

Play Your Way to Literacy

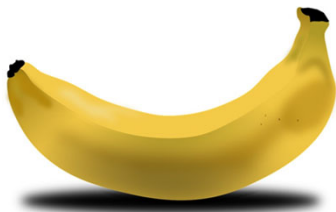


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Mother Goose on the Loose, LLC

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Go Bananas!



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A is for Apple

- Write down as many words, experiences, activities and concepts that can relate to a real apple.

Describe how it looks, smells, feels, tastes...

Describe what you can do with it...

Describe what you can know about apples...

3

A Photograph



Cross off what cannot be known/done with a photograph.

4

A Picture



Cross off what cannot be known/done with a picture.

5

A Drawing



Cross off what cannot be known/done with a drawing.

6

The Written Word

apple

Cross off what cannot be known/done with the word "apple".

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Direct Experience Leads to Understanding

"Hands on, minds on, feelings on, experiences are the foundation of the development of symbolic understanding."



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Direct, Hands-On Experience

- Stimulates language
- Leads to understanding
- Allows the formation of symbolic thought
- Involves multiple pathways in the brain
- Holds the power of DISCOVERY learning



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Play

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What is Play?

verb

Engage in an activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.

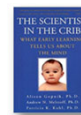
noun

Activity engaged in for enjoyment or recreation, especially by children.

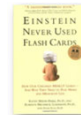
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Children Learn Through Experimentation and Play

Alison Gopnik



Kathy Hirsh-Pasek



Roberta Michnick Golinkoff

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Children Learn Through Experimentation and Play

Playful Learning LANDSCAPES

Let's Reimagine Public Spaces
 Playful Learning Landscapes transforms places where children and families gather every day into thoughtfully designed hubs for meaningful play and connection.

<https://playfullearninglandscapes.com/>



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Play is Essential

Dr. Stuart Brown, psychiatrist, discovered that "play deprivation" in childhood was a common factor in mass murderers.

Recommendation: See the Ted Talk by Dr. Brown:
https://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital

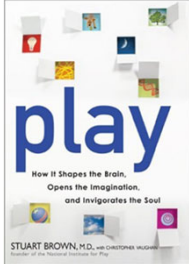


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The desire to play is a powerful instinct.



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"The opposite of play is not work – the opposite of play is depression."

Dr. Stuart Brown

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Playing Together Builds Relationships



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Play Builds Social and Linguistic Competence



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Play Builds Communication Skills



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Play Enables Perspective-Taking



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Play builds social, emotional, and cognitive skills.



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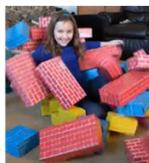
Engaging in play helps to build survival skills



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Play involves experimentation

In play, you can try something over and over again. The rules can change as you go!



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Play helps children exercise the new skills they are developing, while learning about the world around them.



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Play involves examining the properties of objects and seeing what they can do

- What does it look like?
- What does it smell like?
- What does it feel like?
- What does it taste like?
- What happens when I?

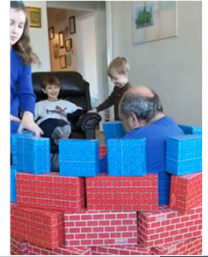
STEM

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Play is essential for adults, too!

Play...

- Builds relationships
- Builds social and linguistic competence
- Builds communication skills
- Enables perspective-taking
- Builds social, emotional, and cognitive skills
- Helps build survival skills
- Exercises power of observation (STEM)
- Affects mental and physical health
- Relieves stress; helps to confront fear



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Play is Free and Accessible to Everyone

"Because play is considered safe and without real consequences, it can be used to reduce anxiety and can help children cope with adverse experiences."

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-play-is-serious-work/>

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Literacy

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What is literacy?

Talk with the people at your table and come up with a one sentence definition of literacy.

- Write it down.
- Be prepared to share it with the group.

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Language and Literacy

Early literacy is what children know about communication, language, verbal and non-verbal, and reading and writing, before they can actually read and write.

from Every Child Ready to Read@ the Library

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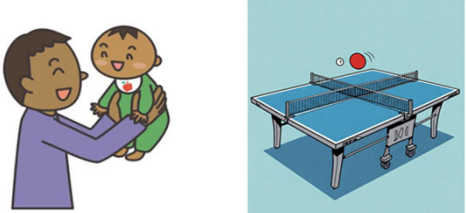
LENA[®]
Building brains through early talk



Using a "talk pedometer" to measure quantity & quality of talk in a child's environment

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Conversational Duets Matter



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Importance of Early Literacy

- Lays groundwork for effective communication
- Sets the stage for lifelong learning and interaction
- Being able to express thoughts, feelings and ideas is vital for emotional and mental well-being.
- Helps children understand the world around them.

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Importance of Early Literacy

- Supports early brain development
- Improves readiness for school
- Strengthens families
- Supports healthy development
- Is "essential for children who face disparities and inequities because of social factors, systemic racism, and socio economic risk."

"Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice: Technical Report", American Academy of Pediatrics| Technical Report| November 25 2024

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Importance of Early Literacy

- Educational achievement,
- Higher rates of high school graduation,
- Physical health and mental health,
- Better financial position,
- Broad well-being.
- Reduced commission of crime in adulthood
- Can break the cycle of poverty!

Heckman, James, and Ganesh Karapakula. "The Perry Preschoolers at Late Midlife: A Study in Design-Specific Inference." (2019)

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Early Literacy Practices

For very young children		For children
• Talk • Sing • Share Books • Play (including fingerplays)		• Talk • Sing • Read • Write • Play

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Play Has Many Benefits

Play optimizes children's development and helps them manage toxic stress.

"Play...enhances the brain structure and function and promotes executive function (i.e. the process of learning, rather than content) which allows us to pursue goals and ignore distractions."

Yogman, Michael W. et al. "The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children." *Pediatrics* 142 (2018).

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Play AND Literacy

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Research Tells Us

- Parents / caregivers have a very important influence on their child's development.
- Children thrive most by interacting joyfully with the adults in their lives
- Play is necessary in the lives of both children and adults

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Research Tells Us

- Early literacy skills are most easily developed when adults talk, sing, joyfully share books, and play with their children.
- Strong early literacy skills help children approach learning with more confidence, which sets the foundation for more success in life socially, emotionally, scholastically, economically and healthwise.

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How Can We Help Children Play Their Way to Literacy?

- Create many opportunities for free play
- Encourage children to learn via discovery
- Explain what we are doing and why we are doing it, for the adults
- Emphasize the importance of play for learning
- Encourage parents to continue playing with their children at home

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Movement Games are great!

- **Movement** allows children to connect concepts to actions
- Develops self-awareness and self-regulation
- Encourages memories which help retain ideas and concepts



"Hi, My name is Sew. And I work in button factory.
I've got a wife and two kids. One day my boss said to me:
"Are you busy Sew?"
"I said 'No."
"Then sew this button for me."

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Storytime / Circle Time

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Storytime Builds Early Literacy Skills

- Exposes children to books
- Builds vocabulary
- Introduces other people's point of view through stories
- Expands general knowledge
- Models book reading behavior
- Shows that letters have meaning and put together, they make words

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Storytime should not be NOT a Performance



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Play in Storytime Can

- Build self-confidence
- Awaken imagination
- Encourage experimentation
- Give opportunities to practice teamwork
- Help children practice focus and self-regulation skills
- Strengthen parent/child bonds if during family engagement programs
- Build narrative/communication skills
- Kindle a love of books
- Increase general knowledge about the world around them
- Practice civility and respect toward other

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What would you like to emphasize and how can you do it?

Literacy

- Build vocabulary
- Hear the sounds in words
- Learn rhyming patterns
- General knowledge
- Communicating

STEM

- Observing properties
- Trying new things
- Cause and effect
- Building

21st Century Skills

- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Learning from mistakes

Social and Emotional

- Self-confidence
- Self-regulation
- Focus
- Following directions
- Getting along with others

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Ways to Build Literacy Through Play

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Sing!

Singing together creates community while building vocabulary and familiarizing children with language patterns and the syllables in words.

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.



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Tap, Clap and Drum

Tapping your name on the drum means separating your name into syllables.

Clapping out syllables in words helps children pay attention to them.

Hearing the syllables in words is called "Phonological Awareness" and it is a basic skill for learning to read.

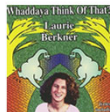


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Using Musical Instruments

Playing along to the beat or participating in a "call-and-response" song

- strengthens listening skills
- gives practice following directions
- builds self-regulation skills
- builds vocabulary



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Making Musical Instruments

Strengthen fine motor skills, builds creativity, excitement about learning, experiencing the fun of innovation

- Beans inside of paper plates
- Rice inside of empty bottles
- A comb with wax paper
- Oatmeal container drums
- Aluminum pie plate cymbals (with pipe cleaner handles)
- Box Banjo with rubber bands
- Rainbow sensor shakers



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Making Sounds With Your Body

Builds positive body image, "Making Rain" is about paying attention, following directions, and teamwork

- With your hands
- With your voice
- With your mouth – no voice
- With your feet



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Dramatic Play: Examples

Restaurant

- Menus
- Order Pads
- Receipts



Doctor's Office

- Patient Forms
- Prescription Pads

Post Office

- Letters
- Stamps
- Mailboxes

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Using the Flannel Board

Visual literacy is recognizing an object and remembering its meaning. Decoding illustrations leads to decoding letters and words.



Giving positive reinforcement when children follow directions helps them feel capable & successful; they also learn how to give appreciation to others.

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Bubbles

- Observing the bubbles move around
- Gross motor skills: Walking or crawling toward and catching the bubbles
- Pointing at, reaching out for, and catching the bubbles
- Vocalizing and showing enjoyment of, or wonder at, the bubbles
- Crawling around and towards each other
- Observing the reactions of other children and adults



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Creative Movement

Leaping Lizards



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Celebrating Birthdays

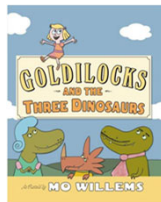
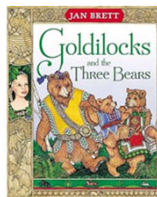
The birthday freeze game inspires imagination, builds communication skills, and give practice stopping and taking turns.



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Acting Out Stories

Perspective-taking, building vocabulary



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Conducting Interviews

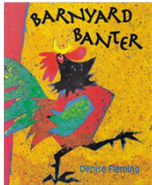
Perspective-taking, communication, putting feelings into words



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Using Puppets

Paying attention, following directions, connecting a picture of an animal with its name and sound it makes



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Crafts

Making a "Bag of Wonder" builds muscles later used for writing



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Use Colored Scarves

- Wave
- Blow
- Sort
- Scrunch
- Wear them
- Hide and find
- Dance with them
- Throw and catch
- Using the imagination - pretend they are animals



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Block Play

- Construction
- Communication
- Patterns
- Learning through mistakes



A great opportunity for guided play!

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Modeling easy-to-create toys

Encouraging adults to talk and play with their children in inexpensive ways



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Scaffolding

Ask:

- "What do you notice?"
- "What happens next?"
- "Tell me about your idea."
- "How could we solve that problem?"
- "What should we write?"



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Playing With Books

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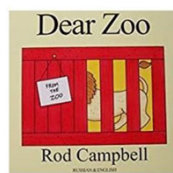
Play with Books

- Read them
- Sing them
- Ask questions about them
- Talk about the pictures
- Make predictions based on the cover
- Act them out with puppets
- Act them out
- Create scenery
- Interview the characters
- Compose a new ending for the story



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Playful Books - Lift the Flap



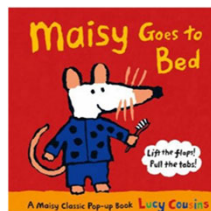
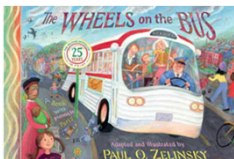
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Playful Books - Call out the Answer



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Playful Books - Paper Engineering



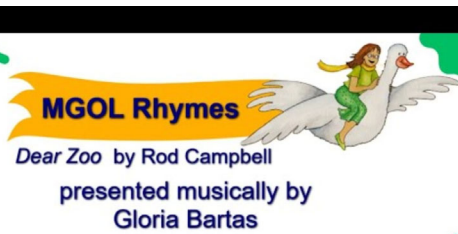
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Play Visually - Add & Take Away



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Playful Books - Use Puppets



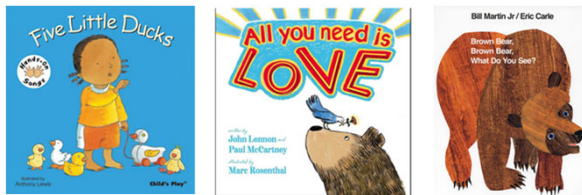
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Playful Books - Sign the Book



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Playful Books - Sing the Book

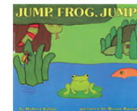


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Playful Books - Make Noises



Repeating refrains

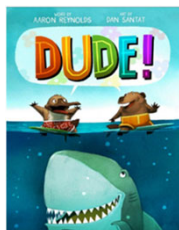


Being aware of the sounds in the world around, listening for patterns and sounds in words.

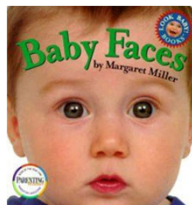
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Expressing Feelings

Using Tone of Voice



Using words to describe facial expressions



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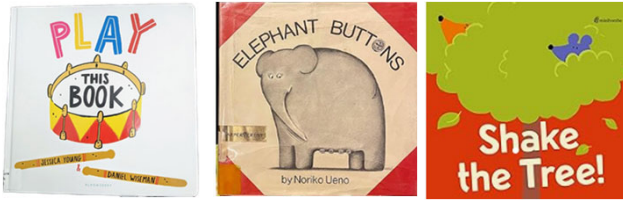
Playful Books - Drama

Fun connections with books builds the desire to learn to read.



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Physically Interact With the Book



Books are fun..... even when you don't yet know how to read!

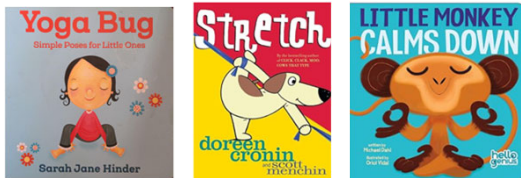
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Use Different Versions of the Same Story



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Playful Books that Teach Calming Techniques



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Play in Storytime Can...



- Awaken imagination
- Give opportunities to practice teamwork
- Help children practice self-regulation skills
- Strengthen parent/child bonds during family engagement programs
- Build 21st century skills

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NOW Play and Build Literacy!

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Developmental Tips are Tools to Help Parents During Family Engagement Programs

A few short and simple sentences with 3 parts:

1. **WHAT?**
2. **WHY?**
3. **HOW?**

84

Developmental Tips are Tools to Help Parents

A few short and simple sentences with 3 parts:

1. **WHAT?** – Identifies what the action is
2. **WHY?**
3. **HOW?**

85

Developmental Tips are Tools to Help Parents

A few short and simple sentences with 3 parts:

1. **WHAT?** – Identifies what the action is
2. **WHY?** – Tells parents why it is important
3. **HOW?**

86

Developmental Tips are Tools to Help Parents

A few short and simple sentences with 3 parts:

1. **WHAT?** – Identifies what the action is
2. **WHY?** – Tells parents why it is important
3. **HOW?** – Explains how it might be replicated at home

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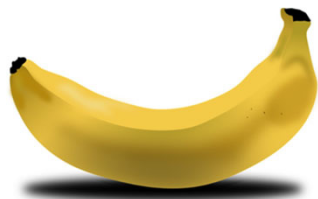
The Banana Rhyme

First we pick bananas
Then we peel bananas
Then we bite bananas
Then we chew bananas
Then we swallow bananas
Then we go bananas!!



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What skills does this activity help build?



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Play Builds Skills in Many Domains!

- Fine & gross motor skills
- Language & communication skills
- Math skills
- Science skills
- Social skills

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Developmental Tip Example

1. **WHAT?** – “We just did the “Go Bananas” rhyme.”
2. **WHY?**
3. **HOW?**

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Developmental Tip Example

1. **WHAT?** – “We just did the “Go Bananas” rhyme.”
2. **WHY?** – “We are actually telling a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. We start with ‘First we pick bananas...’ and we continue in order through the steps involved in eating a banana.” Being able to tell a story is how children learn to communicate.
3. **HOW?**

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Developmental Tip Example

1. **WHAT?** – “We just did the “Go Bananas” rhyme.”
2. **WHY?** – “We are actually telling a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. We start with ‘First we pick bananas...’ and we continue in order through the steps involved in eating a banana.” Being able to tell a story is how children learn to communicate.
3. **HOW?** – Don’t just wait for storytime to do “Go Bananas”; try doing this rhyme at home with your child as well!”

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Create Your Own Developmental Tip and Share It

A few short and simple sentences with 3 parts:

1. **WHAT?** – Identifies what the action is
2. **WHY?** – Tells parents why it is important
3. **HOW?** – Explains how it might be replicated at home

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Let’s Dance and Play!



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Dancing With Books

based on Dr. Seuss’s “My Uncle Terwilliger Waltzes with Bears” from “Songs from Dr. Seuss” and “The Cat in the Hat Songbook.”

Chorus

Chorus

We went to storytime early today,
To read and to sing and to laugh and to play.
We’re using our books in so many new ways....
We’re dancing with books today, hip, hip, hooray!

We’re da-da-da, da-da-da, dancing with books.
Mystery books, hist’ry books, picture books too.
The storytime children do more than just look,
They love to go dancing, da-da-da dancing.
They love to go dancing, dancing with books.

We went to storytime early today,
To read and to sing and to laugh and to play.
We’re using our books in so many new ways....
We’re reading our books today, hip, hip, hooray!

We’re ree-ree-ree, ree-ree-ree, reading our books.
Mystery books, hist’ry books, picture books too.
The storytime children do more than just look,
They love to be reading, ree-ree-ree reading.
They love to be reading, reading a book.

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Dancing With Books

based on Dr. Seuss's "My Uncle Terwilliger Waltzes with Bears" from
"Songs from Dr. Seuss" and "The Cat in the Hat Songbook."

Chorus

Chorus

We went to circle time early today,
To read and to sing and to laugh and to play.
We're using our books in so many new ways....
We're sharing books today, hip, hip, hooray!

We're sha-sha-sha, sha-sha-sha, sharing our books.
Mystery books, hist'ry books, picture books too.
The storytime children do more than just look,
They love to be sharing, sha-sha-sha shancing.
They love to be sharing, sharing their books.

We went to circle time early today,
To read and to sing and to laugh and to play.
We're using our books in so many new ways....
We're da-da-da dancing,
Ree-ree-ree reading,
We're sha-sha-sha sharing
Our books every day!



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Thank you for joining in today!

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