Learning at Home

10 Ideas to Make Story Time Fun

There are so many ways to spark children’s interest and learning. With these simple ideas using well-loved children’s books, children (and adults) can use literature to extend their learning even after a story ends. Note that these suggestions will give you a place to start and can lead in many directions, based on children’s interests. For additional Learning at Home ideas, visit our Family Resource page.

- Books are perfect for building vocabularies. Take note of any new or unfamiliar words you read in a book, or create a word wall. Make a guess at what it means based on the context of the story or the illustrations. Then look up the word to see if your guess was right.
- Consider the topic or message of the book, and choose other books to build on a similar idea. See the box below for some ideas of topics to explore with children’s books.
- Use illustrations to inspire new works of art. Explore different techniques and mediums and give them a try yourself. Combine sketches and watercolors like Beatrix Potter’s The Tale of Peter Rabbit. Or create bold collages like Lois Ehlert in Leaf Man.
- Build from books to create opportunities to explore other concepts like math, science, and ongoing projects. For example, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle can be used to understand the concept of sequencing, explore the life cycle of insects, and even create a butterfly garden to care for over time.
- Reading aloud is a great way to share books, but there are other ways, too. Have your child explore picture books independently, listen to audiobooks, or stream children’s books through Storyline Online. Make reading time more enticing by setting up a special space for it, like a fort or tent supplied with flashlights.
- After reading a book, reflect on the story with a drawing or a brief journal entry. What was your favorite part? What would you do if you were in the character’s shoes? What do you think happened after the story ended?
- Let books like Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin and Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett inspire cooking projects. Take it even further by providing a cookbook for kids to find more recipes to create!
- Relive a tale in a new way by acting it out. Create props and costumes to do a dramatic retelling, or set up a stand with hand puppets.
- Get to know the parts of a book by introducing its cover, back, spine, author, and illustrator. Make sure you show care and respect for books by turning the pages gently from the corner and placing the books in safe spots like baskets or shelves.
- Explore different types of literature beyond picture books — chapter books, books of poetry, books of fact, fiction, photography, and so many more. Creating a daily routine for reading is a great way to progress through books with longer chapters, like Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum, or a series such as Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Topics to Explore

Capture children’s interest and imagination with these starter topics and supporting books.

- Explore transportation with Here Comes the Garbage Barge by Jonah Winter, Freight Train by Donald Crews, and Planes Fly! by George Ella Lyon
- Meet the animals on a farm with Sheep in Jeep by Nancy E. Shaw, Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown, and Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin
- Learn what it means to be kind to others with Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister, Stellaluna by Janell Cannon, and The Boy Who Wouldn’t Share by Mike Reiss
- Glimpse the moon with Kitten’s First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes, Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown, and Happy Birthday, Moon by Frank Asch