

Use a PEER When You Read Aloud

Most parents of preschoolers realize the value of reading aloud every day to your young child. Story time is a great way to connect with your child, to share exciting stories and pictures, and to increase your child's understanding of the world.

The best story times are very interactive: You are talking about and reading the story, your child is talking, and there is conversation taking place between the two of you. Because of all the talking, this type of shared reading is often called dialogic reading.

Parents can use the PEER method to help them remember a few important ways to read in this interactive way:

P: Prompt your child with a question about the story. Prompting your child focuses attention, engages the child in the story, and helps the child understand the book.

Point to something in the picture, for example, a balloon. "What is that?"

E: Evaluate your child's response.

"That's right! That's a balloon."

E: Expand on what your child said.

"That's a big, red balloon! We saw one of those in the grocery store yesterday."

R: Repeat or revisit the prompt you started with, encouraging your child to use the new information you've provided.

"Can you say big, red balloon?" Each time the book is reread, the expanded vocabulary words are verbalized again.

Dialogic reading works. Children whose parents read in a dialogic way have better oral language skills, and are more likely to be exposed to new words.

Don't feel obligated to use the PEER procedure on every page, with every book. Keep it fun! Use PEER when it fits and when your child is engaged with the story.

See our Reading Aloud section for more ideas on reading aloud with your preschooler:
www.ReadingRockets.org/atoz/reading_aloud

