

Children's Knowledge of Books

As young children learn to read, they typically go through several stages in emergent and early reading by exploring books in their environment. (Doake, 1986; Holdaway, 1979; Snow & Nino, 1986; Sulzby, 1985)

The first stage is **Understanding What a Book Is**, this stage usually occurs between infancy and toddlerhood. In this stage children are learning to differentiate between books and toys. A child may sit with an adult and show interest in the book but may not necessarily stay to listen to the whole story. In this stage the child may also pick up a book to explore it on their own, quickly flipping through the pages.

The next stage that children often enter is **Understanding How A Book Works**, this stage usually occurs between the ages of 2 and 3. In this stage children begin to learn how a book works such as holding it right side up, turning the pages. This stage is often referred to as "point-say-connect," this is where the child may point to a picture in the book, say the objects name and then attempt to relate that object to something in their own experiences.

The following stage is **Becoming a Listener and Participant**, this stage often occurs in the preschool years. Children in this stage may often seek to hear the same story over and over again, finding pleasure in retelling the story to an adult or friend. In this stage the dialogue between the teacher and the children is extremely important. Allowing the children to ask questions and make comments during large or small group reading time is essential.

The last stage that young children tend to go through is **Inventing Stories to Go with Illustrations**. In this stage children tend to create their own book language, based off the pictures in the book, sometimes incorporating actual phrases from the book if they are familiar with its content.

Do you have a high-quality variety of books in your classroom?

Teachers should strive to have a variety of high-quality books in their classroom. Within the variety there should be informational books as well as storybooks. "Some children— often boys—find information books related to their interests more motivating than stories."

Do you have fantasy books?

- "Thumbelina"
- "Imogene's Antlers"

Do you have factual books?

- "Me and My Amazing Body"
- "My 5 Senses"

Do you have nature and science books?

- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar"
- "Air Is All Around You"

Do you have books that show different races and cultures?

- "On Mothers Lap"
- "Oh What A Wonderful World"

Do you have books showing different abilities?

- Different Just Like Me
- Looking Out for Sarah



Every day, teachers should be reading aloud to the children in their class, in both small and large groups when possible.

To promote children's engagement and comprehension, teachers use strategies such as reading with expression and asking questions ("What do you think he'll do now?")

Copple, Carol & Bredekamp, Sue. Developmentally Appropriate Practice. NAEYC:2009