

Especially for practitioners working with young children! 

Read and Repeat

 *Reading and Print Awareness*

Children love to hear their favorite books over and over again. Repeated readings help young children ages 3-5 master the narrative, ideas, and language of a story.

What is the practice?

Repeated reading exposes children to books multiple times so that they become familiar with the vocabulary, repeated themes, and use of language. Early childhood practitioners can use repeated readings of a story to help preschool children understand, talk about, and participate in the story. Since many young children, especially those with speech and language delays, are not able to grasp an entire story on the first reading, hearing books read several times helps children understand and notice new things.

What does the practice look like?

When you read a story to a child several times, she can often figure out what an unfamiliar word means by the rest of the words that are read. Repeated reading gives the child opportunities to notice repeated sound patterns. If you point out some letters and words as you read the book repeatedly, she will be able to pick out specific words that are easily recognized and specific letter-sound relationships.

How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas that will help you make repeated readings interesting and engaging to a preschool child.

- During repeated book readings, encourage children to participate actively. Provide opportunities for them to interject, predict what's next, ask for clarification, etc.
- Repeated readings are valuable because they allow preschool children to become so familiar with a particular book they can start to understand it better and think more about the story. A great place to start is by reading the child's favorite book, and starting to ask questions about it as you read, helping him make connections between the story and his own life.
- Let the child choose the story. Preschool children will often choose the same book over and over on their own.
- Be enthusiastic about the story even when you're reading it for the umpteenth time. Read-aloud sessions involve 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 children "read" the story to you. Children get to know the words or plot to a story that has been read repeatedly, and they enjoy saying the words and turning the pages, just as if they were reading the book.



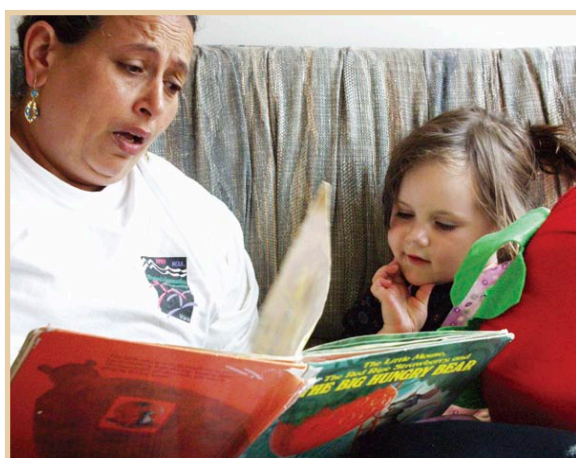
How do you know the practice worked?

- Do the children bring the same book to be read over and over?
- Do they seem to have "picked up" new vocabulary words or understanding of the story?
- Do the children interject comments about the story or tell what's going to happen next?

Take a look at more repeated reading

From Listening to "Reading"

Ms. Nelson's 3-year old class has been fascinated by the caterpillars that they find on the playground. During circle time one day, she reads *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, taking time to let the children enjoy each picture. When they reach the end of the story, one of the children asks Ms. Nelson to read it again. She opens the book to the beginning and begins reading to the several children who remain in place, eager for the second reading. This time she points out different things in the pictures. The next day, the children are happy when Ms Nelson gets the book out, and quickly join her on the circle-time rug. She reads it to them again, pausing at the end of each page to let the children enjoy the pictures, talk about what's happening in the story, and talk about "their" caterpillars on the playground. After a few days, Ms. Nelson overhears some of the children "reading" the book aloud to each other or to themselves.



A Clear Favorite

Four-year-old Zara finds a book about a bear in the reading center of her classroom. She sits comfortably among the pillows on the rug and begins to look at the book. Noticing her interest, an assistant in the classroom joins her. They look at the book together, with Zara "reading" the book to the assistant. When they reach the end of the book, Zara hands the book to the assistant. "You read it," she requests. The assistant reads the book to Zara while asking questions about the bear's adventures and pointing out interesting things in the pictures. When they are finished, the assistant places the book in an easily seen location on the book shelf to support Zara's interest in reading the book. They read the book together almost every day, with Zara remembering more details and taking over more of the reading each time.

The Sign Says...

Three-year-old Joshua has severe language delays and uses signing to communicate. Joshua has a book about trains from his big sister, and lately it's the only book he is interested in. Joshua brings the book to his early interventionist while she is at their home visit. "Do you want me to read the train book again?" asks the interventionist as she makes room for Joshua next to her on the sofa and begins to read. As she reads, she points to the pictures and engages Joshua by asking, "What is that?" Joshua smiles and gives the sign for "train." "Yes, that's the train," says the interventionist while signing and carefully articulating the sounds in the word. When they have finished the book Joshua signs, "Again!" This time, his mother joins them on the couch and reads the story from the beginning, asking questions that Joshua can answer by signing.

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Tales for Talking

Reading and Print Awareness

When a child asks to be read to, it provides the perfect opportunity for interactive reading. This practice guide includes ideas you can use with preschool children that will make reading together enjoyable and beneficial for your children.

What is the practice?

While reading together, encourage the child to ask questions, talk about the illustrations, speculate about what's going to happen next, or relate a time that she experienced something similar to what is happening to the story characters. Reinforce the vocabulary in the book by using and explaining unfamiliar words. You may even use concrete objects to represent the words in the story. Interactive reading helps a child build vocabulary, develop an understanding of story structure, and become more familiar with language patterns and the reading process.



What does the practice look like?

A child sits with an adult while the adult reads a book. The child interjects a comment about the story and the adult responds to the child's comment in an encouraging way. The adult continues with the story, occasionally pausing to ask a question about the plot (e.g., "what do you think he should do now?") or to point out something in the illustration (e.g., "the girl looks really excited!"). When the child responds to the adult's question or comment, the adult answers with another comment or question. The back-and-forth dialogue between the child and adult keeps the child actively engaged in the story.

How do you do the practice?

Interactive reading can occur throughout your daily routine with children one-on-one, or in small groups where every child has a chance to participate.

- Start by choosing stories with topics and characters that are interesting to the child. Often, letting the child pick the book is the first step in getting her involved.
- Read during a time when you are not hurried or needing to transition to another activity, so that there is plenty of time for the children to think about and respond to your questions and comments, and to make comments or ask questions of their own.
- Pause periodically and ask open-ended questions to make sure the children are following the story and understand its meaning. For example, ask "What do you think that word means?" or "Why do you think the character did that?"
- Expand on a child's answers, making it part of a conversation.
- Suggest alternative possibilities starting with "What if ..." or "Suppose" to see where the children will take the conversation.
- Pose increasingly more challenging questions.
- If a child uses picture symbols or an augmentative communication device, have messages available that let her communicate about the story. For example, program a communication device with words such as "turn page," "more," "read," "stop," "yes," "no," and common phrases that can be used to discuss the story.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is the child staying engrossed in the story until the end?
- Does the child ask questions, make comments relevant to the story?
- Does the child answer questions posed to her?
- Does the child demonstrate a larger vocabulary or better conversation skills?

Take a look at more reading and talking

Read and Chat

Three-year-old Paulo chooses a picture book from his preschool's classroom library and brings it to a teacher assistant at naptime. "You want me to read to you before your nap?" she asks. Paulo nods. "What book did you pick?" she asks him, showing him the front of the book. "Cars," says Paulo happily. "Yes, it's the book about cars," says the assistant. She waits while he gets settled on her lap and then opens the book to the first page of the story and points at the picture. "What color is this car?" she asks. "Red" says Paulo. "That's right. It's bright red, like a fire truck." She reads a couple of pages, then before turning to the next page she pauses and asks Paulo, "What will happen next?" Paulo says, "Cars go fast!" "Let's see" she replies, "Turn the page for me." Paulo turns the page and the assistant says, "You're right! What are they doing now?" "Go real fast," answers Paulo. "You might be right," replies the assistant as she continues reading the book.



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Group Story Time

Mrs. Jones lets the four-year-olds in her class choose one of the big books for story time. They raise their hands for the one they want her to read as she holds up their choices. The one that gets the most hands is the book about a rainbow fish. Mrs. Jones reads a couple of pages and then asks, "How do you think those fish feel when he won't share with them?" She waits patiently as each of the children call out their thoughts. "Mad!" "They're sad!" "He isn't nice." When all of the kids have commented, Mrs. Jones asks, "Was there a time when someone didn't share with you?" Again she listens to the children's comments, then continues reading a couple of pages. "Oh, now he's sad. Why is that?" she asks. "No one will play with him," answers one child. "He lost his friends," says another. "What do you think he should do?" Mrs. Jones asks. Several of the children simultaneously shout out, "Share!" "That's a good idea, let's see what he does." She continues reading the book.

Reading and Experiences

Five-year-old Mia has a visual impairment. She sits in the library center as her teacher reads her and a friend her favorite story about animals, using a book with textured pages. As her teacher reads, she lets the children feel each textured animal on a page. Her teacher reads the first part of a sentence, then pauses to let Mia say the rest. Mia smiles as she helps "read" the book by saying the words that she knows come next. When they get to a part about rabbits, Mia's teacher reminds her about petting the class's rabbit that morning. "How did Rosie feel?" asks her teacher. "She was soft and fuzzy," says Mia. "What other animals do you think would feel that way?" "Dogs and cats," says Mia. "What animals do you think would feel different?" Mia thinks for a minute, then answers, "bears and snakes." "I think you're right," says her teacher, and she continues to the next page in the book.

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One for the Books

Reading and Print Awareness

Reading and sharing 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 can make connections between picture and text by using word books with 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 support learning by allowing children to "name" or "read" the picture.

What does the practice look like?

When you share a word book with children, point to each picture and read its label. Be sure to engage the child in the activity by asking him questions about the pictures (for example: *What do you see in this picture? Does that ball look like the one we have on the playground? How is it different?*) The preschoolers in your classroom should be active participants in book-reading activities.



How do you do the practice?

Provide the preschoolers in your class with a variety of word books to choose from and place the books in easy-to-reach places around the room. Word books can have many different themes, so choose books that reflect the children's interest.

- Find oversized word books to read during circle time and ask the children to help you "read" or name the pictures you point to. 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 when they are looking at the books on their own. "What do you think is happening here?" and "What do you think he'll do next?" are the kinds of questions that help preschoolers develop their storytelling skills and increase their interest in the book-reading process.
- Create your own word book by taking photographs of the children in your room and writing their names under each picture. You can also make class theme books, with pictures and labels of everyone's favorite foods, toys, field trips, etc. Engage the children in finding things to photograph and then making appropriate labels.

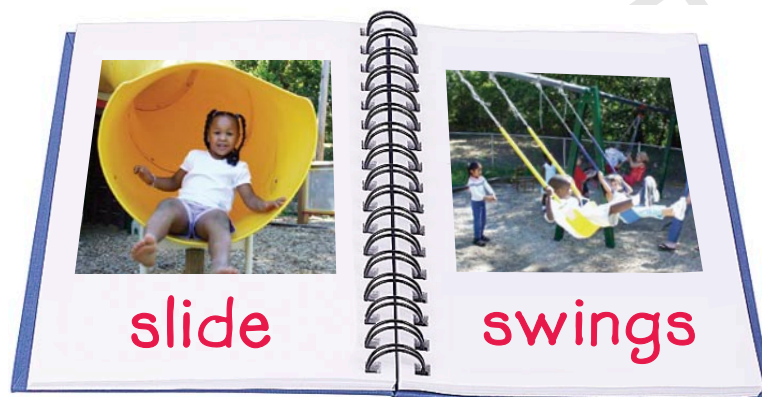
How do you know the practice worked?

- 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, and at group time, 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, and soon everyone has their own word book of all their favorite school spots.



"I Can Read This Whole Book!"

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Three-year-old Jade loves to pretend she can read just like her big sister. Her preschool teacher, Maria, helps Jade by giving her several word books, with bright pictures on each page that are labeled underneath. Jade uses these books to make up stories for the dolls in the housekeeping center. She identifies each picture and then tries to string them together into a story. "Look, Maria," Jade says, showing her teacher her favorite word book with pictures of toys. "I can read this whole book!" She identifies each picture out loud, while following the text with her finger as she has seen Maria 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, so 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 *horse* when she gets to the horse picture. She also traces the printed word *horse* with her other hand.

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