

Prekindergarten Practice: Use Shared Book Reading to Develop Children's Language, Knowledge of Print Features, and Knowledge of the World

Purpose

This document provides prekindergarten educators with information about a high-leverage, evidence-based practice recommended in the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide, [Preparing Young Children for School](#).¹

Introduction

Using shared book reading to develop children's language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world is an evidence-based practice with a strong level of evidence for student achievement and a critical foundational skill for early readers. Page 53 of the practice guide states:

Shared book reading involves the teacher reading a book and encouraging children to be actively engaged in responding to the book as it is read. These interactions around books can be used to build knowledge about the social and natural world and to teach many components of literacy, such as vocabulary, print features including letters, and phonological awareness.

For more information, see [Resources for Educators](#) on the WWC.

ESSA Level of Evidence

ESSA levels of evidence are the result of a synthesis of current evidence-based research. Below is the level of evidence for this recommendation:

- **Tier 1 – Strong Evidence**

See the [full practice guide](#), [Practice Guide Review Protocol: Preparing Young Children for School](#), and [Studies Reviewed for the Preparing Young Children for School Practice Guide](#) for more information about specific studies and an overview of the evidence for this recommendation. For more information about levels of evidence, see the REL document [ESSA Tiers of Evidence: What You Need to Know](#).

¹ [What Works Clearinghouse/IES Practice Guides](#) provide recommendations for educators of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes. WWC/IES Practice Guides were developed by a panel of literacy experts based on reviews of research, practitioner experiences, and expert opinions.

Contact Information:

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How to Carry Out the Recommendation

Listed below are ways to [use shared book reading to develop children’s language, knowledge of print features, and knowledge of the world](#). See the pages of the guide referenced next to each instructional practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

- Select a variety of informational and narrative books that are appropriate for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (53-54).
- Prior to the lesson, plan the purpose for reading the book and determine when to discuss certain topics with children (54-56).
- Prepare children for listening to and discussing the content of the book before reading the book aloud (56).
- Engage in conversations with the children while reading the book (56-57).
- Align literacy activities with the focus of the shared book reading (58).

Connections to Literacy Essential Practices

[Literacy Essentials](#) provide evidence- and research-based approaches educators can use to support early literacy. This resource was introduced to Vermont through work done with [Dr. Nell Duke](#) and includes classroom practices teachers can use daily to implement the recommendations in the WWC practice guides. See the page number referenced next to each Essential Practice to find more specific implementation strategies.

[Literacy Essential Practices for Prekindergarten](#)

- **Essential #1:** Intentional use of literacy artifacts in dramatic play and throughout the learning environment (3)
- **Essential #2:** Read aloud with reference to print (3)
- **Essential #3:** Interactive read-alouds with a comprehension and vocabulary focus (4)
- **Essential #8:** Provision of abundant reading, listening, and viewing material in the classroom (6)
- **Essential Practice #9:** Ongoing observation and other forms of assessment of children’s language and literacy development that informs their education (7)