

Especially for parents of preschoolers! 

Book Is the Word

Reading and Storytelling

Reading and sharing word books with your preschooler helps him recognize familiar words, learn new words, and discover print rules. Word books help children ages 3-5 connect words and pictures.

What is the practice?

Word books have clearly labeled pictures placed so preschoolers can easily connect each picture with its text. The labels help preschoolers recognize and learn new words. These books support learning by making children feel confident they can “name” or “read” the picture. Reading books to your child is important for building future reading skill.

What does the practice look like?

When you share a word book with your child, point to each picture. Read aloud the label that goes with it. Be sure to draw your child into the activity by asking him questions about the pictures. Help your child to be involved in reading by pointing to words that match pictures of objects your child knows. By naming what is in the picture, your child will have “read” its printed label.



How do you do the practice?

Give your child many word books to choose from. Choose word books that have pictures about things that interest your preschooler or that have themes your child likes. Remember to ask questions about the pictures to keep the activity interesting and engaging for your child.

- Ask your preschooler to “read” the word book to you and ask questions about its pictures and details.
- Point to objects on the page and let your preschooler name them.
- Ask wh- questions like “What is this?” or “Where have you seen that?” It will help your child connect the pictures and things he knows about.
- Let your child pick out the word books that he’s interested in reading.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your preschooler showing more interest in books and “reading”?
- Does he point to the pictures and attempt to name them?
- Does he recognize words from his books when he spots them in other places?

Take a look at more fun with word books

On the Spot

Four-year-old Maleko chooses a picture book for his father to read with him before his nap. "It's doggy book," he tells his dad. "Okay," says Dad, as they snuggle together and open the book. Dad points to a word that labels an object on the first page. "Rake" he reads out loud. "Hey, do you remember helping me rake the leaves in the garden?" "Yep!" says Maleko, "We made a big pile." "That's right," says his dad. "This rake is blue, but ours is red." He points to another label on the page and asks, "What does this say?" "Hat," answers Maleko looking at the picture next to it. "Good reading! That's the pup's straw hat to keep off the sun," Dad says. "This is his wheelbarrow," he says, pointing to the picture as he reads the label. "I wonder what the puppy will put in it." "Leaves!" says Maleko with excitement, "He'll rake a big pile, too. Just like us!"



Follow That Interest!



Mattie, who's 4½ years old, and her mother are at the library. Mattie finds a word book about the ocean. Seeing her interest in the book, Mom sits on a bench next to Mattie. "Let's read about the ocean and beaches," she tells her daughter. She opens the book and points to a picture. "Dolphin," reads mom. "That's a dolphin leaping out of the water. Can you leap like that, Mattie?" Mattie smiles and shakes her head. Her mom points to another picture, "What animal is that?" "Octopus!" says Mattie. "Let's read and see," says her mom. She points at the label by the picture. "Yes, you're right. See? This word is octopus." Then she asks, "How many legs does the octopus have?" "Help me count them," says Mattie.

Cartoon Favorite

Three-year-old Jack has developmental delays. Jack loves all things that have his favorite cartoon character on them. Right now the only book he is interested in is about his favorite character. Jack will hand this book to his mom when they are in the living room together. "Do you want me to read the spider book again? Okay," says Jack's mom. Jack sits close to his mom and she begins to read. As she reads she points to the pictures and engages Jack by asking, "Who is that?" She knows that Jack will get excited and that he loves to say, "That's the spider!" When they have finished the book, Jack says, "Read again, Mommy!"

