

6 Ways To Get The Very Most Out Of “Book Time” With Your Child

By Ernest Roebuck, CCC-SLP

It is never too early to start reading to your child, even if you think they are too young to understand! Reading is crucial for a developing child’s language skills and academic success, and “Book Time” can be even more fun and engaging with these tips.

1. Read To Your Child Every Day

If you do only one thing on this list, let this be it. Even just a little reading each day goes a very long way towards your child’s language and literacy development. And that, in turn, will go a long way towards their academic success.

2. Use the Pictures

Pictures don’t just dress up the page, they are tools that aid your child’s comprehension by illustrating the concepts behind the words. Help your child make the connection between what you read and what they see – Ask questions about the pictures, have your child describe the images, and point out interesting details or colors.

3. Use Sounds and Gestures

The more you can do to make a book ‘multi-sensory,’ the more you contribute to your child’s comprehension. While pictures engage the eye, adding sounds and gestures to a story will help to lift it off the page. Verbs are especially fun to act out; when you come across one – like “sneeze” – have some fun letting out a loud “ACHOOO!” And don’t be surprised if your little one wants to join in, too.



4. Use What They Know

Another great way to make a book more “real” for your child is to connect the material to something they already know about. If the book features a horse, for example, you can ask: “Do you remember when we went to the farm? We saw a big, brown horse just like the one in the book!”

5. Use WH Questions to Recap

Pause every once in a while to have your child to recall some of what you’ve read so far. After a page, a paragraph, or even a couple of sentences, prompt them with WH questions about specifics, like: “Who is the story about? What are they doing? Where is this story happening?” Flip back through the pages to help them out, if needed.

6. Use WH Questions to Dig Deeper

As your child gets older, try asking questions that will allow them to practice forming opinions about what you’re reading. The focus here is not so much on recalling specific facts, but on assessing the information and making inferences from it. Again, use WH questions like: “Why did she go outside? What do you think she will do next? Why?”

In short: Read early and often, and provide lots of opportunities to “Engage With The Page!”

References

Lawson-Adams, J., & Dickinson, D.K. (2019). Sound stories: using nonverbal sound effects to support English word learning in first-grade music classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*. doi: 10.1002/rrq.280

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