



Read-Aloud

What is it?

Reading to children introduces them to the language of books, which is different from speech and conversation. Clay (1991) describes this as “book talk.” Through exposure of the language of books, children develop anticipatory systems for expecting particular structures to occur within written language. Margaret Meek (1992) explains how children “discover text and discourse in the sustained, cumulative building up of related episodes: how one thing follows and is related to another. The rhythms and structures of written sentences, the patterning of events, the conventions of story beginnings and endings are all significant features of written language in which they learn without introductions. (p112). This knowledge about books provides children with a personal foundation for making meaningful predictions as they read stories on their own.

Why should I do it?

A well-balanced literacy program should include opportunities for children to hear stories that they would be unable to read for themselves. The purpose of a read-aloud component is:

- To provide a good model of fluent and expressive reading.
- To provide opportunities for writing.
- To provide opportunities for retelling.
- To expose children to a wide variety of story structures, genres, characters, and authors.
- To increase children’s concept and vocabulary knowledge.
- To promote an enjoyable experience with books.