

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 to 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
- ▶ Uncover insects with Eric Carle's collection of *The Grouchy Lady Bug*, *The Very Quiet Cricket*, *The Very Busy Spider*, *The Very Lonely Firefly*, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

