

Dialogic Reading

What is Dialogic Reading?

Dialogic reading is a way of sharing a book that emphasizes the interaction between the adult and the child or children. Often when adults and children share books, the adult reads while the children listen. In dialogic reading, the activity becomes a shared experience between the adult and children. A shared conversation about the words and pictures in a story can help children build vocabulary, narrative skills, understanding of the characters, and social skills. Get started by asking questions as you read. You can start using dialogic reading as soon as a child has enough words to respond to questions about the book.

Things to try

- When you ask a question, wait five to seven seconds for a response. This allows children to fully process the question and give their best answers.
- To build vocabulary, ask questions like “What is that?”
- Expand on the child’s answers: “Yes, that’s a ball, a red, bouncing ball.”
- To build sentence skills, ask open-ended questions like, “What’s going on in this picture?” or “What do you think will happen next?”
- Ask follow up questions such as “How do you think that happened?”
- Ask questions to help relate the story to the child’s experience. Try “How do you think that would feel?” or “Have you ever felt like that before?”
- Use a wide range of vocabulary. Allow children to hear and try difficult or less common words.

Book Suggestions:

Dialogic reading works well with any book! Just ask questions about the story and characters. You might try this technique with wordless picture books, which provide lots of opportunities for children to describe the story. Try these:

- *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney
- *Goodnight, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathman
- *A Boy, A Dog and a Frog* by Mercer Myer
- *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* by Margaret Chodos-Irvine
- *Hello Ocean* by Pam Muñoz-Ryan

Getting Started:

- Preview the book and write possible questions on sticky notes that you place on the appropriate pages. This will help you remember to pause and ask questions as you go!
- Encourage children to stay on topic, but be welcoming and open toward any responses.
- Praise children for their thoughts and ideas.
- Follow the interest of the children.
- Keep it fun and flexible.

