associated with the rhyming words. For example, if the children decide that they would like to turn around in a circle each time they say a letter that rhymes with *A*, have them sing the song slowly enough so that they can turn around twice in a row when they hear the letters *J* and *K*.

Read rhyming books with a songlike quality in a way that highlights the rhyming words in a fun and engaging manner. For example, using Dr. Seuss’ famous book, *Green Eggs and Ham*, you might open your eyes widely while looking at the children as you stress the rhyming words *box* and *fox*, *boat* and *goat*, *there* and *anywhere*, and *bam* and *am*. After several readings of the book, encourage children to complete the rhymes in the book for you. Pause at the end of the second line and allow children to fill in the rhyming word.



Research Evidence

Building on research that emphasizes the importance of exposure to rhyme for supporting phonological awareness, Yopp and Yopp (2000) provide examples of rhyming songs and rhyming activities that encourage children to focus on the sound structure of language.

Connection to State Standards

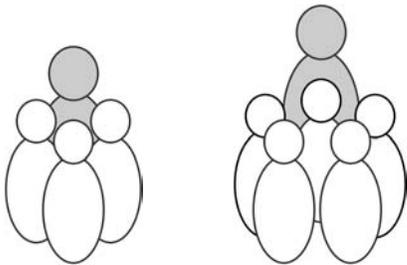
Hears and recites nursery rhymes, poems, jingles, and chants. (West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten Standards)

Fill-in-the-Rhyme

Objective

Children recite nursery rhymes and complete rhyming verses.

Grouping



Materials Needed

Book of nursery rhymes (e.g., Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes)

Pictures of objects appearing in the nursery rhymes (optional)

Lesson Description

Tell children that you are going to read nursery rhymes and that you are going to point to one of them when you need help completing a rhyme. For example, with the nursery rhyme, “Hickory Dickory Dock,” you would say, “Hickory dickory dock! The mouse ran up the _____,” and

then pause and point at one child at random. The child would say “clock!” and you would continue with the nursery rhyme. Try to select nursery rhymes that you have read a few times before so that all children are familiar with the rhymes and can participate in the activity.

Variations

Give each child a set of index cards, each containing a picture that could be used to complete a nursery rhyme, and have the children hold up the appropriate picture when you point to them for help. For example, to complete “Hickory Dickory Dock,” children would hold up the picture of a clock when you pause and point at them. To complete the nursery rhyme, “Jack Be Nimble,” children would hold up the picture of a candlestick when you pause and point at them.

Research Evidence

Knowledge of nursery rhymes contributes to phonological awareness and is related to children’s early reading skills (Maclean, Bryant, & Bradley, 1987).

Connection to State Standards

Repeats familiar songs, rhymes, and phrases from favorite storybooks. (South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines)

Chapter 8

Inferential Language

Inferential language is a relatively underemphasized aspect of young children's language development; yet as van Kleeck and colleagues (2006) point out, language comprehension spans a continuum from literal to inferential comprehension, and the achievement of skilled language comprehension (as well as reading comprehension) relies on one being proficient along the entire continuum. It is also possible that by explicitly fostering children's comprehension of inferential language, more

literal abilities will be improved through the generalization process. By some accounts, working on more complex language goals during intervention or instruction can facilitate achievements in less complex language goals; if this is the case, then focusing on inferential language may have positive impacts for literal language as well. The 15 activities presented here can be used repeatedly as presented or with the variations suggested to build inferential language abilities in young children.

Activity		Objective
1	Embedding Questions into Storybooks	Children extend and expand their understanding of a story by answering questions asked by adults throughout a book sharing experience.
2	What's My Story?	Children connect different parts or pieces of a story together.
3	Under Cover	Children use clues from pictures and the text to make predictions about book illustrations.
4	Who Am I?	Children use relevant information in a poem to guess a mystery character.
5	Reenact a Story	Children take the perspectives and infer emotions of different characters while recreating a story read aloud.
6	What Do You Know?	Children learn to access and apply their prior knowledge within the context of shared book reading of an informational text.
7	Dramatic Role Play	Children learn different points of view and draw conclusions about others' actions and feelings through role playing.

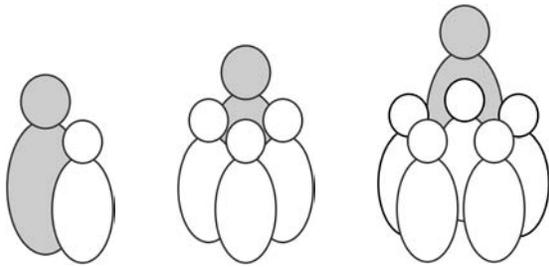
Activity		Objective
8	Mystery Game	Children put together clues about an object to solve its identity.
9	Think Aloud	Children listen to and become familiar with the inferential process during book reading.
10	Inference Charades	Children use body language and contextual clues to deduce the feelings or conditions of others.
11	Idioms	Children demonstrate an understanding of figurative language by answering simple questions about idioms.
12	Let's Experiment! Sink or Float	Children predict the outcome of a science experiment using their background knowledge and prior experience.
13	Hide-n-Seek	Children use clues in a poem to guess the label and location of an object.
14	Guess the Animal	Children use their background knowledge and observation skills to make inferences about the actions of others.
15	Mouse Predictions	Children use the pictures in the text and their background knowledge to make predictions.

Embedding Questions into Storybooks

Objective

Children extend and expand their understanding of a story by answering questions asked by adults throughout a book sharing experience.

Grouping



Materials Needed

Storybook

Sticky notes

Lesson Description

Select a storybook to read to the children. Prior to reading the book aloud, prepare for the experience by prereading, reflecting on and considering the book's story events. Next, create several questions that will encourage the children to think beyond the pictures and text. In particular, construct higher-level language questions that ask children to provide explanations or make conclusions about portions of the story. For instance, explanation questions may begin with *why* and elicit responses from children that contain words such as *because*, *so that*, or *since*. Using the book *Skippyjon Jones* (Schachner, 2003) as an example, questions eliciting explanation might include, "Uh-oh, Skippyjon Jones is in trouble with his Mama. Why is he in trouble?" and "Hmmm, why do you think Mama wants Skippyjon to stay out

of his closet?" In addition, generate questions for children to infer parts of a story using pieces of information from the text. Provide the children with one or two story clues and then ask them to make their best guess. Some children may be able to do this independently, whereas others may need support. Examples of questions asking children to draw conclusions could be, "At the beginning of the book it says, 'Skippyjon Jones woke up and slept with the birds.' Now on this page he says, 'I am not a Siamese cat . . . I am a Chihuahua!' What does Skippyjon like to make-believe about himself?" and "Here it says, 'With a walk into his closet, his thoughts took him down a lonesome desert road, far, far away in old Mexico . . . ' What do you think Skippyjon is doing in his mind?" Then write each question on a sticky note. Determine points in the text at which to stop and ask the questions and place the sticky notes on the corresponding pages. Once preparation has been completed, read the storybook asking the children the embedded questions and offering assistance as needed.

Variations

In addition to higher-level language questions, mix literal questions into the book reading experience. Questions that ask children to label (e.g., "What is that?"), describe actions (e.g., "What is he doing?"), or complete sentences ("His mama said, 'You are not a bird, you are a _____.'") help children of varying abilities participate in book sharing. These types of questions have perceptual salience, which makes answering them less demanding.

Insert comments not directly related to the text into the shared book reading. In this way, children are not required to respond but rather simply listen. The focus of the comments might include the character's feelings (e.g., "I bet Skippyjon felt very sad when his mama put him in time-out.") or similarities and differences between objects or ideas (such as "I don't think it's too far off for Skippyjon, a kitten, to pretend he's a

Chihuahua. Both kittens and Chihuahuas are small and have pointy ears and tails. They both look a lot alike.”).

Research Evidence

Van Kleeck and colleagues (2006) embedded questions focused on inferential language into book reading interactions for children with language

impairments. These youngsters scored higher on measures of vocabulary and inferential language than children in a control condition.

Connection to State Standards

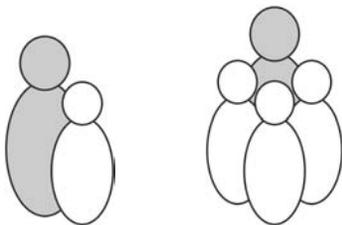
Begins to answer questions related to a story that has been read or told to him/her. (Delaware Early Learning Foundations)

What's My Story?

Objective

Children connect different parts or pieces of a story together.

Grouping



Materials Needed

Four to five different story-related items from three or four books previously read to the children

Three or four paper bags

Lesson Description

Collect at least four or five different items from three or four books you've previously read to the children. If possible, the items for each book should

represent major parts in the story. Place story-related items from each story into their own bag. Give each child a bag. Tell children, “You each have a bag. Inside the bag are objects that go with a story we've read together. We're going to take turns taking an item out of the bag, looking at it, and thinking about the story that goes along with it.” As each child removes an object, encourage her to name it as well as tell what she remembers about it from the story. After each child has emptied the items from her bag, ask each one to guess the title of the story that the objects represent. If children have difficulty, show them the actual books, read the titles, and allow them to look through the pictures to match the book to the objects.

Variations

In each child's bag include an item unrelated to the others but that goes along with one of the objects in another child's bag. Have children identify the object that doesn't belong and tell why it doesn't fit with the other items. Then have that child give the item to another child who has similar objects.

Have children create a story bag at home from a story read with their parents that includes story-related items and a copy of the book cover. Ask the children to bring the bags to school for other children to guess.

Research Evidence

Bridging various elements of a story to one another is an important component of inferencing and text comprehension (van Kleeck, 2006).

Connection to State Standards

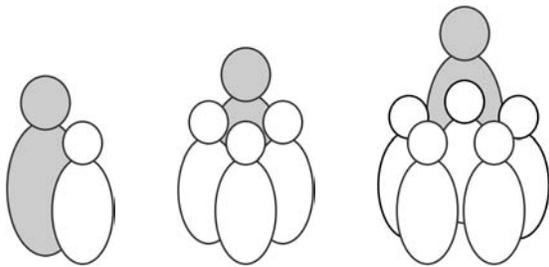
Begins to recognize books by their covers and identifies the beginning, middle, and end of stories and books. (Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards)

Under Cover

Objective

Children use clues from pictures and the text to make predictions about book illustrations.

Grouping



Materials Needed

Storybook
 Piece of paper or fabric
 Tape

Lesson Description

Select and read aloud any storybook in which the illustrations correspond well with the text. Before reading the book, preselect four or five pictures in the book and cover a part of them with a piece of opaque paper or fabric using tape so that children can only see a piece of the picture. Then read the text on the page and ask children to guess and

describe the contents of the picture under cover. Before the children guess, provide them with a model by thinking aloud. For example, "I think the picture might show a mouse with a frown on his face because the story said that the mouse was very angry." Encourage children to use the clues they see as well as hear in the text to guess the picture. In this way, children must use the clues they hear in the book to predict what they might see in the picture. Reveal the picture when a child correctly predicts the picture under cover.

Variations

Instead of covering part of the picture, cover the entire illustration. Have children use the text from the book to help describe the picture. Draw children's attention to the most important words on the page to help them guess the picture.

Have children draw their own pictures of what they think the covered picture might be. Encourage the children to describe their pictures. Then compare the children's drawings to the actual illustration on the page. This would be most effective with a highly descriptive text. Accept any plausible drawings; avoid a "one right answer" approach.

Research Evidence

Drawing conclusions about information not perceptually salient is important to reading comprehension as well as children's ability to participate in classroom discourse (Nystrand, 2006).

Connection to State Standards

Makes predictions from pictures and titles. (Georgia's PreK Program Content Standards)

Who Am I?

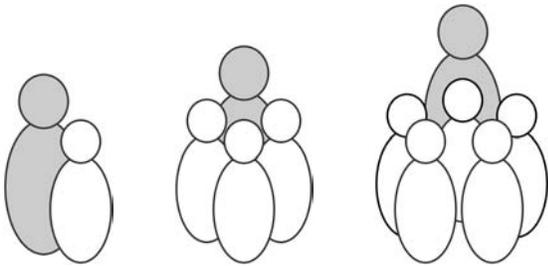
Objective

Children use relevant information in a poem to guess a mystery character.

So the king sent his men to see me.

They tried and tried and then said with a sigh,
"Oh my, he won't go back together."

Grouping



Variations

After reading the poem to the children, ask them to draw a picture of the mystery character. Encourage children to share and explain their pictures with one another, asking, "What made you draw that?" In this way, children must verbalize the clues in the poem they used to inform their pictures.

As a class, choose a character and create a mystery poem. Present the class poem to another classroom for the children and teacher to solve.

Materials Needed

Fairytales
Chart paper

Lesson Description

After reading various fairytales to children, create poems about the characters and write them on chart paper. Read the poems to the children and ask them to guess the fairytale character. If the children have difficulty, make a list of the things you know about the character from the poem or offer the children a number of fairytale characters to choose from.

Example:

I sat on a wall and had a great fall.

Research Evidence

Children with language-learning disabilities often demonstrate more difficulty identifying relevant information in text compared to peers; this can significantly affect their ability to make inferences and comprehend written information (Wright & Newhoff, 2001).

Connection to State Standards

Listens to, responds to, and discusses a variety of literature including fairy tales, folk tales, legends and myths, rhymes and poems, fiction and non-fiction. (Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards)