

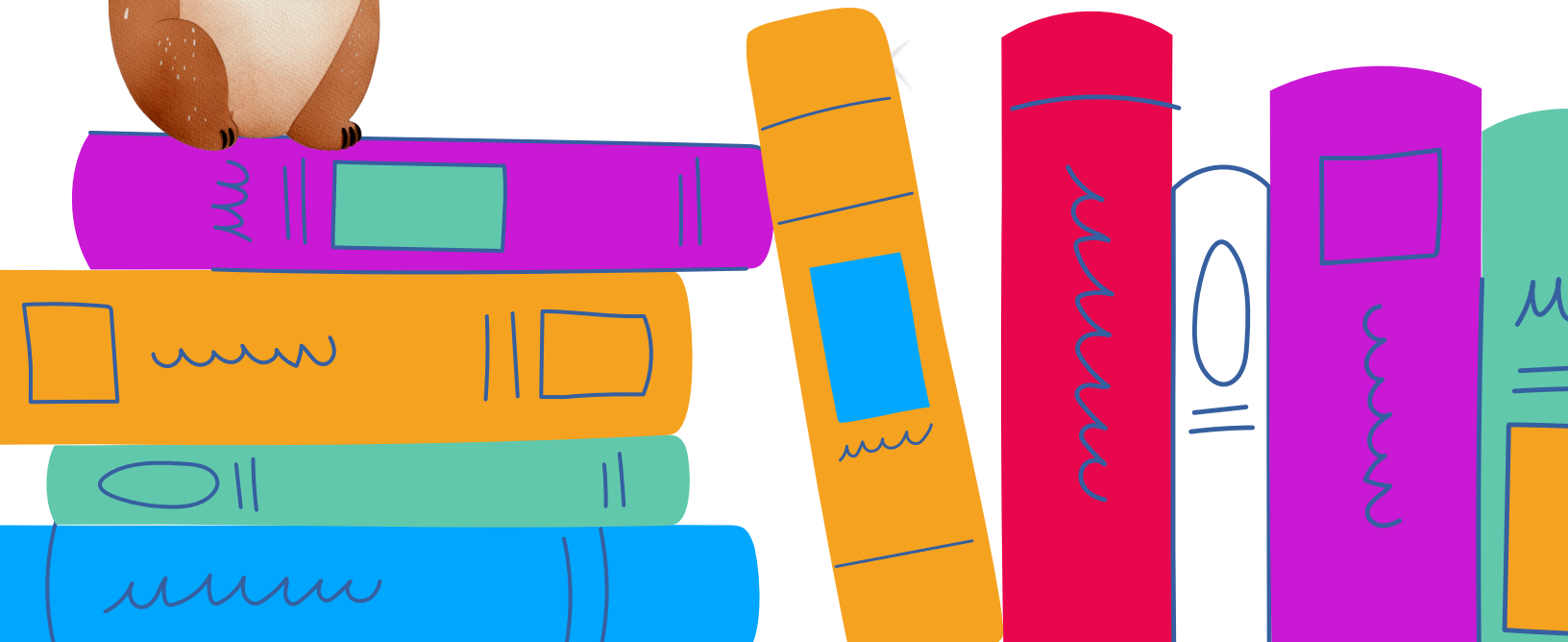


CT State Library
Division of Library Development

CT READY TO READ WITH sparkler



A “beary” fun literacy curriculum for librarians to use with parents/caregivers and their young children at library storytimes!





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Introduction



Early literacy is the foundation for children's lifelong learning journey. Research shows that the first few years of life are crucial for brain development, and the experiences young children have with language, books, and storytelling during this time can significantly shape their future academic success. Libraries and librarians can play a vital role in supporting parents and caregivers in helping children learn important early literacy skills.

The Public Library Association and the Association for Library Services to Children released the first edition of the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program 25 years ago to advance early literacy. ECRR was centered on the six early literacy skills: print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, print awareness, and letter knowledge. It included stand-alone adult education sessions separate from children's programming. This early edition of the program was eventually updated to replace the six early literacy skills with five related practices: sing, talk, read, write, and play.


This curriculum, CT Ready to Read with Sparkler, was created by the CT State Library and Sparkler Learning and builds on the legacy of ECRR, modernizing the program for today's librarians and families. The program is designed to help librarians lead engaging and purposeful storytime sessions that promote key early literacy skills for parents or caregivers and their young children to experience together. This structured program provides a roadmap for librarians to facilitate interactive, skill-building sessions that not only support young children's growth but also empower parents and caregivers to become active partners in their children's early literacy skill development.


Using a "bear themed" curriculum, six core early literacy skills are introduced and reinforced through shared stories, activities, and songs:


- **Week 1: Print Awareness** – Helping children recognize that print carries meaning, from books to labels to signs in the world around them.
- **Week 2: Narrative Skills** – Encouraging children to understand and tell stories, fostering the ability to organize and express their thoughts through language.
- **Week 3: Phonological Awareness** – Strengthening children's ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds in spoken language, a key building block for reading.
- **Week 4: Letter Knowledge** – Introducing children to the alphabet, letter recognition, and the sounds that letters make.


- **Week 5: Vocabulary** – Expanding children’s language by introducing new words and helping them make connections between words and their meanings. 
- **Week 6: Print Motivation** — Building children’s interest in print and reading and their persistence with reading, even when it is difficult. 

Each week of the program includes a blend of reading, writing, singing, talking, and playful activities that actively engage children while also providing valuable guidance for parents and caregivers. By attending these storytimes, families will not only develop a love for reading, but also learn practical, evidence-based strategies to support their child's literacy development at home.

CT Ready to Read with Sparkler offers librarians a clear, structured framework to deliver high-quality, research-based early literacy programs, while fostering meaningful connections with families in the community. Through these sessions, librarians can help parents and caregivers understand how everyday activities — such as reading together, talking about the world around them, and playing with sounds — are integral to building a child's literacy foundation. 

CT Ready to Read with Sparkler was created through a collaboration between Sparkler Learning and the CT State Library. 

More about The CT State Library: The Connecticut State Library is an Executive Branch agency of the State of Connecticut. The State Library provides a variety of library information, archival, public records, museum, and administrative services to citizens of Connecticut, as well as the employees and officials of all three branches of State government. The Connecticut State Archives and the Museum of Connecticut History are components of the State Library, as is the Division of Library Development. 

More about Sparkler Learning: The CT Office of Early Childhood makes Sparkler available statewide for all families with children 5 and under and to all programs serving families with young children. For families, Sparkler is a mobile app that gives parents easy access to developmental screening, thousands of activities that support play-based learning, tips for parents and caregivers, and connection to support. Sparkler’s service was developed by Sparkler Learning, a nonprofit organization focused on supporting families to promote healthy learning and development in the early years. Learn more at playsparkler.org/CT. 





Help Your Child Get a Strong Start!

Children learn through play! Sparkler is a mobile app that helps parents with young children (0-5) check on their children's early development and spark early learning through play. It's available in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, and Arabic for iOS and Android, smartphones and tablets.



We ALL have questions.

From the day new parents bring their baby home from the hospital, they have questions: Are they meeting milestones? Should we be worried? What can we do to help our child learn to climb stairs... draw circles... solve problems... read books?



Know

Use Sparkler to complete the mobile Ages & Stages Questionnaires® to understand your child's development.



Play

Get inspired to learn together through play. Use Sparkler's library of 2000+ off-screen activities to grow children's hearts, words, minds, and bodies!



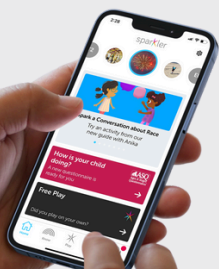
Grow

Follow your child's progress. See all that you accomplish together — and earn "Sparkles" as you play.



Connect

Get handy nudges, plus answers to your questions about child development and parenting.



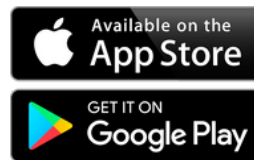
CT Ready to Read with Sparkler is integrated with Sparkler — so families who download the app can play along in the app to enrich their learning during storytimes and keep track of what they accomplish together!

Get Started With Sparkler!

1

Download the app to your smartphone or tablet.

Go to the App Store or Google Play Store and download the app. You can search for the app or find it by scanning the QR code below.



2

Open the App. Tap "Create a new account."

Tap on "Email address" or another method to create your new account.

3

Enter your program's access code.

This will connect you with your library or other Connecticut-based program. Any Connecticut family can use the Code CT to access support from 211 Child Development care coordinators.

Our Program's Access Code

4

Now it's time to set up your Sparkler account.

Enter your email address and create a password you'll remember. On the following screen, enter your name and contact information.

5

Set up your child's profile.

The most important thing to share on this screen is your child's correct birth date (and weeks prematurity if your child is under 2 years old). The birth date allows Sparkler to assign the correct play content and developmental screening.

6

You'll see the names of the organizations that are "Sponsoring Partners."

These are the organizations that are supporting you with Sparkler. They'll be able to see your screening results and play/engagement in order to offer your family support and resources.

Elements of CT Ready to Read With Sparkler



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

During each storytime, families will gather in the library. If materials are required for the session, we'll let you know!



Tips for Adults

Each unit includes key lessons for parents/caregivers. We call these out at the beginning and incorporate them throughout the lesson.



Song

Each storytime session starts with a song to establish a tone of joyful participation. Sessions also include songs/music throughout to keep children engaged.



Story Time

Read together to explore the theme. We suggest books, but if a librarian prefers, they can substitute alternative book(s).



Activity

This is when children solidify their understanding through song, activity, or dramatic play. This helps them build a visible and physical connection to the lesson.



Take Home Resources

Each lesson is paired with a take-home resources that help families continue practicing the skill at home. These activities are all available as printable handouts in this booklet and also within the Sparkler mobile app.



Week 1: Print Awareness



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Book-making materials: 3-4 pages of blank paper for each child, stapled together down the middle and folded in half as a blank book, leaves from outside or cut from paper; glue; crayons, and other art supplies.



Tips for Adults

1. **Print Awareness** is children's ability to recognize words and print that they see, and to understand that written language conveys meaning.
2. It is important because it helps children understand that written language has meaning, and that it's connected with spoken language.
3. Grown-ups can teach children print awareness by...
 - a. Reading to children and playing with books with them;
 - b. Pointing to words in books when reading with child(ren) and pointing to signs and other words when outside; and
 - c. Pretend play.



Welcome Song

All Kinds of Bears (to the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb)

Grizzly Bears are big and brown.
Big and brown, big and brown!
Grizzly Bears are big and brown,
And live in the woods.

Polar Bears are soft and white.
Soft and white, soft and white.
Polar Bears are soft and white,
And live where it's cold.

Panda Bears are black and white,
Black and white, black and white!
Panda Bears are black and white,
And live in the jungle.





We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Michael Rosen • Helen Oxenbury



Story Time

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt"

by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury

As you read the book aloud, do the following to build children's print awareness:

Silly Reading (A Sparkler activity)

1. We're reading "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Can you help me?
2. I'll make silly mistakes like holding the book upside down or backwards, reading the author's name instead of the title, or turning the pages backwards.
3. Wait! That's not right! Can you show me how to hold the book, and how to turn the pages? Thanks for your help! Let's read!



Song: These Are My Glasses by Laurie Berkner



As children open and close books, begin to imagine what's written inside, and start to recognize the difference between letters, words, and sentences, they are practicing print awareness!



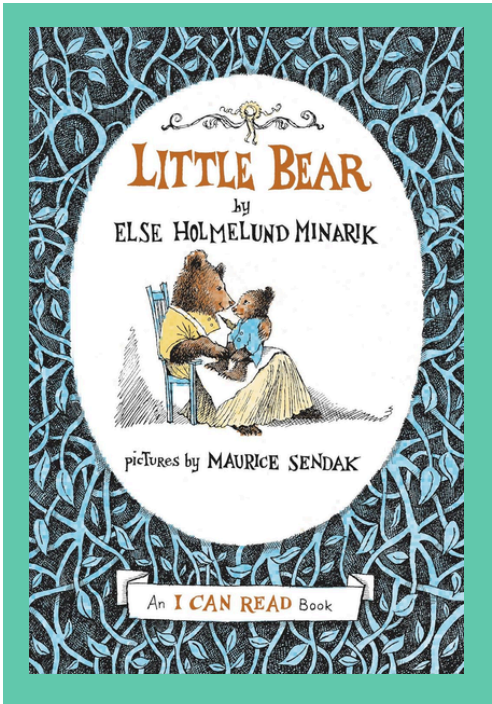


Story Time

“Little Bear”

by Else Holmelund Minarik (Author), Maurice Sendak (Illustrator)

This time, as you read aloud, point to words as you read!



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we read in playful ways to give children the opportunity to practice print awareness and learn in a new way from the stories we read?
 - a. We did “silly reading” to think about the parts of a book and how we use them.
 - b. We pointed to words as we read to connect the spoken and written words.
 - c. We pretended to read as we sang!
2. Now we’re going to create our own books — which is another way for children to develop print awareness.
3. This activity will help children make the connection between spoken words and words that are written and printed.



Activity: Let’s Make Our Own Bear Books!

- There are book-making materials out on the tables.
- Families, please each create your own short book about a bear.
- Before starting, come up with a plan with your child:
 - Characters: Who are the bears and other characters?
 - Setting: Where are the bears?
 - Plot: What happens in the beginning of the story? What happens in the middle? What happens in the end?
 - Feelings: How do the characters feel along the way?
- Grown-ups should write the words, and children should illustrate the books!
- Remember to put a title and the names of the authors/illustrators on the front cover!

Goodbye Song



“Open Shut Them” — Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie
 Open, shut them. Open, shut them.
 Give a little clap, clap, clap.
 Open, shut them open, shut them.
 Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
 Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,
 Shake them just like this, this, this.
 Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,
 Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)
 Open, shut them, open, shut them.
 Give a little clap, clap, clap.
 Open, shut them, open, shut them.
 Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
 Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,
 High up in the sky, sky, sky.
 Wave to me, I'll wave to you,
 Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

Each CT Ready to Read unit is paired with take-home resources that help families continue practicing the skills at home. Parents can play in the Sparkler app by scanning the QR Codes or you can print out the handouts on the following page and share them with families as they leave.



Sounds Like a Story

Practice *Expression* and
Representation

Write down your child's story as they do pretend play. Later, read the story together!



Love Story

Practice *Trust* and
Representation

Write a story with your child about your child and someone they love (like a grandparent).



Words



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SOUNDS LIKE A STORY

INSTRUCTIONS:

- You're imagining and pretending! It sounds like what you're imagining is a story that's waiting to be written!
- While you're playing, I'll ask you to tell me what's happening: Who are the characters? Where are they? What happens first, next, and last? I'll write down your words.
- Later, we can read your story together!



WHY?

Writing down your child's words and ideas encourages them to say more, and think about words and the structure of stories!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: LOVE STORY



Heart

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Let's write a story about you and someone you love.
- What are your favorite things to do together? Let's draw pictures of them.
- Next to your pictures on each page, I will write words that tell the story.



WHY?

This activity helps to build trusting relationships between children and the people they love. It also helps them to practice telling stories!

Week 2: Narrative Skills



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Felt board and cut-out characters, stuffed animals



Tips for Adults

1. Narrative Skills are the ability to describe events, tell stories, and understand how stories work.
2. These skills are important because they help us communicate clearly and tell stories from beginning to end.
3. We can teach them by...
 - a. Reading books;
 - b. Retelling familiar stories; and
 - c. Making up our own stories.



Welcome Song

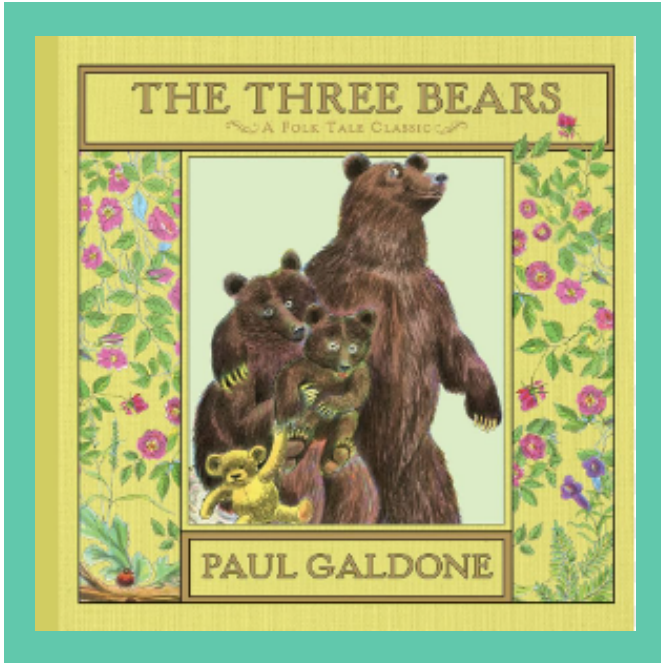
Teddy Bear Picnic

If you go down in the woods today
You're sure of a big surprise
If you go down in the woods today
You better go in disguise
For every bear that ever there was
Will gather there for certain because
Today's the day the teddy bears have their picnic

Every teddy bear whose been good
Is sure of a treat today
There's lots of marvelous things to eat
And wonderful games to play
Beneath the trees where nobody sees
They'll hide and seek as long as they please
That's the way the Teddy Bears have their picnic

If you go down in the woods today
You're sure of a big surprise
If you go down in the woods today
You better go in disguise
For every bear that ever there was
Will gather there for certain because
Today's the day the teddy bears have their picnic





Story Time

“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”

by Paul Galdone (or your favorite version!)

After you read, use a felt board and cut-out characters to retell the story as a group. This is a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and telling/retelling the story helps to build narrative skills.

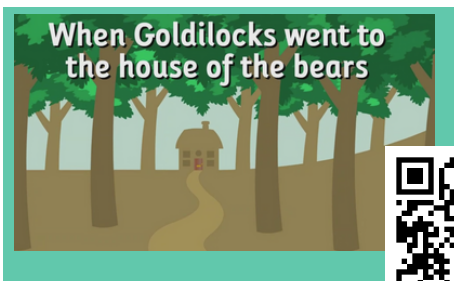
Please note: felt and puppet characters can be borrowed from Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC).

Adaptation of the Sparkler Activity “Tiny Theater”

1. Let’s use our felt characters and retell the story we just read!
2. You can each be a character and I’ll do the rest while we retell the story.
3. What did your character say and do?



Song: When Goldilocks Went to the House of the Bears



Children learn narrative skills as they listen to a familiar story in the song!

Activities:

1. Print or draw pictures of key events in the story (e.g., Goldilocks entering the house, trying the porridge, breaking the chair, etc.).
2. Use paper plates, markers, and construction paper to create bear masks.



Story Time

“The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear”

by Don Wood and Audrey Wood (Author) and Don Wood (Illustrator)

Have children and their grown-ups act out the role of the Mouse and the Strawberry as you read!



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we used play to practice narrative skills and telling stories?
 - a. We read a familiar story and retold the story using our felt board
 - b. We SANG a story!
 - c. We acted out a story
2. Now, we will practice telling stories to our stuffies, which is another way for children to practice narrative skills.
3. This activity will help children describe events, tell stories, and understand how stories work!



Activity: Read to a Stuffed Friend

- There are stuffed animals to choose from out on the table.
- Families, please choose an animal you'd like to read to and find a comfy place to sit.
- Read the title and author to your stuffed animal friend! Let's open the book and flip from page to page. Point to pictures and talk about what you see!
- What did you and your stuffed friend like best about the story?



Find it on Sparkler!





Goodbye Song



“Open Shut Them” -Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.

Give a little clap, clap, clap.

Open, shut them open, shut them.

Put them in your lap, lap, lap.

Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,

Shake them just like this, this, this.

Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,

Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)

Open, shut them, open, shut them.

Give a little clap, clap, clap.

Open, shut them, open, shut them.

Put them in your lap, lap, lap.

Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,

High up in the sky, sky, sky.

Wave to me, I'll wave to you,

Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

Each CT Ready to Read unit is paired with take-home resources that help families continue practicing the skills at home. Parents can play in the Sparkler app by scanning the QR Codes or you can print out the handouts and share them with families as they leave.



Sounds Like a Story

Practice *Expression* and *Representation*

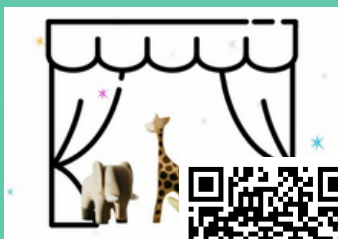
Write down your child's story as they do pretend play. Later, read the story together!



Read to a Stuffed Friend

Practice *Expression* and *Empathy*

Read to a favorite stuffed animal at home!



Tiny Theater

Practice *Stories* and *Expression*

Use toys as if they were puppets to act out a story!



Write What You Know

Practice *Representation* and *Small Muscle* skills

Make a book about something you know a lot about!



Words



Heart



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SOUNDS LIKE A STORY

INSTRUCTIONS:

- You're imagining and pretending! It sounds like what you're imagining is a story that's waiting to be written!
- While you're playing, I'll ask you to tell me what's happening: Who are the characters? Where are they? What happens first, next, and last? I'll write down your words.
- Later, we can read your story together!



WHY?

Writing down your child's words and ideas encourages them to say more, and think about words and the structure of stories!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: READ TO A STUFFED FRIEND



Words



Heart



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pick out a few books and find a comfy place where we can cuddle up and read with your favorite stuffed toy.
2. Read the title and author to your friend! Now, let's open the book and flip from page to page. Point to pictures and talk about what you see!
3. What did you and your stuffed friend like best about the story?

WHY?

When your child reads to their toys (even if they are making up the story based on the pictures they see), they are learning how books work and beginning to understand that printed words on page have meaning.

Words



FEATURED ACTIVITY: TINY THEATER

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's use our toys as if they were puppets and act out a familiar story like The Three Little Pigs.
2. Let's choose toys to represent the main characters. We can use stuffed animals, plastic animals, or draw pictures!
3. You can be the puppeteer for one character, and I'll do the rest while I tell the story. What does your character say and do?



WHY?

Using puppets helps your child engage deeply with familiar stories to help them think about the many different parts of the story.

FEATURED ACTIVITY: WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW



Words

Body



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's make a book on a topic that you know well — trains, flowers, animals, or even family members.
2. Let's put one picture on each page. We can draw, use photographs, or cut pictures from catalogues or magazines.
3. Let's choose one word to write on each page. You tell me what words to write and I'll write them out on each page. Let's fold and staple our book so that you can read it yourself!

WHY?

Making a simple book gives your child practice at representing their ideas on paper.

Week 3: Phonological Awareness



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Paper and crayons/markers/colored pencils



Tips for Adults

1. Phonological Awareness is our awareness, understanding, and ability to work with the sounds of spoken language.
2. It is important because understanding the connection between letters, words, and sounds is key for learning to read.
3. We can teach it by...
 - a. Reading books and poems that rhyme
 - b. Singing
 - c. Teaching letter sounds (not just letter names)



Welcome Song

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, jump up high.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the sky.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, wiggle your nose.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your toes.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, nod your head.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, go to bed.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the light.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, say "Good night."
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, peekaboo.
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, I love you.





Story Time

“Bear Wants More”

by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

As you read the book, pause for children to fill in repeating, familiar, or rhyming words.

Adaptation of the Sparkler Activity

“Let’s Read”

- “So up mouse hops onto Bear’s big back. They tromp through the woods for a fresh fruit....”(snack!)
- “But the bear wants...”(more!)



Song: Willoughby Wallaby Woo

Children learn phonological awareness as they listen to silly rhyming words!

Note to Librarian: Pull out instruments and allow kids and families to march and dance to the song!

Willoughby wallaby woo, An elephant sat on you! Willoughby wallaby wee, An elephant sat on me! Willoughby wallaby Wusan*, An elephant sat on Susan*! Willoughby wallaby Wyan*, An elephant sat on Ryan*. Willoughby wallaby woo, An elephant sat on you! Willoughby wallaby wee, An elephant sat on me!

* Play with children's names, substituting the /w/ sound



singable songs for the very young



with a peanut-butter sandwich



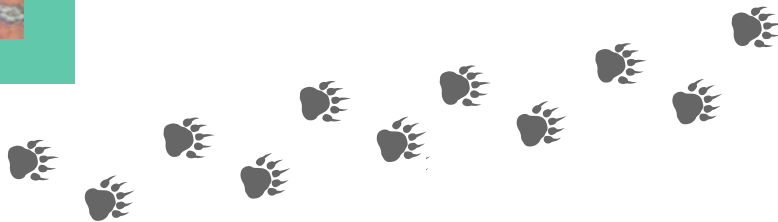
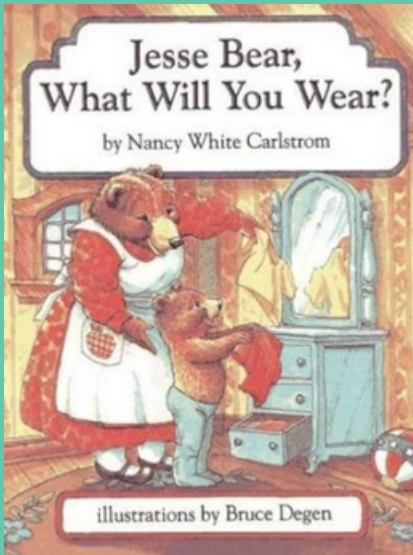
Story Time

"Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?"

by Nancy White Carlstrom

After you read the book, talk about the beginning sounds in words.

The first sound in the word "Bear" is the B sound. What else starts with the "B" sound?



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we used play to explore word and letter sounds? Rhymes naturally break words into syllables and help us notice the sounds.
 - a. We predicted rhyming words as we read the book.
 - b. We sang together to practice more rhyming words.
 - c. We sang a silly rhyming song.
2. Now we will think about the sounds that letters make, which is another way for children to learn phonological awareness!
3. This activity will help your child think about letters and the sound each one represents!



Activity: A Poem About YOU

- There are paper and markers/crayons on the table.
- An acrostic poem is a poem with the first letter of each line spelling out a special word. Let's write an acrostic poem with your name as the special word!
- Families, help your child write their name vertically down the side of the paper.
- Think of words with your child that describe them for each line of the poem! For example, a poem about Leo could be L= Loving, E= Energetic, O= One of a kind.
 - For younger children, draw a picture of something that starts with the first letter of your name! Leo could draw a lion, for example.



Find it on
Sparkler!



Goodbye Song



“Open Shut Them” — Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,
Shake them just like this, this, this.
Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,
Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,
High up in the sky, sky, sky.
Wave to me, I'll wave to you,
Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

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Silly Ending

Practice *Sounds & Letters* and *Trust*

Retell a familiar rhyme with silly rhyming words!



T is for Turnip

Practice *Sounds & Letters* and *Memory*

Come up with a different vegetable for different letters of the alphabet!



Willaby Wallaby

Practice *Sounds & Letters* and *Expression*

Sing a funny rhyming song!



Let's Read

Practice *Expression* and *Self Regulation*

Fill in predictable words while reading a book!





Words



Heart



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SILLY ENDING

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's think of a nursery rhyme that you know very well like Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or Baa Baa Black Sheep.
2. Let's change the last word in each line to a silly rhyming word. Instead of, "Twinkle twinkle little STAR," we can say, "Twinkle twinkle little CAR!"
3. Our nursery rhymes sound so silly this way! Let's use silly rhyming words and say the whole nursery rhyme together.



WHY?

Playing with rhymes, letters, and sound helps your child learn to hear and distinguish different word sounds, which will help them learn to read one day!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: T IS FOR TURNIP



Words



Mind



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Turnip starts with the letter T! Let's write a letter T on our paper. T sounds like "T - T - T."
2. Let's write the letter B! B sounds like "B - B - B." Can you think of a vegetable that starts with B?
3. Let's try another letter. I will write it on the paper and tell you how it sounds. Can you think of a vegetable that starts with that letter?

WHY?

Guessing games are a fun way for your child to think about letters and the sound that each represents.

Words



FEATURED ACTIVITY: WILLABY WALLABY



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's sing "Willaby Wallaby" to get a laugh and practice our rhyming skills.
2. Willaby Wallaby wee. An elephant sat on me! Willaby Wallaby woo. An elephant sat on you...
3. Can we rhyme our own names into the song? Our new verses are funny!

WHY?

Rhymes help your child learn the sounds of the letters, which will eventually help them read, write, and express themselves!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: LET'S READ



Words

Heart



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's read "Bear Wants More" by Karma Wilson.
2. Once you know the story well, I will pause when I get to the word "MORE" so that YOU can say the word "more."
3. We can say the whole sentence together: "Bear wants more."

WHY?

Reading rhyming books with phrases that repeat is a great opportunity for your child to practice their expression skills.

Week 4: Letter Knowledge



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Printed out letters



Tips for Adults

1. Letter Knowledge is knowing that the same letter can look different, that letters have names and are related to sounds.
2. It is important because it helps children remember the forms of written words as they learn to read.
3. We can teach it by...
 - a. Noticing letters and words all around;
 - b. Teaching letter names; and
 - c. Forming letter shapes in different ways.

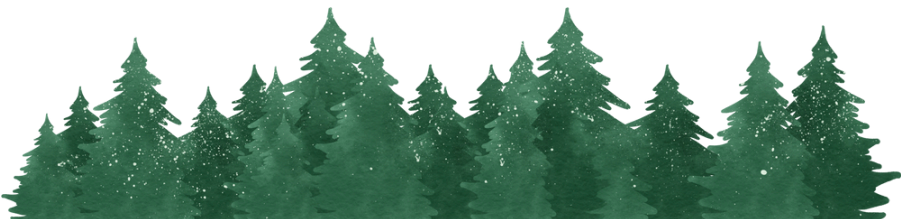


Welcome Song

The Alphabet Song (with sign language)

A, B, C, D,
E, F, G
H, I, J, K,
L, M, N, O, P,
Q, R, S,
T, U, V,
W, X, Y, AND Z.

Now I know my ABCs,
Next time won't you sing with me?



Bear Is Awake!

An Alphabet Story



HANNAH E. HARRISON



Story Time

"Bear is Awake"

by Hannah Harrison

Read the story and have children repeat the letter names after you. Or, pause and let them read the letter names!

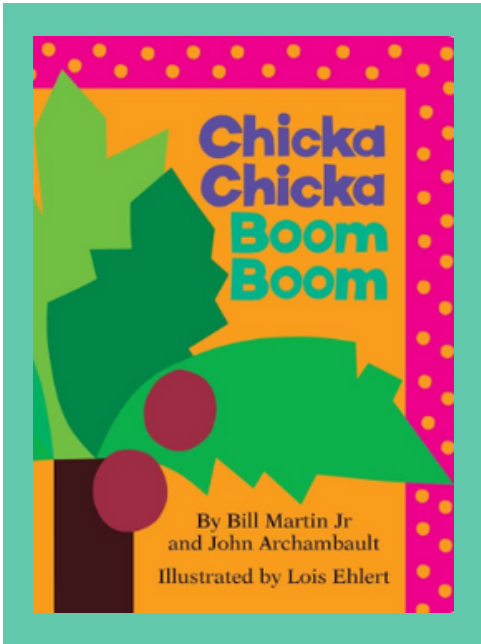


Song: T-E-D-D-Y (to the tune of BINGO)

There was a friend who had a bear and Teddy was his name-o
T-E-D-D-Y
T-E-D-D-Y
T-E-D-D-Y
And teddy was his name-o.

Teddy loved to have some snacks and honey was his favorite.
H-O-N-E-Y
H-O-N-E-Y
H-O-N-E-Y
And honey was his favorite!





Story Time

“Chicka Chicka Boom Boom”

By Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

Illustrated by Lois Ehlert



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we used play to explore letters?
 - a. We sang the Alphabet song and named each letter with our mouths and with our hands;
 - b. We read an alphabet book that helped connect the letter shape and name; and
 - c. We sang about letter names.
2. Now we will play a spelling game! This is another fun way for children to learn about phonological awareness.
3. This activity will help your child begin to recognize letters and their sounds.



Activity: Where’s Bear?

- There are lots of pieces of paper hiding around the room. Each one has a different letter.
- We’re trying to spell BEAR.
- Families, see if you can find the letters B, E, A, and R! I’ll have an example here for you to show your child.
- Did you find all the letters? Let’s spell our word together! “Bear!”

Goodbye Song



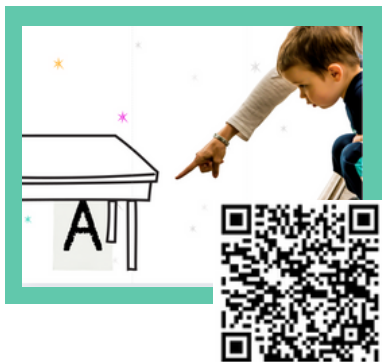
“Open Shut Them” -Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,
Shake them just like this, this, this.
Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,
Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,
High up in the sky, sky, sky.
Wave to me, I'll wave to you,
Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

Each CT Ready to Read with Sparkler unit is paired with take-home resources that help families continue practicing the skills at home. Parents can play in the Sparkler app by scanning the QR Codes or you can print out the handouts and share them with families as they leave.



Where's My Name
Practice *Counting, Numbers, and Representation*

Write the letters of your name and I'll hide them. Let's find them and make your name!



Namely

Practice *Sounds & Letters and Counting & Numbers*

Let's write our names and compare them!



Alphabet Yoga

Practice *Sounds & Letters and Big Muscle*

Form letters of the alphabet with our bodies!



ABC Coconut Tree

Practice *Sounds & Letters and Small Muscle*

Make the letters in your name out of natural items like sticks and leaves!





FEATURED ACTIVITY: WHERE'S MY NAME?

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's write your name in big letters on a sheet of paper. Let's cut out each letter and count them.
2. Now, close your eyes while I hide the letters around the room.
3. Time to search for the letters! Let's count them as you go. When you find them all, let's put them together to spell your name again!



WHY?

Searching, identifying, and naming letters will help your child recognize the letters of the alphabet.

FEATURED ACTIVITY: NAMELY



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your name and your child's name. Say each letter out loud as you write.
2. Do you have any of the same letters in your names?
3. How many letters are in each name? Which name is longer? Shorter?

WHY?

Understanding that letters combine to make words is a first step towards learning to read and write!

 Words

 Body



FEATURED ACTIVITY: ALPHABET YOGA

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's form letters with our bodies!
2. Let's start with some letters that use straight lines like L, I, or X.
3. Let's try to form some letters with curves, like C, U, or P — either standing up or lying down. We can use a camera to take pictures of our letter shapes.



WHY?

Using language like “straight” and “curve” will help your child think about the shapes of letters!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: ABC COCONUT TREE



 Words

 Body

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's read “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault.
2. Let's go outside and look for small leaves and twigs.
3. Let's use what we find in nature to make the letters of your name. Can we make any other letters?



WHY?

Using different materials to explore letters, not just pen and paper, helps your child to internalize the shapes using a variety of senses.

Week 5: Vocabulary



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Large piece of paper
- A variety of items with different smells



Tips for Adults

1. Vocabulary is all of the words that children know and understand.
2. It is important because having a large vocabulary helps children to understand the meaning of the words and sentences on the page.
3. We can teach it by...
 - a. Exposing your child to new words
 - b. Helping children use context clues to understand new words
 - c. Reading together



Welcome Song

Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (with motions)

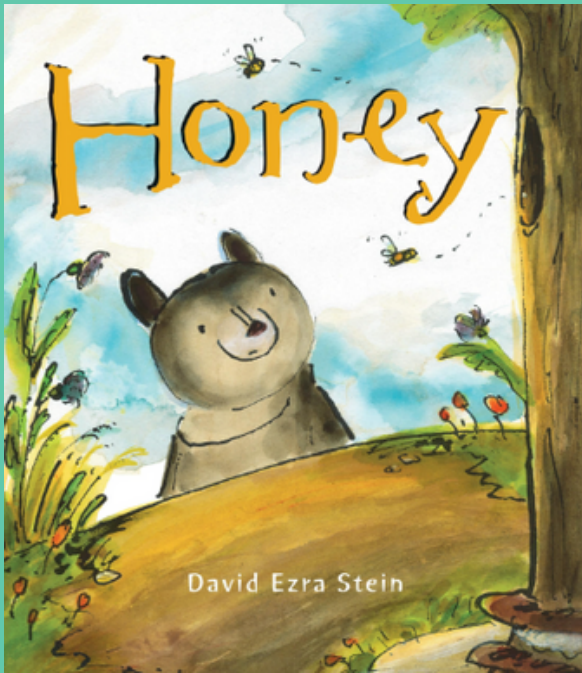
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

And eyes and ears and mouth and nose.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.





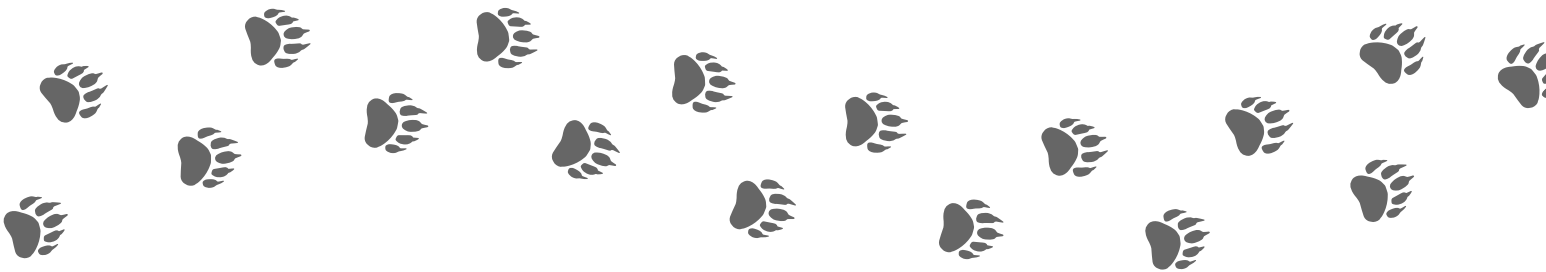
Story Time

“Honey” by David Ezra Stein

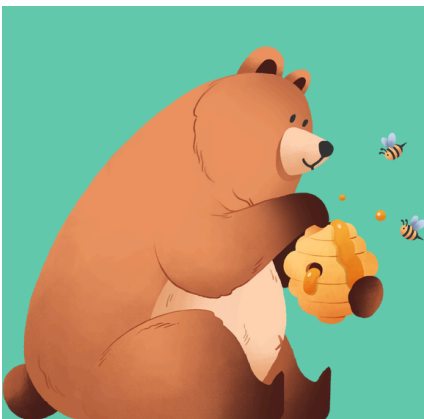
Adapted from the Sparkler activity “Love Poem”

Let’s write an acrostic poem using the word HONEY together. I’ll write the word HONEY vertically on a big piece of paper. Can we come up with a word or phrase for each letter that begins with that letter?

H	_____
O	_____
N	_____
E	_____
Y	_____



Song: T-E-D-D-Y to the tune of BINGO



There was a friend who had a bear and Teddy was his name-o
T-E-D-D-Y
T-E-D-D-Y
T-E-D-D-Y
And teddy was his name-o.

Teddy loved to have some snacks and honey was his favorite.
H-O-N-E-Y
H-O-N-E-Y
H-O-N-E-Y
And honey was his favorite!



Story Time

“We’re Going on a Bear Hunt”

by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury

As you read aloud, emphasize the different words used to describe the obstacles in the story!



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we used different forms of play to practice and grow vocabulary?
 - a. We read book(s) that use words that we don’t often hear in conversation.
 - b. We learned words from each other as we described a sweet treat.
 - c. We sang songs to hear and practice words.
2. Now we will play a vocabulary game!



Activity: Smell Detective

- I have a special box over here for the grownups to come pick some items for you all to smell!
- I want all the friends to cover their eyes (or you could use blindfolds).
- Families, hold the item you chose in front of your child’s nose and have them sniff. How does it smell? What might it be? Were you right? Let’s try another item!
- If there’s time, let’s switch and have grown-ups try to guess! Use descriptive words like delicious, spicy, stinky, etc.



Find it on Sparkler!



Goodbye Song



“Open Shut Them” -Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.

Give a little clap, clap, clap.

Open, shut them open, shut them.

Put them in your lap, lap, lap.

Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,

Shake them just like this, this, this.

Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,

Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)

Open, shut them, open, shut them.

Give a little clap, clap, clap.

Open, shut them, open, shut them.

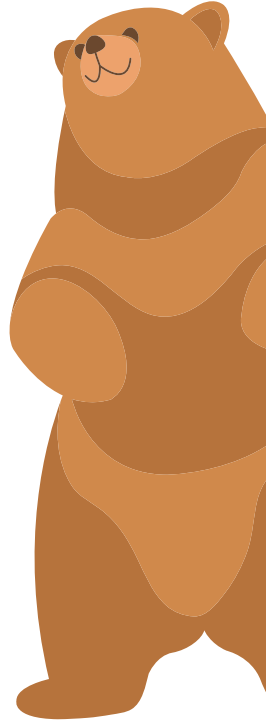
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.

Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,

High up in the sky, sky, sky.

Wave to me, I'll wave to you,

Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

Each CT Ready to Read with Sparkler unit is paired with take-home resources that help families continue practicing the skills at home. Parents can play in the Sparkler app by scanning the QR Codes or you can print out the handouts and share them with families as they leave.



Feelings Charades

Practice *Expression* and *Feelings*

Guess what I'm feeling!



Mystery Sock

Practice *Expression* and *Focus*

Describe what you feel hiding in a sock!



Words



Heart



FEATURED ACTIVITY: FEELINGS CHARADES

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. People use body language and facial expressions to help them tell stories. Let's play feelings charades and act out different emotions.
2. Without using any words, I'll act out a feeling — like happy, sad, mad, excited, or worried. You guess what I'm feeling!
3. Now it's your turn to silently act out a feeling and I'll guess.

WHY?

Acting out emotions and guessing what others might feel helps your child identify feelings and develop empathy.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: MYSTERY SOCK



Words



Mind

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's play Mystery Sock! I will hide something inside of this sock and tie the top.
2. Feel it. What is inside? If you're not sure, ask me some questions. What is your guess?
3. Now it is my turn. Find something at home that will fit in the sock and tie it at the top. I'll guess. Let's try again!

WHY?

This game helps your child practice focusing on one task and using clues to find an answer. It is also good practice for taking turns, talking, and listening.



Week 6: Print Motivation



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

- Gather in the library
- Blank booklets (3-4 pages of blank paper stapled together down the middle), glue, tape, a variety of textured materials (cotton balls, sand paper, velcro, nylon, etc.), and markers/crayons.



Tips for Adults

1. Print motivation is the reason why we read. Our love of reading motivates us to learn new ideas and gain new information.
2. Print motivation is important because it gives children a reason to read.
3. We can teach print motivation by...
 - a. Modeling reading ourselves and
 - b. Making storytime enjoyable.



Welcome Song

My Teddy Bear

My teddy bear has two eyes, two eyes, two eyes.
My teddy bear has two eyes. I love my teddy bear.

My teddy bear has one nose, one nose, one nose.
My teddy bear has one nose. I love my teddy bear.

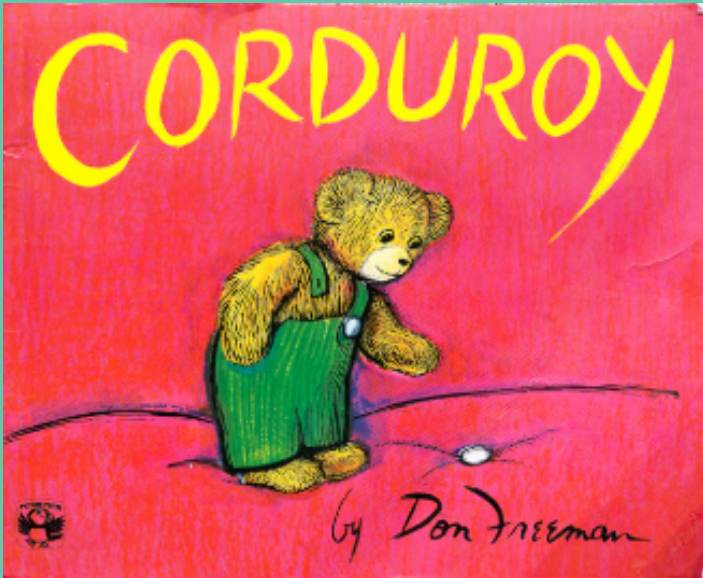
My teddy bear has two ears, two ears, two ears.
My teddy bear has two ears. I love my teddy bear.

My teddy bear has two arms, two arms, two arms.
My teddy bear has two arms. I love my teddy bear.

My teddy bear has two legs, two legs, two legs.
My teddy bear has two legs. I love my teddy bear.

My teddy bear has four paws, four paws, four paws.
My teddy bear has four paws. I love my teddy bear.





Story Time

"Corduroy"

by Don Freeman

Or YOUR favorite bear book!

Introduce the story by sharing your connection to the book!

As you read, share any personal connections or stories related to the text, or invite the children/families to share their stories.



Song: The More We Read Together



The more we read together, together, together,

The more we read together, the happier we'll be.

'Cause your friends read my books and my friends
read your books.

The more we read together the happier we'll be!



Story Time

"Bear Can't Sleep"

by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

As you read, ask the children if they've ever had trouble falling asleep.



Tips for Adults

1. Grown-ups: Did you notice how we used play to share our love of books?
 - a. We read our favorite book(s) together.
 - b. We sang a song about sharing books with friends.
2. Now we will make our own touch and feel book! This is another way to encourage print motivation.
3. This activity will motivate your child to read a book of their own creation and share it together with you!



Activity: Touch and Feel Book

- Over on the table, I have lots of different materials with different textures - sandpaper, cotton balls, nylon, etc.
- Families, help your child select some materials they want to use in their book. Use glue or tape to attach the materials to each page.
- Once the materials are attached, have your child describe what each one feels like. Write the word they used onto the page (or help them write it themselves).
- Read your book together! Should we share our books with the group?



Find it on Sparkler!

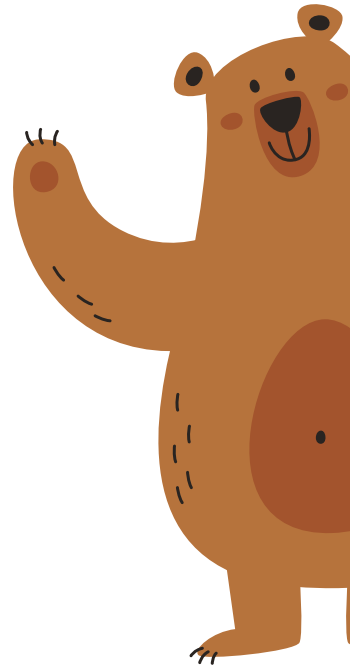


Goodbye Song



“Open Shut Them” - Goodbye version by Molly Whuppie

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Shake them, shake them, shake them, shake them,
Shake them just like this, this, this.
Roll them, roll them, roll them, roll them,
Blow a little kiss (Mwah!)
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Give a little clap, clap, clap.
Open, shut them, open, shut them.
Put them in your lap, lap, lap.
Wave them, wave them, Wave them, wave them,
High up in the sky, sky, sky.
Wave to me, I'll wave to you,
Let's all say "Bye, bye."



Take Home Resources

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My Story

Practice *Stories* and *Memory*

Tell a story about your child's day!



Home Library

Practice *Memory* and *Expression*

Turn your bedroom into a library!



Words



Mind

FEATURED ACTIVITY: MY STORY



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Listen! I'll tell you a story about something that YOU once did.
2. Do you remember when that story happened?
3. Help me tell the story from beginning to end!



WHY?

Reading and creating oral stories builds your child's language skills!

FEATURED ACTIVITY: HOME LIBRARY



Mind



Words



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pretend your bedroom is a library! You can be the librarian.
2. Please read me your favorite book. You don't have to remember all the words; you can show me the pictures and tell me the story as you turn the pages.
3. Here is my home library card, so I can borrow the book. When do I need to return it? Thanks!



WHY?

When your child pretends to be a librarian, they exercise their memory as they share books with you.

Bear Books: A Reading List

Literacy Skill	Book Titles Included in Curriculum	Additional Book Suggestions
Print Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen • Little Bear by Else Holmelund Minarik 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Came Along by Richard T. Morris and LeUyen Pham • Oh, Bear by Melissa Nelson Greenberg (Author), Ruth Hengeveld (Illustrator)
Narrative Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldilocks and the Three Bears by Paul Galdone • The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear by Don Wood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bear and the Piano by David Litchfield • The Bear Ate Your Sandwich by Julia Sarcone-Roach • A Visitor for Bear by Bonny Becker (Author), Kady MacDonald Denton (Illustrator)
Phonological Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Wants More by Karma Wilson • Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear? by Nancy White 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Song for Bear by Gabby Dawney • Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin
Letter Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear is Awake by Hannah Harrison • Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr and John Archambault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alphabears by Kathleen Hague • Not an Alphabet Book: The Case of the Missing Cake by Eoin McLaughlin
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honey by David Ezra Stein • We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a Bear in My Chair by Ross Collins • Orange, Pear, Apple Bear by Emily Gravett
Print Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corduroy by Don Freeman • Bear Can't Sleep by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Classic Adventures Of Paddington Bear by Michael Bond • A Book For Bear by Ellen Ramsey

Additional Literacy Activities

Age	Sparkler Activity	
Prenatal	Belly Reading 	Library Card 
0-6 months	The Wheels on the Bus 	Goodnight Moon Picture Hunt 
6-12 months	Tell Me My Story 	Goodnight to Myself 
12-24 months	Show Me 	Farm Adventure 
2 year olds	Look for Letters 	Rhyme Power 
3 year olds	Mixed Up Story! 	Super Story 
4 year olds	Five Senses Book 	Name Artist 
5 year olds	Now What? 	Send Mail 

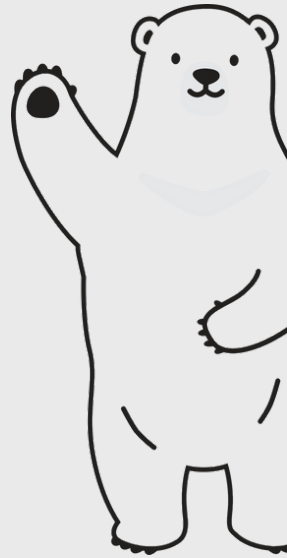
Extra Resources



CT READY TO READ

To learn more about the CT Ready to Read initiative and to learn more about the six literacy skills, visit:

libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/children/ct-ready-to-read



To learn more about what parents can do to support early literacy and download a chart with tips to support each of the six literacy skills, visit Children's and YA Services at the CT State Library:

libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/children/what-parents-can-do



To learn more about how Help Me Grow is supporting families in CT through Sparkler and more, visit:

cdi.211ct.org/program/help-me-grow/



To learn more about Sparkler for families and providers, screening, resources for Connecticut families, and more, visit:

playsparkler.org/connecticut/