

Developmental Observation Topic

How You Can Help Me Learn to Love Books

(Exploring the Environment and Learning)



What parents will be observing



- How what they do and say when sharing books with their children can help their children learn to love books
- How their children give them “clues” to follow when sharing books together



Environment



For this DOT, it is important to include a selection of books, materials and activities that are appropriate for the range of ages in your group. **Have several areas of the room set up with various books and materials so children can choose (and parents can observe!) which books and related materials/activities are most engaging and interesting to them. Be sure to select books (homemade/store bought/library) that will appeal to infants and toddlers!** Listed below are some ideas/examples for different areas of the room:

Use materials related to the books to give parents ideas for expanding on book reading and making book reading fun and engaging for their child. It will be really important to use books related to the *interest of the children in the group*. For example:

- Use books about farm animals. Put out a barn, farm animals, and blocks. Use farm animal puppets and make a puppet show “barn” theatre out of a cardboard box so parents and children can interact with each other with the puppets (or use farm animal finger puppets made out of socks).
- Use books about trucks, cars and/or airplanes and put out trucks, cars, airplanes, blocks to make roads/runways, paper/markers to make road/airport signs, etc.
- Use books that show funny faces or different emotions and have a mirror set up so parents and children can read parts of the book and then try to make the faces in the mirror!

Set up a comfy, quiet area for parents and children to sit, look at and talk about books or just be together! Set up several bean bag chairs/rocking chairs and use a variety of books (cloth/vinyl books, board books, pop-up books, picture books, books that make noises/sounds, books with different textures such as crinkly, soft, scratchy, etc.). This area may be really popular for parents with infants.

Set up an area where parents and children can make books together to take home. Search the internet (*how to make books for babies*) and you’ll find many ideas to fit into any budget! There are many possibilities for making books based on the children and families in your group. You could take pictures the week before of everyone in the group and have those available to make a Playgroup Book (see example on Brown Bear idea sheet included in this DOT). You could have pictures of various things children are interested in (cats, dogs, fire trucks, dolls, flowers, etc) as well as precut squares of different textures to make a texture book. You could also have families bring family pictures to make a book or do this on a follow-up home visit.



Opening Discussion



A. Hello Song (with names of each child and parent)

Hello (child's name), Hello (parent's name), How are you? How are you?
We're so glad to see you! We're so glad to see you! Come and play! Come and play!



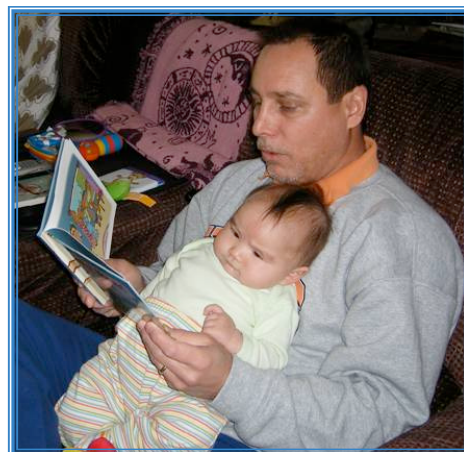
Note to facilitator: As children become familiar with the song, they will begin to show their recognition. You will see them become still. They will start waiting to hear their name, and some will show smiles and other signs of pleasure when they hear it - be sure and point this out to the parents!

B. Introducing the Topic

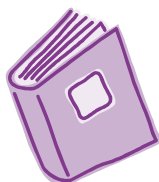
1. Providing information on the DOT

It is never too early to start sharing books with your infants and toddlers! Reading books together not only provides opportunities for fun and loving interactions between you and your child, but it also builds skills that are important for later success in learning. Today we are going to talk about how you can help your child learn to love books. The comfort of cuddling in your lap and the warmth of hearing your voice can help your child fall in love with books, reading and learning!

As many of you have probably already experienced, very young children enjoy the way books “taste,” as they tend to like to chew on books! They like to reach, grasp, touch and explore books. Then, they begin to pay more attention to pictures and like books that “do” things like make noises and have pop-up pictures. They may also like to just turn the pages – even if you haven't finished reading all the words on the page! And – that is ok! It is all part of how they learn about books and reading!



Later children begin to point to and name the pictures in the books. They often have favorite books that they want you to read over and over! When you read the same book to your child several times, they begin to know the stories well enough that they can anticipate what is coming next or even tell you the story! It makes your child feel really special when you follow their lead and read the books they are interested in or when you listen to them tell the story – even if it is different from the one in the book!







2. Sharing what you already know

Ask parents to think back over the last week and share some things their child has done when they look at books together. Some possible conversations starters are:

- What happens when you and your child look at books together?
- When/where do you share books together? Do you have reading routines with your child, bedtime, etc.
- What does your child do (chew on books, turn pages, tell stories, read books to their stuffed animals?, etc.). What have you observed?

3. Summarizing the main points

-  Sharing books together is a great way to spend special time connecting and cuddling with your child.
-  Different children enjoy, interact with and learn different things from books in different ways at different ages.
-  Helping your child develop a love of books is really important and will help them as they grow and develop.
-  Sharing books with your child can help them begin to make sense of their world and learn many new things about the world and himself/herself.

C. Describing the Environment

We are going to have a variety of books and materials out in different areas of the room for you and your child to share books, play with materials related to the books and just spend time together. For example, some books will make noises, some will have pop-up pictures, some will have textures that you and your child can feel, and some will have pictures of your child's favorites things – like animals or fire trucks! **One of the areas will have materials like those in the books** (barns, animals, cars, tractors, etc.) that you and your child can play with while you are talking about the book. **Another area of the room will be set up so that you can make a book with your child**, if he or she is interested in doing that! **There will also be a quiet area where you can just cuddle up, read and be with your child.** Remind parents of infants that infants love to hear their parent's voices when they read to them! They might also try some face-to-face interactions/ games or use the mirror to play when their infant becomes interested in changing activities.

D. Suggesting things to try

Here's a great thing about sharing books with your child: it doesn't take special skills, just you, your child, and some books! Remember to wait, watch and see what your child does with the books and then join in! Don't worry about finishing entire books — focus on pages that you and your child enjoy!

Here are a few things to try (pick a few examples to discuss):

- **Make the books come to life by making sounds (woof, meow, moo, etc.), acting out parts of the story, singing, being silly and exaggerating motions.**
- **Sing nursery rhymes, make funny animal sounds, dance, or bounce your infant on your knee — anything that shows that books and reading are fun.**
- **Don't worry about following the text exactly or reading all of the words.**
- **As you read, ask questions or make comments about the pictures or text. ("Where's the doggy? There he is! What a cute brown doggy.") Talk about the pictures, relate them to things that your child has seen before or that you have done together.**
- **Imitate or copy your child's sounds and actions.**
- **Expand on the book by playing with the toys that relate to the book (trucks, cars, farm animals).**
- **Most of all - have fun with your child!**

E. Making Predictions

Remind parents that they will be watching to see what happens when they try some of the strategies that we just talked about. Ask parents to make predictions about what they think will happen.






- What do you think will happen?
- What kinds of books do you think your child will like best?
- Where do you think your child will spend the most time?
- What strategies do you think you might use to help your child enjoy interacting with you and the books?



Parent-Child Observation Time



As you interact with each dyad:

-  Join in the fun, commenting and supporting competence and confidence
-  If you see a parent using one of the “things to try,” comment on it and its effect on the child
-  If you need to model an interaction or activity, do it and then encourage the parent to try



Transitions



A. From Activity to Snack

If you use books about animals (such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Who Do You See?* by Eric Carle or *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury), **you can entice children to the snack area by getting parents to pretend to go on a bear hunt to the snack table.** The facilitators can start the bear hunt by saying, “I’m a bear and I hungry! I’m going on a bear hunt to find a snack! And then move like a bear to the snack area. Toddlers can pick the animal they want to be and then, with their parent, pretend to be that animal and move to the snack area. You could also use animal crackers as part of snack (as long as there are no allergies)! This is a great way to give parents ideas for how they can expand on books and make them come to life for their child!

B. From Snack to Songs & Games

Transition by singing songs related to some of the books that were read earlier. For example, there are many different versions of *If You're Happy and You Know It* (even a Taggie version for infants!), which would be a fun song to sing and do silly dances to as a way to entice children back to the central area. You could also just continue the bear hunt back to the central area if children and parents seemed to enjoy that earlier!



Parent-Child Songs & Games



Ask parents to share their child’s favorite songs and nursery rhymes or make up silly songs related to some of the books used during the Parent-Child Observation time! For example, if you used farm animal books, you could sing *Old McDonald Had a Farm* or if you used *Baby Cakes*, you could play fun parent-child games with the saying from the book – *Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, I Love You! Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, Yes I Do!*



Closing Discussion







A. Reviewing Predictions

Start out the closing discussion by asking parents what happened?

- Did their child do what they thought they would do?
- Which books did their child like best? Did your child surprise you?
- What do you think made the books that your child liked interesting or engaging? (examples – novelty of the book, the book made noises/sounds, had pop-up pictures, or maybe the child was interested in the book because he or she just wanted to sit in the Mom's/Dad's lap!).
- What strategies did you try that might have helped keep your child interested in reading or looking at the books? (examples – following the child's lead, making sounds, talking about the pictures, playing with the materials related to the book)

B. Main Points

-  Books are a great way for you to spend special time connecting with your child!
-  Different children enjoy, interact with and learn different things from books in different ways at different ages.
-  You can help make sharing books a positive experience for your child by making the books "come to life" (exaggerating as they read, using motions, sounds, etc.), adding new words or ideas, supporting what your child is interested in doing with books (whether that is chewing on the cover, naming the pictures, turning pages, or reading the same story over and over!)
-  Children learn from looking at books with you. They learn new words, they learn about their world, they learn about themselves, they learn to love books – ***but most of all they learn that they are special to you!***

C. Carry-Over to Home

Try some of the "Things to Try" at home with your child's favorite books and see what happens. See if they interact with you in the same way at home as they did in playgroup. Try to read to your child a few minutes every day and make reading a part of your daily routine!

If you didn't make a homemade book today, try to make one together at home! Babies of any age like photo albums with pictures of people they know and love.

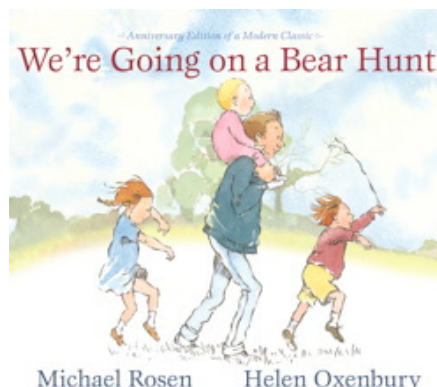
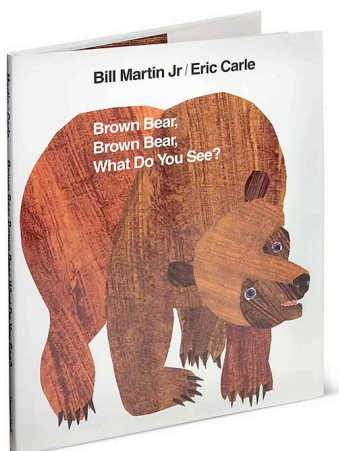
Try going to the library with your child. Many libraries have story time just for infants and toddlers. Don't forget to pick up a book for yourself while you're there. Let your child see you enjoying reading – remember they like to model what we do! Model reading as part of your everyday routines (reading newspapers, magazines, books, signs).

D. Good-Bye Song

Example - Good-bye (child's name), Good-bye (parent's name), Good-bye (next child's name), We're glad you came to play!

(Keep repeating until everyone's name has been used.)

Examples of Activities for Specific Books










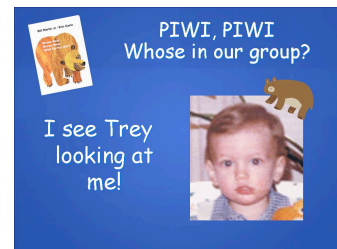
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

by **Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle**

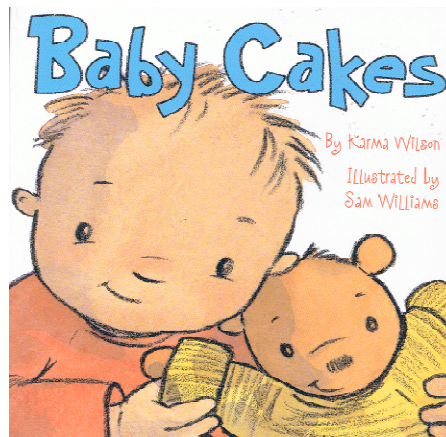
We're Going on a Bear Hunt

by **Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury**

-  Make animal sounds with your child as you are reading about each animal in the book (lion roaring, hippopotamus snorting, etc.).
-  Pretend to be the animals in the book - crawl around the room and make sounds like the animals. Ask your child how he thinks the zebra (or any of the animals in the books) would move and then try to imitate your child's moves!
-  Cut out pictures of animals and glue them on popsicle sticks. Use these to tell the story or have your child pick out the animal as you are reading and stick the animal in a styrofoam block that you can pretend is grass! You can find pictures of the animals from Brown Bear and Polar Bear at www.dltk-kids.com. You can make copies in color or black/white and have children color the pictures.
-  Make a "Whose in Our Playgroup" book using pictures of the children in the playgroup or parent/child pictures. These are great take home books! See the example on this page. 
-  Go on a bear hunt! Act out the story using stuffed animals (they don't have to be the same as those in the story – just whatever the child has!).
-  Sing "Old MacDonald Had a Zoo" (to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"), using the names of the animals in the book. Encourage your child to create sounds for the animals and help you sing the song. Take turns with your child choosing which animal to sing about next. You could also use the pictures of the animals on the popsicle sticks (from #3) as you song the song!





Examples of Activities for Specific Books




Baby Cakes by Karma Wilson

While reading *Baby Cakes* with your child, perform some of the actions that the book talks about. For example:

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“Hide from little Baby Cakes. Peek-a-Boo!” Start a game of Peek-a-Boo by hiding behind the book or a blanket and then peeking around the book/blanket saying “peek-a-boo!”
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“Hug my little Baby Cakes oh so tight. Now my little Baby Cakes go night night.” Offer your child one of the dolls or stuffed animals and blankets. As you read the book, demonstrate hugging, kissing and loving your doll as you put the doll to sleep. This is a great opportunity for toddlers to imitate loving and caring interactions.

Carry over to home idea: Try softly saying a few of the rhyming parts of *Baby Cakes* every day before your child’s naptime to establish a predictable routine. When your toddler hears *Baby Cakes*, she will know it is naptime!
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“Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes I love you! Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, Yes I Do!” This is a great part of the book to use with infants as well as toddlers. Gently move your infants legs or arms as you say “Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, I love you! Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, Yes I do!” Or you could say your child’s name instead of *Baby Cakes* (“Tyrone, Tyrone, I love you! Tyrone, Tyrone yes I do!”). Try giving your toddler a big hug when you read this part of the book!

Carry over to home idea: Try saying “Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes I love you! Baby Cakes, Baby Cakes, Yes I Do!” as you change your child’s diapers. Watch to see how your child reacts!

*** Be sure to watch how your child reacts while you are reading the book and performing the actions. What does he do to let you know that he wants you to continue with the interaction? Remember to – wait, watch and follow your child’s lead!**