**Book Reading**

**Background**

Book reading is an activity that promotes language and literacy skills in young

children. Joint book reading can be an effective instructional tool for children who are developing typically as well as children with language delays. There are many potential benefits that can be obtained through shared book reading experiences. Shared book reading offers children opportunities to learn new words and to put words together in new ways. In addition, children can increase their listening and attending skills, acquire print awareness and story structure, explore human experiences and feelings, and view the diversity and complexity of human life.

However, children come to book reading activities with different histories and skills that influence their current experience. Some children have been read to or told stories by parents and other caregivers; others have not. The styles of the adults who have read to them vary in terms of the ways they encouraged children to interact with the text and in their attitudes toward reading. Children’s attitudes about books and book reading are affected by their interactions with adults around books.

There are a variety of adult skills that are needed prior to, during, and after book reading. Selection of quality, non-biased literature that is of interest to and appropriate for the particular group of children is of primary importance. It is equally important to determine the purpose for reading the book (e.g., content connected to theme, children’s interests, etc.) and the desired child outcomes (increase knowledge, enjoyment, attending, etc.). these preparatory tasks help adults determine the skills they need to use when reading the book. Both the prior considerations and evaluations after the book reading activity help adults determine follow- up activities to extend the story.

**Guidelines**

(adapted from Spodek & Saracho, 1994)

1. **Carefully select a book that is appropriate for the group of children to whom you will read.**Any book that will be used in a preschool classroom should be carefully reviewed for content, vocabulary, length, illustrations, and cultural sensitivity.
2. **Set the environment.**Have children sit on the floor in front of you so they can see the illustrations and print. Children should be sitting in comfortable positions. Some teachers have children take turns being the page turner during story time. This is often helpful for children who have difficulty with attention during the story.
3. **Introduce the book.**Discuss the title, author, and illustrator. Remind the children if they have read other stories by the same author or illustrator. Discuss related past experiences with the topic of the story. Based on the cover illustration, ask children to predict what they think the story may be about. The teacher’s introduction of the book should motivate the children to want to hear the story.
   1. Example: If the cover illustration is a garden scene, you can ask questions such as: “What do you think this story is going to be about? Have you ever planted a garden? What grows in a garden? How do you think these flowers grew so tall?” You can write the children’s predictions on chart paper and refer back to them at the end of the story.
4. **Read the story:** Read the story with expression, for pleasure and enjoyment. Children enjoy repeating a familiar refrain or chant or making simple hand gestures or sound effects during story times. When teachers point to the words as they read the story, children can see that print follows certain patterns and they begin to recognize letters and sound-symbol relationships. When children in the group are working on particular speech sounds in therapy, it is important to emphasize those phonetic sounds during the reading of the story.
   1. Example: If you read the book *The Snowy Day,* emphasize all the initial “s” sounds as you read the words so children who are working on the initial “s’ sound hear the sound emphasized throughout the story.
5. **Discuss the story.**After the initial reading, discuss the illustrations, characters, or favorite parts of the book. Some children with disabilities will need to have the questions and discussion interspersed throughout the reading of the story to maintain their engagement in the activity. The discussion should have a natural flow. Monitor the children’s abilities to answer questions about the book and their comprehension of the story. Be sure to make the discussion brief and end it before the children lose interest. This is especially important if any of the children are dual language learners who may have difficulty listening and then answering questions about a story that is in a language unfamiliar to them.
6. **Provide follow-up activities.**After the initial or subsequent reading of the book, implement appropriate follow-up activities such as dramatization, art, music, and writing. Multiple copies of the book can be made available in the classroom book center for children to “read” independently or in pairs during free choice times of the day. It is important to encourage children to “reread” their favorite books as often as possible since children learn to read by engaging in the act of reading.

**Microteach Instructions**

1. Select a high-quality book based on your goals for the lesson.
2. Make a plan for your introduction, reading, and follow-up of the book.
3. Implement your lesson with your target child or children.
4. Follow general microteach procedures.