

COACH'S CORNER

Coach's Corner is a DIEEC blog dedicated to providing fresh ideas for all early childhood education professionals.

Reading, Language and Literacy Tips for Children's Book Week

By Meghan Pallante

Every November DIEEC joins the national celebration of Children's Book Week. It is one of our favorite events because we have the opportunity to go out to early childhood education programs across the state and read to children. Shared storybook reading is one of the best ways to encourage language and emergent literacy in children. It can be even more effective if we make it fun and interactive by encouraging conversation and questions about the story.



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Tips for Shared Storybook Reading

While engaging in shared storybook reading we can extend children's learning in many different ways. Below are some tips for shared storybook reading.

- **Ask open-ended questions-** Asking open-ended questions about the story or illustrations can encourage children to expand on their thoughts by connecting the story to things in their own lives. For example, if a character in a story is feeling scared, we can ask the child about a time when they felt scared. This creates meaningful conversation between the educator and the child which can support language acquisition.
- **Plan group and individual storytimes-** Provide opportunities for reading throughout the day. Many times we think of storybook reading as a group activity, but sitting with an individual child and reading a story is a great way to encourage more reading time as well as providing an opportunity for bonding.
- **Take cues from the children-** If the children are not interested during one of your reading sessions, it's okay to stop and finish a book later, choose a different book entirely, or allow younger children to leave the group and play nearby while others choose to stay longer.
- **Go beyond storybooks-** Just like adults, different children will have different interests. Having a variety of book types and genres available makes it more likely that you have books for all children to enjoy. These may include, but are not limited to, narrative, informational, picture books, wordless books, and poetry.
- **Provide diverse books-** As always, we want to make sure we are being mindful of diversity in terms of race, culture, family structure, gender, and ability. This helps to ensure that all children can see themselves and their classmates represented.
- **Consider the needs of your youngest readers-** Encourage books that they can explore. Board books and books with different textures are great for little hands. Keep in mind that these books will need to be replaced often due to expected wear and tear. Even if they are not sitting and listening to the story, educators can still encourage language development by talking about what they see in the pictures.

Encouraging Language and Literacy

In addition to shared storybook reading, there are many other ways to encourage language and literacy skills with young children. We want to be sure to weave language and literacy concepts throughout our days in meaningful and playful ways. Below are some tips for encouraging language and literacy in your program.

- **Add books to areas of the classroom other than the library.** Books can be used in many different ways. Consider adding books about construction to the block area or factual books with science materials. You could also add cookbooks to the kitchen/dramatic play area or books with pictures of famous artwork with the art and drawing materials. This gives children additional opportunities to interact with reading materials.
- **Plan some hands-on activities related to books.** For example, if you are reading Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, you could put out a coconut tree cut-out on a magnetic board and let the children use magnetic letters to act out the story or put out an invitation to create a coconut tree in the art area.
- **Support language and literacy at home.** Think of ways to involve and encourage families. Some examples are listed below.
 - Send home resources about the importance of reading to young children.
 - Create book activities to do at home.
 - Invite families to come in to be guest readers.
 - Create a “lending library” of classroom books. Families could even be encouraged to donate to the lending library.
- **Reach out to your local library to create a partnership.** They can keep your program in the loop of workshops, resources, and activities that are scheduled.

The most important part of encouraging literacy experiences with young children is to have fun. Providing varied opportunities for literacy exposure helps to ensure that all children will find a way to enjoy reading. Happy Children’s Book Week!

Professional Learning Experiences

[DIEEC's Children's Book Week webpage](#) has many great resources to support your early literacy efforts, including Delaware-based organizations.

Additional Resources

- [Rocking and Rolling. Reading Aloud with Infants and Toddlers- NAEYC](#)
- [Reading with Your Child- Reading Rockets](#)
- [Read it Again! The Benefits of Reading with Young Children- ECLKC](#)



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