



# TOOLS & TIPS FOR READING WITH CHILDREN





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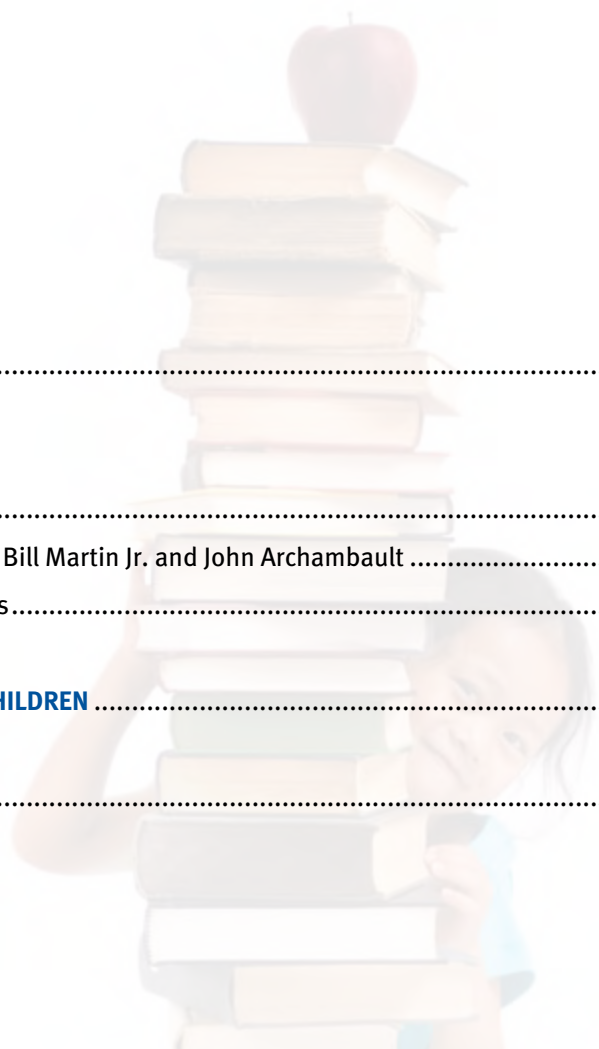
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**TOOLS & TIPS FOR READING WITH CHILDREN**





Children who cannot read well by the end of third grade are four times as likely to drop out of high school.<sup>1</sup> Yet millions of American children get to fourth grade without reading well. To address this critical issue, United Way Worldwide has launched a national initiative to boost early grade reading. If you are in a position to read with children, you can play a critical role in helping create strong readers and better learners.

Research has shown that children learn best when they are engaged and having fun. United Way has prepared this booklet to help volunteers, parents, caretakers, teachers and others who read with young children make reading more fun and help boost children’s literacy skills and creativity. This booklet contains activity guides for three children’s books: *Corduroy* by Don Freeman, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, and *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss. Each activity guide includes:

- Questions and discussion topics you might introduce while reading each of the books. These will help the children process key information to better understand the story, predict what happens next, draw conclusions, and learn the relevance of books to real life. Keep in mind that these questions are not meant to be a test but rather to help the children understand and enjoy the books.
- Simple exercises to improve literacy skills such as recognizing letters and sounding out words.
- Hands-on, fun activities, including games.

You do not need to be a reading specialist or experienced tutor to use the activity guides or read other books to children. All that is needed is enthusiasm, a willingness to share one’s love of reading and a little preparation — reading the books, reviewing the questions and exercises, and gathering the materials for the activities.

The activity guides are designed to be used in one-on-one situations or with small groups of children. The books were chosen and the games were designed for children who are learning to read (Kindergarten–third grade). Readers can select and adapt activities depending on time availability and children’s interest and skill level.

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<sup>1</sup> Hernandez, Donald J., *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Center for Demographic Analysis, University at Albany, State of New York; Foundation for Child Development. 2011



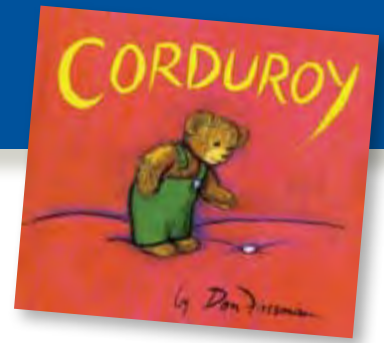
The activities can be undertaken most anywhere — at home, in after school programs, or at libraries, recreation centers and places of worship. The ideas can be used at school during “reading time” when the class is broken down into small reading groups, or in “reading enrichment programs” in which children who are struggling with reading get focused help.

This resource also includes general tips for reading to children that can be used with any book, in a group setting or when reading one-on-one with a child. Because children need positive recognition for both personal and academic growth, the reading tips include how to offer praise. In addition to verbally praising a child who does well in reading exercises, adults who read to children are also encouraged to provide low-cost rewards for a job well done. The reward could be a gold star, a pencil, or some other simple form of recognition. Readers may wish to keep each book and the activity and reward materials in a backpack, box or other container to share with other readers or transport from the reading location to the child’s home. All the suggested materials are low-cost and easily available.

Offering your time and talents to help a young child develop stronger reading skills is important. It helps the child build a stronger foundation for success in school, work and life. And it makes a difference in your community, as part of a larger strategy to boost high school graduation. Thank you for sharing your love of reading with children and for helping build a firm foundation for their future success in school and in life.



# ACTIVITY GUIDE for *CORDUROY* by Don Freeman



## READING AND DISCUSSING THE BOOK\*

### Introduce the Book

Show the children the book cover, read the book title and the name of the author.

Tell the children this book is about a teddy bear named Corduroy, who got his name from the green corduroy overalls he wears. Ask the children if they know what corduroy is and if they have corduroy clothes. If possible, show a piece of corduroy clothing.

### While Reading

Be sure the children understand terms such as “department store” and “night watchman.” Tell them to let you know if they do not understand a word or something that happened in the story. Praise them when they do so.

As you read, ask questions and discuss the story with the children. Listed below are some examples of the questions and discussion topics you might use. Always encourage the children to explore issues and ask their own questions.

- What are the reasons the mother gave for not buying the teddy bear? Ask the children for an example of when they wanted to buy something and a family member said no. Discuss reasons and feelings.
- Talk about the duties of a night watchman. Ask if they can name other professionals that work at night. They may even be family members or friends.
- Ask the children to point out where Corduroy is hiding before reading the text that reveals the answer.
- Before she tells Corduroy, ask the children to explain why the little girl returned to the department store.
- After completing the story, ask, “Did it have a happy ending? How do you know?”

### After Reading

- If time permits, you might want to ask if the children have ever had an adventure in a department store or ask about their favorite toy.
- If possible, send the book home with the children and encourage them to read it again with parents, caretakers and/or siblings.
- For the children that particularly enjoyed this book you might suggest the next Corduroy book, *A Pocket for Corduroy*.

\*Questions and discussion topics were adapted from Real Men Read, a program and publication of the United Way of the Wabash Valley, Terre Haute, Indiana



## Activity 1: Playing a Memory Game

This is a fun card matching game built upon *Corduroy*. It teaches word and letter recognition, following directions, concentration and memory skills. Two can play it but it is more fun when played by a larger group. Depending on the children’s skill level, you can remove cards to make it easier or add cards to make it more challenging.

### LIST OF MATERIALS

One per child plus spare copies of the following:

- *Corduroy Memory Game Cards Template* (see following pages)
- 8” x 11” cardboard sheets

And the following materials to share:

- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Pencils, pens
- Colored pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Making the Playing Cards

Explain to the children that you are going to play a fun card game but before starting to play, they need to make the playing cards. To help them make the cards follow these steps:

- Copy and distribute to each child the *Memory Game Cards Template*. It is always wise to make some extra copies in case one gets ruined or additional children join the group.
- If you copied the template in black and white, ask the children to color the pictures.
- Help the children complete the words on the template. Ask them to name the picture, then say the missing sound and write the missing letter in the appropriate space. For instance, the first picture is a “bear” and the beginning sound is “buh” for the letter “b.”
- Hand out to each child an 8” x 11” piece of cardboard and ask him/her to glue it on the back of the template copy. The cardboard will make the cards easier to manipulate.
- Hand out scissors and ask the children to cut out the cards along the lines.
- Now you are ready to play.
- Use one of the children’s set of cards to play. After playing, return the cards, and every child will have a deck of cards to take home.



## Playing Instructions

Mix the cards and put them face down on a table. Explain to the children that when their turn comes, they should turn two cards face up. If the cards match, they can keep them. If the cards do not match, they should put them back face down in the same place where they were before. Explain that they should remember where the cards are to make it easier to get a “match” next time they play. The children take turns until all the cards are taken. The child with the most cards wins.

If the children are enthusiastic and you feel that they can handle a more challenging game, borrow additional pairs of cards, add them to the deck and play again. The new pairs will be repeats of existing ones (e.g. an additional pair of bears). Ask the children how they can differentiate the new pairs. By marking them with different colors? By putting stars or stickers on them?



CORDUROY MEMORY GAME CARDS TEMPLATE



\_\_ear



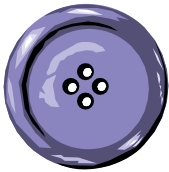
bea\_\_



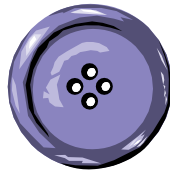
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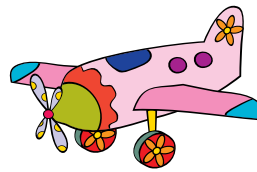
gir\_\_



\_\_utton



bu\_\_on



toy



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_atchman



watch\_\_



\_\_veralls



over\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_other



mother\_\_



\_\_tore



sto\_\_

## Activity 2: Playing Button Games

This will help children group similar objects (buttons) and identify patterns and sequences, which are important skills for reading readiness and math.

Tell the children you are going to play fun games with Corduroy's buttons.

### MATERIALS

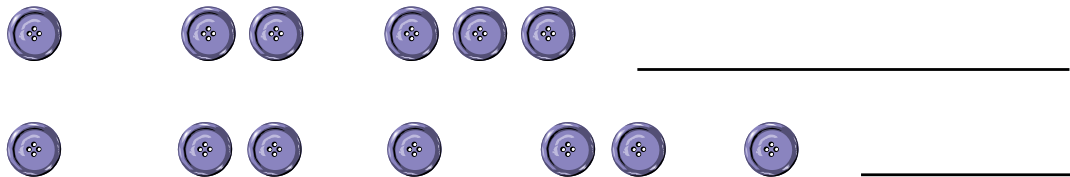
Bring a box full of buttons of different sizes, colors and shapes. Be sure to have at least a dozen of one color and shape (e.g. green, round buttons) and a dozen of another color with the same shape (e.g. red, round buttons). Also include light and dark buttons of the same color (e.g. light and dark green buttons) and at least one button of this color (e.g. green) that is bigger than the others.

### ACTIVITIES

- Give each child 10 buttons and ask them to group the buttons first by color and then by shape. Do they think that light green and dark green buttons should be grouped together? There is no right answer but the children have to agree on the rule before doing the exercise. Also, ask if the children can identify other ways to group the buttons, for instance, size or number of holes.
- Separate the children in two groups. Give one group 10 buttons and ask the children to line them up from the smallest to the biggest. Give the other group another 10 buttons and ask them to line up the buttons from the biggest to the smallest. Be sure everybody participates and that children who have "different ideas" on how to perform tasks or answer questions are heard and respected.
- Use the buttons you have to replicate the patterns in the next page. If you prefer, you may just photocopy the *Button Games Template* and give a copy to each child to work on. The activity sheet is particularly important if the child is going to do these activities at home, where the necessary buttons may not be available.

## BUTTON GAMES TEMPLATE

1. Ask the children to “guess” (predict) what the next group buttons will be like.

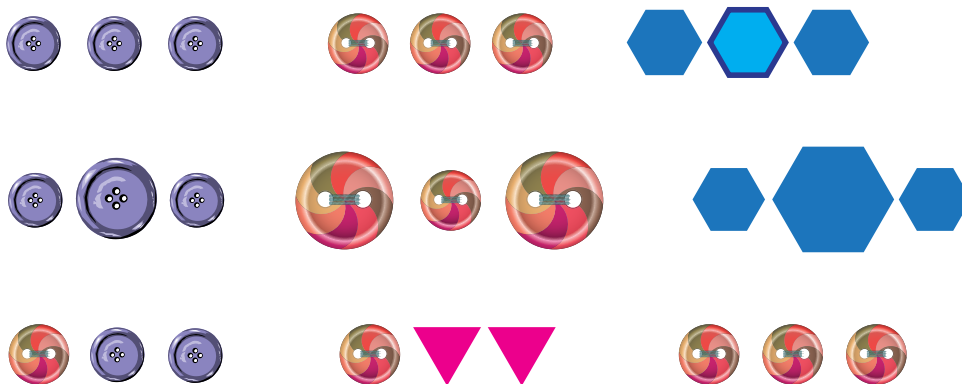


If the children struggle with this exercise, explain the concept and try again with a different color. Then change the sequences, you may use 2-1-2 -1 or 1-3-1-3 and so on.

2. If they children have mastered the previous exercise, try the one below.



3. Ask the children to circle what does not belong to each row. Ask them to explain why.



4. If they are enjoying the “guessing” game but it seems too easy, ask the children if they can come up with their own patterns using color, shape and size variations.

### Activity 3: Sighting and Sounding Out

These games emphasize literacy readiness including letter and sound recognition and differentiation. Ask the children to build a letter “b” (uppercase and lowercase) with buttons. If they do not know the letters yet, you may write “b” on a board or on a piece of paper and let them copy it. Then ask the children to look at the first page of *Corduroy* and find the letter “b.” See if they can read or guess that the word that starts with “b,” is “bear.” If at first they cannot figure it out, let them look for a little while and then help them sound out the word. Then ask the children to look at page 5 and see if they can find and “read” the word “button,” which also starts with “b.” Ask if they know other words, besides “bear” and “button,” that start with “b.” As they name the words, write them slowly sounding out the letters so that they can hear and see the words being formed.

If a child makes a mistake, and says a word starting with “d” instead of “b,” use this as an opportunity to explore other letters instead of dwelling on the mistake. Just say “This word starts with “d,” what other words start with “d?”

If the children can do the “starting sounds” easily, ask them if they can come up with words when you provide the “ending sounds.” You might have to give hints to help them. For instance, for words ending in “b,” you might think about “cub” and the hint would be “a small bear” or a “baby bear.” From there you can ask them to change the first letter and come up with other words such as “tub” (where one takes a bath) or “rub” (show the motion). Let them think for a few seconds before providing more hints.

Repeat these games using other letters. For instance, turn to the page and ask the children to find the word “lamp.” Before they look ask them to sound out and name the starting and the ending letters.







# ACTIVITY GUIDE for *CHICKA CHICKA BOOM BOOM*

by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault



## READING AND DISCUSSING THE BOOK

### Introduce the Book

Show the children the book cover, read the book title and the names of the authors and the illustrator. Explain what the illustrator does.

Ask if the children if they can tell what kind of the tree is on the book cover. If possible, bring a coconut to show the children.

### While Reading

- Read slowly to emphasize the rhymes. Pause and invite the children to join in when you say “*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom.*”
- After reading three or four pages, ask the children if they think this story is real and why.
- Read a few more pages, and ask the children what they think will happen when more and more letters climb up to the top of the tree. Will they all fit?
- What happens after the letters fall down? What kind of injuries did they have?
- Discuss who The Mamas and the Papas are and what they did. If time permits, read the book one more time. Pause so the children can join in as you say the name of the letters and “*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom.*”

### After Reading

- Ask the children if they have ever climbed a tree and fell down? What happened when they fell down?
- Ask the children what happens near the end of the book, when the sun goes down. If the children were letters, would they do the same thing? Why?
- Sing the *ABC Song* with the children.



## Activity 1: Joining the Beach Party

### MATERIALS

- Bucket
- Beach towel
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Suntan lotion
- Uppercase and lowercase alphabet letters made of plastic, wood or any other sturdy and easy to manipulate material. These are available at arts and crafts stores.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Tell the children they have been invited to a beach party. Ask them to sit in a circle around a beach towel. You might wear a hat, bring in sun tan lotion and/or hand out cheap sun glasses to make it more fun.

Depending on the children's skill level choose one or more of the activities below. If you are not sure about their skill level, start with the first two. This will allow you to determine if the children are ready for the more challenging exercises.

Scramble the uppercase letters on the beach towel. Then ask the children to work together and line them up in alphabetical order. Once they finish, sing the ABC Song together pointing at the letters as they come up in the song. Repeat the exercise using the lowercase letters.

Put some uppercase and some lowercase letters in the bucket. Ask the children to take turns drawing a letter from the bucket, saying the letter's name, if it is upper or lowercase and sounding it out. Invite the children to talk to the letter and make friends with it. Then ask the group to come up with words that start with that letter. Reward correct answers and effort with stickers or other small gifts.

If this is too easy, make the exercise more challenging by asking the children to come up with words that end in the letter they picked up. If needed, provide hints to help the children come up with words. For instance for a word ending with "t," your hint may be "an item of clothing," which could be skirt, shirt, hat, coat or vest.



Write the word COCONUT with the plastic letters. If you only have one set of letters, you will have to mix upper and lower case letters to do this.

Tell the children that using the seven letters from the word coconut (C, O, C, O, N, U, T) they can form thirteen smaller words, three two-letter words, seven three-letter words, two four-letter words and one – the big one – five-letter word. These words are listed below. Tell the children that some of these words are easy and frequently used, others are more difficult. Challenge them to come up with as many words as they can. Encourage them to try different strategies, for instance pick up two letters and see if they can form words by moving the letters around. If they did not find the two two-letter words, tell them to try it again with another pair of letters. Then pick up three letters and so on.

Every time they find a word say “Let’s count it!” Count the letters and then count how many words you have found. Emphasize the word “count” and see if they can figure out that “count” is the big five-letter word.

Two letter words	Three letter words	Four letter words	Five letter word
on	nut	onto	count
to	not	unto	
no	cot		
	cut		
	ton		
	con		
	out		





## Activity 2: Making an ABC Book

Tell the children they are going to create their own ABC books.

### MATERIALS

#### For each book

- 3 (8" x 11") sheets of paper
- 2 brads (2")

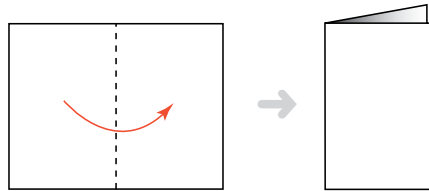
#### Plus

- Coloring pencils and pens
- Rubber stamps with letters and pictures
- Pictures (magazines)
- Glue stick
- Two-hole punch

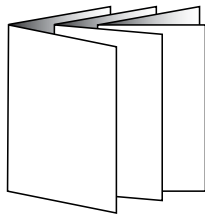
### INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the children to do the following:

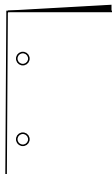
- Fold each of the three pieces of paper in half.



- Put one piece inside the other



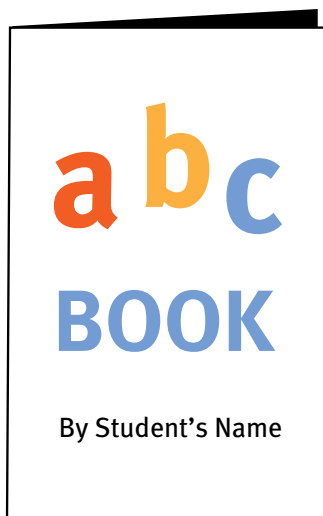
- Punch two holes along the left side about 1/4" from the left margin





- Insert the brad in the holes and close it to hold the pages in place.
- Decorate the book cover. Write the book's title and the author's name (e.g. ABC Book by Sally Doe).
- On the first page, draw an uppercase "A" and lowercase "a." Then illustrate that page by cutting and pasting, stamping, or drawing a picture of something that starts with "A."
- Write the picture's name. Tell the children to start with the first letter, which should be "A" and then try to sound out the other ones. Tell them also, that it does not matter if they cannot write the word or write it incorrectly – the important thing is to try. Praise all efforts. Then help them write the word correctly.
- Do the same for letters "B," "C," and "D."
- Ask the children to tell with a simple story connecting the pictures.

If time permits, use another 8" x 11" piece of paper and repeat the process to add the letters "E" and "F" to the book. Note that to keep book in alphabetical order, the children will have to take out the brad and put the new pages at the bottom. Then insert the brad again and close it.





### Activity 3: Solving the Picture Puzzle

#### MATERIALS

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- One copy per child (plus extra) of the *Picture Puzzle Activity Sheet* (see next page)
- Scissors
- Glue

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Tell the children it is picnic time and you are bringing fruits and vegetables to the beach.



Make copies of the *Picture Puzzle Activity Sheet* on the next page and distribute them to the children.

Ask the children to circle the matching letters in each row. The circled letters are also the first letter for the fruit or vegetable pictured in the column to the right of the letters. See if the children can figure out this relationship by saying the letter and the name of the fruit or vegetable.

Ask the children to cut out the words at the bottom of the page and glue them next to the corresponding fruit.



PICTURE PUZZLE ACTIVITY SHEET

A	B	D	E	A		
A	B	T	B	P		
Y	C	D	C	L		
G	H	I	G	W		
E	B	M	P	M		
Z	S	O	T	T		
U	O	X	O	Q		

Bananas

Corn

Apple

Grapes

Melon

Tomato

Orange







2 + 3 = 5  
6 - 3 = 3  
9 - 1 = 8  
4 + 5 = 9

2 + 5 = 7  
6 - 2 = 4  
9 - 4 = 5  
3 + 4 = 7



7 - 2 = 5  
1 - 8 = -7  
4 - 2 = 2  
3 - 8 = -5

5 - 5 = 0  
6 - 1 = 5  
5 - 5 = 0  
8 - 2 = 6



2 + 3 = 5  
6 - 3 = 3  
9 - 1 = 8  
4 + 5 = 9

2 + 5 = 7  
6 - 2 = 4  
9 - 4 = 5  
3 + 4 = 7

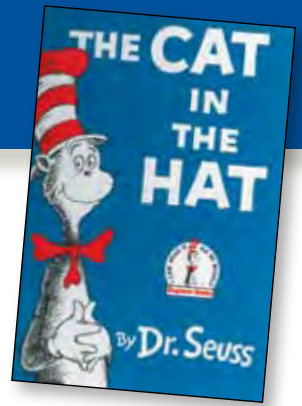
2 + 3 = 5  
6 - 3 = 3  
9 - 1 = 8  
4 + 5 = 9

2 + 5 = 7  
6 - 2 = 4  
9 - 4 = 5  
3 + 4 = 7

2 + 6 = 8  
2 + 5 = 7  
2 + 7 = 9  
6 + 1 = 7  
7 + 3 = 10

1 + 9 = 10  
4 + 5 = 9  
8 + 2 = 10  
3 + 3 = 6

# ACTIVITY GUIDE for *THE CAT IN THE HAT* by Dr. Seuss



## READING AND DISCUSSING THE BOOK\*

### Introduce the Book

Tell the children you are going to read a book written and illustrated by the great Dr. Seuss. Mention that Dr. Seuss was sad when he found out that many kids were not reading because they thought books were boring, so he decided to write fun and entertaining books like the one you will be reading today. Ask the children if they find reading boring or entertaining, and why.

If copies of other Dr. Seuss books are available, show the children the books and tell them that many of Dr. Seuss' books have unusual titles. Read the titles and ask the children if they have read or heard about these books.

Show the children *The Cat in the Hat* and read the title.

### While Reading

Ask the children if they understand what "rhyming" means. Give some examples, and encourage them to do the same. Read slowly so the children can hear the rhymes. Stop periodically and invite them to repeat the rhyming words. Also, ask them to come up with more words that rhyme with those they repeated. Ask questions and discuss the following topics as you read the book.

- Ask if any of the children have a cat. Does the cat in the book look like a cat they might have as a pet? Is he a real cat? How do they know?
- Ask the children to describe the fish. Ask if the fish is a bad fish or a good fish and why?
- Ask the children if they can remember at least three bad tricks played by Thing One and Thing Two.
- Ask the children how the mess was cleaned up.
- Dr. Seuss concludes the story with the question "What would YOU do if your mother asked YOU?" Invite group discussion.

### After Reading

- Ask the children what was their favorite part of the book and why.
- Ask them to name the characters and identify their favorite one and why.

\*Questions and discussion topics were adapted from Real Men Read, a program and publication of the United Way of the Wabash Valley, Terre Haute, Indiana





## Activity 1: Playing the Rhyming Game

### MATERIALS

#### One per child plus spare copies of the following:

- *Rhyming Game Cards Template* (next page)
- 8" x 11" cardboard sheets

#### And the following materials to share:

- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Pencils, pens
- Colored pencils

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Making the Playing Cards

Explain to the children that you are going to play a fun card game but before playing they need to make the playing cards. To help them make the cards follow the steps below.

- Make copies of the *Rhyming Game Cards Template* and distribute one to each child.
- If you copied the template in black and white, ask the children to color the pictures.
- Read the words in the template with the children and identify the rhyming pairs.
- Hand out to each child an 8" x 11" piece of cardboard and ask him/her to glue it on the back of the template copy. The cardboard will make the cards easier to manipulate.
- Hand out scissors and ask the children to cut out the cards along the lines.
- Now you are ready to play (playing instructions below).
- Use one of the children's set of cards to play. After playing, return the cards, every child should have a deck of cards to take home.

#### Playing Instructions

Mix the cards and put them face down on a table. Explain to the children that when their turn comes, they should turn two cards face up and "read" the words aloud. If the words rhyme, the player can keep them. If the cards do not rhyme, they should put back face down in the same place they were before. Explain that they should remember where the cards are for the next time around. The children take turns until all the cards are taken. The child with the most cards wins.

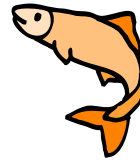
RHYMING GAME CARDS TEMPLATE

**RED**

red



pot



fish



fox



dish



box



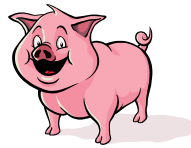
cot



dot



wall



pig



hat



sad



cat



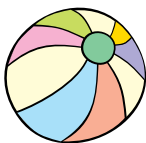
hot



bed



cake



ball



wig



mad



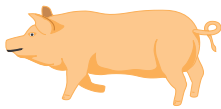
rake



# HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

## Activity 2: Guessing Words

Provide a copy of the activity sheet below to each child. Ask the children to name the picture and circle the right word.



pig pot



dig dog



bat cat



cake lake



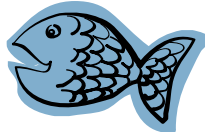
pin pan



cake lake



mat hat



fish wash



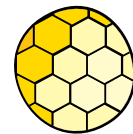
book boat



cat mat



mouse house



ball mall



book look



tree trim

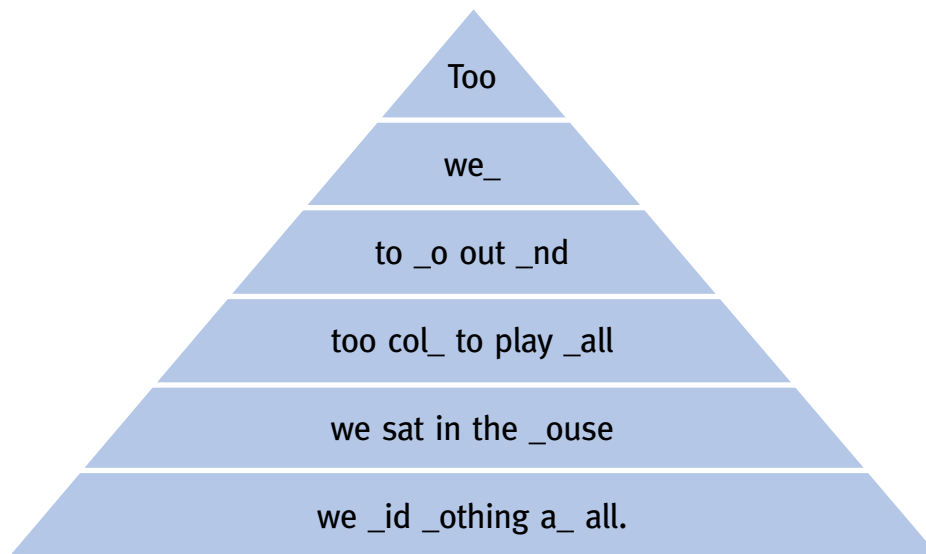


hot hat

### Activity 3: Building a Word Pyramid

Before you play the game, create these letters using construction paper or other materials: n, t, g, a, d, h, d, t, and b. Put the letters in a box.

Either before playing or as you begin to play, draw a pyramid on a poster board that looks like this:



Tell the children that before the Cat in the Hat came to visit, Sally was building a word pyramid describing the boring, rainy day. Then the Cat in the Hat came and brought along Thing One and Thing Two, and what did they do? Read from the book:

...Those Things ran about  
With big bumps, jumps and kicks  
And with hops and big thumps  
And all kinds of bad tricks

After the Cat in the Hat cleaned up the mess, Sally noticed that several letters had fallen down and were put in the box below. Can you help Sally put the letters back in the pyramid so that the words and the sentences make sense?



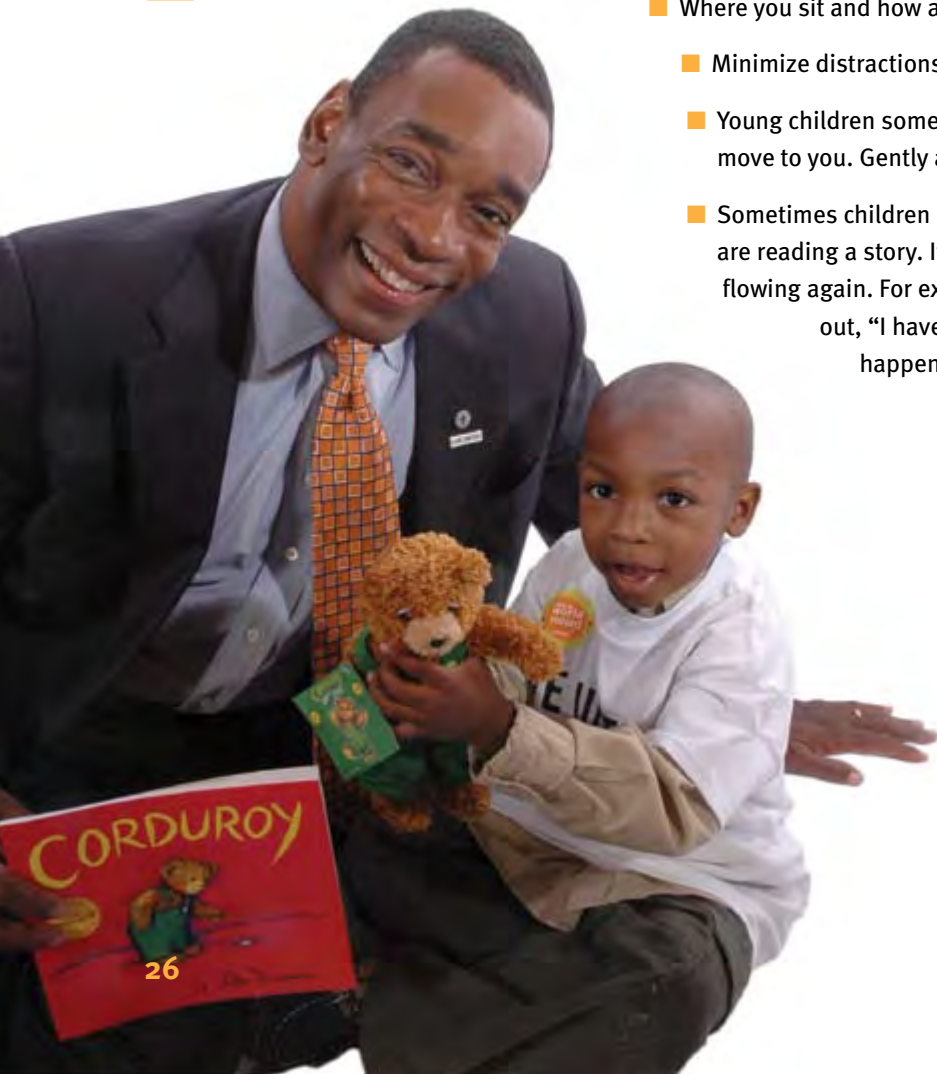
*Reading with children can be a fun and rewarding experience. Like any activity, reading with skill and ease will come with practice. These tips are suggestions that may help make the experience enjoyable for the children and you. Your priority is to keep them interested and motivated to read, so be prepared to respond and adjust to the level of interest among the children.*

#### BE PREPARED

- Read the book ahead of time to avoid surprises and so you can think about additional questions to ask the children as you read.
- Plan for places in the text where you can ask children to predict what will happen next, or to discuss what is happening in their lives that might be similar to the story.
- Plan in advance about how to engage restless children. You can ask them to find letters they know in the book, read along with you, or silently raise their hand when they hear the “word of the day.”
- Put sticky notes on the pages to remind you where you want to ask questions, explain an unfamiliar word or concept, or have the children join in.
- Asking “What do you think will happen next?” is a good way to get back to reading the story if the discussion strays off for too long.

#### MANAGE THE SETTING AND THE CHILDREN

- Where you sit and how are important. Be sure that all children can see the book.
- Minimize distractions so children can focus.
- Young children sometimes get so absorbed in the story, they stand and move to you. Gently ask them to sit back down.
- Sometimes children start asking lots of questions or “sharing” while you are reading a story. If this happens, respond simply and try to get the story flowing again. For example, a child sees a dog in the picture and shouts out, “I have a dog” you can say, “Yes, you do. Let’s see what happens to this dog” and move on.



## READING STYLES

- Each storyteller has a different style of reading. Find ways to read aloud that are comfortable for you.
- Be expressive. Add sounds. Make the snake hiss and the door creak.
- Read rhyming and counting books and recite the rhymes and numbers together.
- Use expression appropriate to the book. There is no need to be overly dramatic.
- If you feel comfortable doing so, create voices for the different characters.
- Slow your pace to the children’s level, so they will have time to understand and appreciate the story and the pictures.
- Project your voice, but don’t shout. A low voice is more likely to get their attention than a high or loud voice.
- Hold the book carefully so all can see — out to the side. Move from side to side slowly so everyone gets a chance to see the pictures.
- Try to look at the children who cannot see the book (to help hold their attention), so you are always looking in the opposite direction that the book is facing.
- If a passage is too long, shorten it or “read” the pictures.
- Reading to young children can be like a television commercial — you have to get their attention to be successful. Depending on their age you want to keep the story short to fit their attention span. The book can’t be too long and has to be interesting and exciting to hold their interest while building up their imagination.
- Don’t hesitate to conclude the story before you’ve finished reading it if the children aren’t enjoying it.
- There is not just one way to do things — be inventive.
- When you finish reading a story, just let it be over. Give children a few seconds of quiet to think about a story they’ve just heard. You can answer questions that the children might have, but there is no need to review the moral, the story or ask questions to get a response. Let children take what they will from the story.
- Have fun! If you are having fun, the children will catch the spirit as well.

### ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

- Involve the children as much as possible. Ask questions and encourage conversation about the book. This helps them connect the story with their own lives and also helps them compare the current story to others that they have heard.
- You can get their attention at the start by asking them about the cover illustration.
- Vary the questions, including open-ended questions, like “Why do you think the boy in the story did that?” or use prompts, like “Tell me more about why the girl in the story is....”
- Talk about the stories and pictures as you read. Ask questions like, “What do you think comes next?” or “What is happening here?”
- Ask them what they think will happen before turning to the last page. Tease them and pretend that you won’t read the last page, saying “we are all done!” This gets them laughing and involved.
- Follow the children’s lead – be open to focusing on an aspect of the book you hadn’t considered.
- Have the children join in: by reciting a repetitive phrase, or counting if the story involves numbers, or making a motion or sound that is part of the story.
- Mimicking is fun, and a good way to keep the children engaged. Say a phrase, and then ask all the children to say it again with you.
- If there is a word in the story that might be unfamiliar, try providing a short explanation, and then re-read the sentence.
- Extend the level of interest by discussing the book after you have finished reading, and voting on where the book should be kept so the children can look at it later. Talk about things that happened in the book that you might like to do.



## ONE-ON-ONE READING TIPS

Reading with a child one-on-one is a good way to associate reading with the special attention all children love. Asking children to read aloud and listening to children read can greatly help boost their fluency, especially after a child has learned to read on his own.

- Let the child choose and hold the book. Sometimes kids want to hear a favorite book over and over again.
- Try to find a quiet place.
- Let the child set the pace and have fun. The more fun children have while reading aloud, the more they will love books and reading.
- Have the child turn the pages.
- Run your finger under the words as you read to show that the print carries the story.
- Stop to look at pictures; ask the child to name things he or she sees. Talk about how the pictures relate to the story.
- Sometimes read together or alternate reading — the child reads one page, you read the next.
- Be encouraging and provide gentle corrections.
- Give the child time to figure out tough words, but give them help quickly if they ask for it. Don't force them to sound out a word, but let them do it if they want to.
- If the child asks a question, stop and answer it. The book may help the child express her thoughts and solve her own problems.
- If the child substitutes one word for another while reading, see if it makes sense. If it does, (e.g., “dog” for “pup”) continue reading. If it doesn't, (e.g., “road” for “read”) ask the child to read the sentence again because you are not sure you understood it.
- Recognize the child's energy limits. Stop at or before signs of fatigue or frustration.

## OFFER PRAISE AND OTHER REWARDS

Whether simply reading with children or playing some of the games described in the activity guides, it is important to offer praise and some visible reward for a job well done. Frequent, honest praise will help students feel good about themselves and encourage them to try hard again next time. Here are a few tips for praising young readers:

- Children don't need a lot of praise for things they already enjoy or excel at. For example, if a child sounds out words easily or quickly completes the exercises described in the activity guides, try praising the child for the process they used, e.g., “You figured it out. Good job.” rather than praising how quickly or easily they accomplished a task.



- Help children learn to embrace the effort they make and to learn from mistakes. For example, if a child mispronounces a word, and then tries hard to pronounce it correctly later on, praise the effort.
- Praising children publicly can inspire other students to follow the example. Even though students may act embarrassed, the positive attention often fills a void that children may have.
- Public praise is an excellent way to keep students behaving appropriately. Focus on praising children who are particularly troublesome in your class, as this will help them improve their behavior more quickly than being compared to classmates.
- Use the following phrases to praise children for a job well done:
  - Great job!
  - I'm proud of you!
  - Thank you for listening!
  - What great listeners!
  - Thank you for being great helpers!
- Praise children for a job well done each day. Be sure, though, that your praise is honest — and as specific as possible. For example, “Great job in rhyming that word, Tommy!”
- Rewards are visible, tangible forms of praise. Ideas for rewarding young readers include:
  - Stickers/tags the child can wear. They could be gold stars, or a positive phrase like “I am a star reader!” or “I read a book today!”
  - Hand stamps in the shape of a smiley face, star or other positive symbol could be pressed on the back of children’s hands.
  - Children could create “Good Reader” booklets and place stickers, tags or stamps to keep track of their achievements.
  - Colorful sheets of paper can be designed to look like a “Good Reader Certificate,” with the child’s name and the name of the book they read handwritten on the certificate.

These resources informed some of the suggestions presented in this booklet, and offer additional information that may be helpful to volunteer readers.

American Library Association's Notable Children's Booklist

<http://ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncb/index.cfm>

EVERYBODY WINS! A national literacy and mentoring nonprofit

<http://www.everybodywins.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics literacy resources

<http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/literacy.cfm>

*How to Praise Children for a Job Well Done* by Jennifer Wagaman

<http://jenniferwagaman.suite101.com/how-to-praise-children-for-a-job-well-done-a107008>

National Education Association's Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children

<http://www.nea.org/grants/13154.htm>

National Association for the Education of Young Children articles:

- *Using Read-Alouds with Critical Literacy Literature in K-3 Classrooms*  
<http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200911/PrimaryInterestWeb1109.pdf>
- *The Power of Planning: Developing Effective Read-Alouds*  
<http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200811/BTJReadingAloud.pdf>
- *The Essentials of Early Literacy Instruction*  
<http://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/Roskos.pdf>

Reading is Fundamental's *Reading with Your Child*

<http://www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/reading-with-your-child.htm>

*The Best Way to Praise Children: An Expert Q&A* by Alisa Stoudt

<http://www.education.com/magazine/article/praise-children-expert/>

*The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease and website

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/>

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