

*Especially for practitioners working with preschoolers!* 

# 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.

