

Picture Walks

Targeted skill

Young children are expected to develop an understanding of the structure of stories—that they have a beginning, middle, and end—as well as learn to recognize the relationship between the text and illustrations.

Materials

- ◆ a children's book with strong illustrations

What to do

Before opening the book, show your child the cover and read the title. Ask him or her to predict what the story will be about, based only on what he or she can see. Slowly flip through the book, page by page, without reading a single word. Ask questions about each picture, and try to elicit responses that require your child to make inferences based upon the images, and not the words, on each page.

Starting with the five Ws (who, what, when, where, why) and one H (how), you can ask plenty of questions to engage your child's imagination and encourage his or her active participation.

Ask questions such as, "What is going on here?" "Who is this?" "Why does the character look so excited?" "When is this story taking place?" "Where did the character just come from?" "How do you think the story is going to end?"

This way, you are leading your child in telling the story of the book just by paying close attention to the illustrations.

Extending the activity

After doing several picture walks together, encourage your child to tell the story of a picture book independently.

What your child is practicing

When your child answers questions about the pictures in a story, he or she practices paying close attention to illustrations and putting his or her thoughts into words. With a bit of encouragement, this is also a time when your child practices using complete sentences to answer questions. When your child reaches the stage at which he or she can do a picture walk on his or her own, your child is practicing the way stories "sound."