



Sharing books through conversation

WHEN YOU READ A BOOK, YOU MAY LIKE TO

talk about it with someone else. The same is true for your child. Reading experts say that talking about a story while listening to it helps children learn about reading even before they are able to read themselves. The term for having a conversation about a book is “dialogic reading.” Using these book sharing techniques, you can help your child get ready to read.

Sharing books with babies and toddlers

It’s never too soon to start reading to your baby. Infants learn to love books while snuggling in your arms and hearing your voice. Tap on the book to draw your baby’s attention to the picture. Ask a question about the picture. The tone of your voice changes and your baby will soon learn what a question sounds like.

Older babies and toddlers are beginning to label pictures. Give them time to remember and say the words. Ask questions like, “Where did that bunny go?” and then give the answer. You will be modeling questions and answers for your little one.

Use the word **PEER** to remind you how to have a conversation about a book with an older toddler. **P** stands for “prompt”, what you do with your first question. **E** stands for “evaluate” what your child says so you will know what to say. **E** stands for “expand” on what your child says. Add something to help her learn how to give more details. **R** stands for “repeat.” Ask your child to repeat your word or phrase to show she has learned new information.

Sharing books with preschoolers

Children also benefit from dialogic reading in the preschool years. Reading and talking about books builds vocabulary, lengthens attention span and increases enjoyment from stories. Your preschooler



will be able to respond to questions and think about characters and the plot. This helps him predict what will happen, an important reading skill.

The word **CROWD** will help you have a conversation with your child about a book. **C** means “complete questions.” Ask a question and leave part of it for your child to complete. For example, “Jack and Jill went up a _____?” **R** means your child should “recall” details that happen in the story and be able to answer questions. **O** stands for using “open-ended questions” which require more than a yes or no answer. **W** reminds you to ask “what, where, when, and why” questions. **D** stands for “distancing” questions which ask the child to relate the story to their own experience.

Talking about books helps your child learn about reading but don’t over do it. Read a book several times before using dialogic reading. The important thing is to have fun and help your child enjoy reading. So relax, let your child choose his favorite books, and have a good conversation about a good story. ❖