

Expanding Reading Fun for you and your child

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." - Dr. Seuss, "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!"

Here are some ideas for expanding your child's enjoyment of books and reading. By interacting with books in different ways-- retelling the story, imagining different outcomes, using art and song-- your child uses multiple intelligences to expand their learning experience. Some suggested activities are best for younger, some for older children-- and some can be used many times, expanding the ideas as your child grows. Have fun, try our suggestions or your own ideas and enjoy the time with your child!

Kindergarten

Your kindergartener is enjoying a wide range of books with you this year. Extend that reading experience by trying any of these fun ideas:

Tell Me the Story: Read a story with your child. Ask your child to retell the story to you. This shows how and what parts of the story your child understands and what parts were most important to them. Your child may surprise you with a couple of twists and turns of their own.

Draw a Story: Read a story with your child. Ask them to draw you a picture of part of the story. Ask questions and have them explain their picture. Enjoy and applaud their efforts!

What's the Story Here? Before you read a book to your child, look at the picture on the cover together. Ask your child what they see. Talk about what the story might be about. Ask your child to make some guesses. Now, read the story-- how close were their guesses?

Reading the Pictures: Similar to the above-- using information from illustrations to interpret the story. Ask your child to choose a book to "picture read". Explain: "First, we're going to 'read' this book' by just looking at the pictures. I wonder if we can figure out the story?" Have your child look at the pictures and tell you what they think is happening. Can they tell where the characters are? What are the characters feeling? Don't worry if the "picture-story" is different from the "word story". Appreciate your child's efforts and imagination. Now, read the actual story. Decide with your child-- were they close? What was the same or different? Which do they like better?

Into the Book: Read a book with your child. Ask them "What would it be like if you were in this book?" Ask them if they would be one of the existing characters, or a completely different character. What would be the same-- or different? Try reading the book again, and have your child insert their character where they want in the story-- see what happens!

Pretend Friends: Read a book with your child. Ask your child: "Which of the characters in this book would you want for a friend?" Ask them to explain why, and ask what they would do together.

Silly Sequencing: This fun game introduces the concept of “sequence of events” in a story. Choose your child’s favorite story and jumble up the sequence of events. Instead of reading ‘Once Upon a Time there lived a little rabbit’, start off with ‘Happily Ever After’. Watch your child giggle and correct your mistakes. Finally, read the story correctly, having your child help build the correct “timeline” as you go. In the end, let them make a timeline of all the important events in the story.

Sing Me A Song: Make up a song with your child about the characters in a book you read. Simple tunes to use can be “BINGO”, “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”, “Wheels on the Bus”, etc. For “Peter Rabbit” you might try “There was a bunny in a book and Peter was his name-o. Peter, Peter, Peter, and Peter was his name-o”. Try singing the song with your child-- being silly and making mistakes is part of the fun!

Stuffed Animal Stories: Ask your child to gather some of their favorite stuffed toys together. Ask them to imagine a story about the toys. Suggest ideas, and offer to be some of the stuffed toys-- “I’ll be the brown bear and the green snake-- what should we do?” Let your child direct the story and join in.

Silly Stories at the Store: Does your child help you grocery shop? Ask them to help you tell a silly story as you shop. Choose a character or 2 and decide what they are doing-- getting food for dinner, planning a party, whatever you imagine. The story begins: “Sam is going to the store.” At each aisle, ask your child to tell one new part of the story using something from that aisle AND repeat the rest. Example: Enter the store and start the story: “Sam is going to the store. He is getting food for dinner. Aisle #1: “Sam is getting food for dinner and... Your child adds “He’s going to buy biscuits”. Aisle # 2: “Sam is getting food for dinner and he is going to buy biscuits. Next”, ...your child adds “He is going to buy butter and jam.” and so on. You and your child can create Silly Stories at a visit to the park, a walk around the neighborhood and many other locations.

