

Dialogic Reading

Targeted skill

The questions during Dialogic Reading strengthen young children's listening comprehension, and strong listening comprehension leads to strong reading comprehension.

Materials

- ◆ any children's book

What to do

Dialogic reading is a fancy way of saying, "Read a book to your child and ask questions before, during, and after reading it." While it is always a good idea to read aloud to your child, this experience becomes more educational when your child is encouraged to think about the story by answering the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how. This type of questioning engages your child as an active participant in the read-aloud. In thinking of questions about storybooks, sometimes it helps to use the acronym CROWD:

Completion prompts – You leave a blank at the end of a sentence and get your child to fill it in. These are typically used in books with rhyme or books with repetitive phrases. For example, you might read, "I think I'd be a glossy cat. A little plump but not too _____," letting your child fill in the blank with the word *fat*. Completion prompts provide children with information about the structure of language that is critical to later reading.

Recall prompts – These are questions about what happened in a book. Recall prompts work for nearly everything except alphabet books. For example, you might say, "Can you tell me what happened to the little blue engine in this story?" Recall prompts help children understand a story's plot and describe the sequence of events.

Open-ended prompts – These prompts focus on the pictures in books. They work best for books that have detailed illustrations. For example, while looking at a page in a book that your child is familiar with, you might say, "Tell me what's happening in this picture." Open-ended prompts help increase children's attention to detail.

Read-Alouds

Dialogic Reading *(continued)*

W-prompts – These prompts usually begin with who, what, where, when, why, and how questions. Like open-ended prompts, W-prompts focus on the pictures in books. For example, you might say, “What’s the name of this?” while pointing to an object in the book. W-questions teach children new vocabulary.

Distancing prompts – These prompts ask your child to relate the pictures or words in the book to experiences outside the book. For example, while looking at a book with a picture of animals on a farm, you might say something like, “Remember when we went to the animal park last week. Which of these animals did we see there?” Distancing prompts help children form a bridge between books and the real world, as well as help them with their verbal fluency, conversational abilities, and narrative skills.

Extending the activity

- ✦ After you’ve asked your child about stories and illustrations many times, encourage him or her to ask questions about the pictures in the book.
- ✦ Help your child make up his or her own oral story, copying the style of a favorite author. Help him or her include details to personalize the story.

What your child is practicing

When your child is answering questions about the pictures in a story, he or she is practicing paying close attention to illustrations and putting his or her thoughts into words. With a bit of encouragement, this can also become a time when your child practices using complete sentences to answer questions.