Shared Storybook Reading

Quick Start Guide

What is Shared Storybook Reading?

Shared Storybook Reading is an interactive approach to reading that encourages children to **actively participate in the story.**

Rather than only reading the words on the page, educators create opportunities for children to talk about pictures and events, answer questions, learn new words, and connect the story to their own experiences.

The goal is to make reading a **back-and-forth interaction** between educators and children.

Why Shared Storybook Reading Matters

Interactive reading provides natural opportunities to support children's:

- Communication and language
- Vocabulary
- Story comprehension
- Social engagement and participation
- Early literacy skills

The interaction is where much of the learning happens!

Rather than the teacher doing all the talking while children listen, shared reading gives children opportunities to think, communicate, and contribute.

What Does Shared Storybook Reading Look Like?

During shared storybook reading, educators:

Prompt children to participate

Invite children to comment, answer questions, make predictions, describe pictures, and join familiar parts of the story.

Expand children's language

Build on what children communicate by adding words, ideas, or information.

Provide supportive feedback

Acknowledge children's contributions, encourage their attempts, and provide helpful information.

Connect the story to children's lives

Relate characters, events, feelings, and ideas in the book to children's own experiences.

Shared Reading Can Look Different For Each Child

There isn't one "right" way for children to participate.

Children might:

In group read-alouds, not every child needs to answer every question. The goal is to create many meaningful opportunities for children across the group to participate.

Choosing Books for Shared Reading

Look for books that:

- Are interesting and engaging to your children
- Have clear or interesting illustrations
- Connect with children's interests and experiences
- Introduce useful or interesting vocabulary
- Offer natural opportunities for conversation and participation

Familiar books and repeated readings can also create more opportunities for children to join in.

Make Reading a Conversation

Shared Storybook Reading should feel like a conversation around a book! Follow children's interests. Pause when children have something to contribute. Talk about what catches their attention. Give children time and different ways to participate.

You don't have to read every word, ask a question on every page, or hear from every child each time. The goal is to make books a **shared, engaging experience** where children are active participants.

Adapted from: Towson, J. A., Akemoglu, Y., Watkins, L., & Zeng, S. (2021). Shared interactive book reading interventions for young children with disabilities: A systematic review. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 30(6), 2700–2715.