

## Top 10 Ways to Maximize Story Time

By Pam Schiller and Pat Phipps

1. Select books that have a clear story line and simple, clear, and accurate illustrations. Make sure stories are age appropriate and interesting to children. Stories with rhythmic language and predictable text appeal to preschool children.
2. Make sure that the books in your classroom library, as well as the books you choose to read aloud, are culturally diverse and free of stereotypes.
3. Familiarize yourself with the book. Plan for learner outcomes, including identifying concepts to be developed, vocabulary to be discussed, and/or questions to be asked.
4. Print new vocabulary words on sentence strips in lowercase letters. Illustrate the words with simple drawings, if possible. Display sentence strips in a pocket chart at children's eye level. Review vocabulary before reading the story.
5. Talk about the book cover with the children. Encourage the children to describe what they see and predict what the story is going to be about. Discuss the role of the author (the person who writes the words) and the illustrator (the person who draws the pictures).
6. If appropriate, help the children make a personal connection with the story.
7. Use facial expressions and voice variations to add excitement to the story. Pace your voice to fit the type of book you are reading.
8. After reading the book, review the plot with the children. Ask them questions that encourage thought and reflection.
9. Use story maps, work webs, KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) charts, role playing and sequencing activities to expand on the story. Provide activities in learning centres that expand or extend the concepts and information in the book.

10. Limit the number of interactive strategies when reading a book so that you keep the joy of the story alive. Story time for children ages 3 to 5 should never last longer than 10 minutes.

**Note:** These strategies are designed to develop concepts in children's books and print awareness. The strategies you use will vary from book to book and from reading to reading. It usually works best to use a book for interactive reading that you have read to the children at least once before.

**Presented by the York Region Early Literacy Specialists**

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