

Especially for parents of preschoolers! 

Read It Again!

Reading and Storytelling

Young children love to hear their favorite books read aloud again and again. Repeated readings help preschoolers master the story lines, ideas, and language of well-loved stories.

What is the practice?

Repeated reading lets children learn the words, story structure, and use of language in a story. Parents can read a story many times so their preschool child can 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. So hearing books read several times helps them learn and notice new things.



What does the practice look like?

When hearing a story several times, a child can figure out what a new word means by the rest of the words he hears. Sharing a book again and again lets your child notice repeated sound patterns. If you point out some letters and words each time you read a book, he can begin to match letters to sounds.

How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas that will help you make repeated readings interesting and fun for your young child.

- Encourage your child to be part of the fun as you share favorite books. Welcome her comments and questions. Ask her what happens next.
- Preschool children are most likely to enjoy repeated reading when the books are about things they find familiar and interesting. A great place to start is by reading the child's favorite book.
- Let the child choose the story. Preschool children will often choose the same book again and again on their own.
- Be excited about the story, even when you're reading it for the umpteenth time. Read-aloud sessions are much more than saying words and turning pages. When you express your own excitement about the pictures, story, setting, and characters, the child will be excited too.
- Let your child "read" the story to you. Children get to know the words and plots of stories that have been read to them many times. They enjoy saying the words and turning the pages, just as if they were reading the book.
- Involve your child in repeated reading when you are both relaxed and unhurried. Perfect times? How about when you snuggle together at bedtime or when you're passing time in a waiting room.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child bring you the same book to be read over and over?
- Does she seem to have "picked up" new vocabulary words or an understanding of the story?
- Does the child make comments about the story or tell what's going to happen next?

Take a look at more repeated reading

One More Time!

Five-year-old Aaron loves pretending to build things with his toy tool kit. In the children's section of a bookstore one afternoon, Aaron finds a book about his favorite television show. Aaron's father sees him paging through the book and goes to sit beside his son. He begins to read the story to Aaron, taking time to let him enjoy each picture. When they reach the end of the story, Aaron takes the book and opens it to the beginning. His father takes the hint and reads the story again, this time pointing out different things in the pictures. When they reach the end of the story, Dad asks if he'd like to buy the book. Aaron's face lights up as he agrees. On the way home in the car, Aaron looks through his new book and "reads" the story aloud. At bedtime that night, Aaron picks the new book for his bedtime story. Dad happily reads it to him for the third time that day. He pauses on each page to let Aaron enjoy the pictures and talk about what's happening in the story.



Role-Playing While Reading

Four-year-old Janet and her mother wait together at the doctor's office for Janet's yearly check-up. The office is busy and the wait is long. Janet's mother has brought along a few of Janet's favorite books. She pulls the books from her bag and asks Janet to choose one for them to read together. Janet picks the one about a princess that they have been reading almost every night at bedtime. Janet's mother begins to read the book aloud. She makes Janet laugh by talking in funny voices for each of the characters. She offers to let Janet take the princess role. She pauses so that Janet can "read" the princess' lines in the story. Janet knows all the princess' lines by heart and eagerly says each one in her most princess-like voice. Afterward, they read

the story yet again, with Janet "reading" a different role while her mother is the princess. Mother and daughter have a great time with the story until Janet's name is called by the nurse.

Let's Read Again!

Three-year-old Javier has severe language delays and uses hand signs to communicate. Javier was given a book about a baby rabbit by his father. This week it's the only book he is interested in. Javier brings the book to his mom and dad at nap time. "Do you want me to read the bunny book again?" asks his father as he stretches out next to Javier. Javier snuggles in between his parents and Dad begins to read. Dad points to the pictures and engages Javier by asking, "Who is that?" Javier smiles and makes the sign for *rabbit*. "Yes, that's the rabbit," his father answers. He carefully articulates the sounds in the word *rabbit* while making the sign. When they have finished the book, Javier signs, "Again, Dad!" His father starts the story from the beginning. This time he asks Javier different questions he can answer by signing.

