



# Reading Explorers Program

## CAREGIVER GUIDE FOR DIALOGIC READING

### What is Dialogic Reading?

- Dialogic Reading is an evidence-based method of shared reading where you and your child have a conversation about a book.
- By reading and talking about the pictures and content of the story, you can help your child connect language and what you are reading to your child's own language and experiences.
- The ultimate goal is for your child to become the storyteller and you to become the listener.
- You guide the reading and conversations about the book by prompting, reflecting, expanding, and encouraging your child's responses.
- The technique works best when used with books that you and your child have read several times together.

### What are the benefits of dialogic reading?

- It increases your child's language, vocabulary, and recognition of words, which is critical nutrition they need for later reading comprehension.
- Your child learns about the rules of reading and writing, like how words (print) flow from top to bottom and left to right on the page. This is called print awareness.
- It develops your child's interest in books and motivation to listen to stories, which will help them be a lifelong learner!
- It strengthens the relationship between you and your child because you are spending time together building language and reading skills.

### What kinds of books work best?

- Books that:
  - Have clear pictures
  - Have a simple story
  - Are short enough to keep your child's attention
  - Have pictures of things that are familiar to your child
  - Are interesting to your child
  - Have pictures that show action and detail



# STEPS FOR DIALOGIC READING

## Step 1: Prompt your child to talk while you are reading the story

- Focus on the pictures in the book and invite your child to tell you about them. Examples: What is happening in this picture? Tell me what you see on the page.
- Ask questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why, and how about the pictures in the book. Use your finger to point to what you are asking about. Examples: What's this called? What do we use this for? How many X do you see? What does X mean?
- Ask your child to complete a word or phrase and/or pause for them to finish the sentence. These are typically used in books with rhyme or repetitive phrases. Example: "Let's finish this page together..."
- For children ages 4 and older:
  - Ask details about what happened in the story. Examples: What was this story about? What happened at the beginning of the story? What happened at the end?
  - Ask your child to relate the picture or words in the book to experiences outside the book. Examples: Have you ever X? When have you seen an X?
  - Ask your child to think about the sequence of the story and what will happen next. Example: What do you think will happen next?

## Step 2: Reflect and Evaluate what your child says

- Repeat what your child says and think about their response. Is the answer correct? What information can you add? Help your child as needed with the responses.

## Step 3: Expand on what your child says

- Add a few other words or another piece of information to your child's response. In some cases, gently provide the correct response.

## Step 4: Repeat the prompt

- Ask your child to repeat the new or corrected information that you provided.

## Step 5: Enjoy!

- Praise and encourage your child. Tell your child when he or she is doing well by saying things like: "Good reading!" or "That's right. Good job!"
- Follow your child's lead in what they want to talk about. If your child shows an interest in a picture, follow by asking questions about that picture.
- Balance your prompting. Your child may just want to listen to the story and that's okay too!
- Keep it fun! Nurture the time you have together.

## Reading the story for the first time

- Read the title of the book from the cover, pointing to each word as you say it.
- Have your child repeat the title as you point to each word.
- Point to the picture on the cover. Ask: What do you think this story is about?
- Read the story, moving your finger under the words as you read. This helps your child connect what you are saying to the printed word.
- Utilize the dialogic reading steps to bring the conversation to life!
- We recommend that you prompt your child 1-2 times per page of the book.

## Reading the story again and again

- When you read the story again, do less reading of the words to the story, leaving more and more time for your child to do the reading and retelling of the story in their own words.
- You should expect more sharing from your child each time you engage in dialogic reading with the same book.
- If your child needs help responding to a prompt, ask that prompt again the next time you read the book.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- How you read to your child is as important as how often you read to them.
- Your child learns most from books when they are actively involved.
- It's helpful to focus on the interaction and conversation you are having with your child rather than being concerned about reading all the words on the page or finishing the book.
- You can read or have a conversation about a book in any language. Reading and talking about a story in your home language builds the language and reading foundation needed for your child to learn new languages once your child gets to school.
- You can start using shared book reading from infancy, although you will do most of the responding at first. What's important are the interactions you have with your child while reading a book or during your everyday routines (cooking, eating, cleaning, walking, driving, or shopping together). When your child begins reading words, you can take turns while reading. First, you read a word/sentence, and then your child reads the same word/sentence you just read.
- Try to read with your child every day and start when they are very young. By developing these routines early, you are helping to promote your child's overall reading readiness, which is essential for their later success in school and in life!



For more information about the research on Dialogic Reading, please visit [Reading Rockets](#).

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