

READING STRATEGIES THAT ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND USER
FRIENDLY FOR BUSY PARENTS WITH PRESCHOOLERS WHO ARE AT RISK
FOR POOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

OR

THE BUSY PARENT'S GUIDE TO EARLY READING

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ABSTRACT

A graduate student in speech-language pathology at the University of Northern Iowa created the following reading strategies resource to help clinicians, teachers and parents strengthen the development of emergent literacy skills in preschool children who are at risk for reading and writing difficulties when they enter school. Emergent literacy is the knowledge children acquire about the basic concepts of reading and writing before the formal teaching of these concepts in school. Phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print concepts, narrative awareness, vocabulary and oral language are skills that have been linked to literacy skills (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

Emergent literacy skills are forming as children interact with others in their environment and begin to understand the importance of words for communicating their needs, wants, thoughts and feelings (Roth, Paul & Pierotti, 2006). Many factors affect the quality and types of interactions that children will have, and this in turn can affect their emergent literacy skills and ultimately their reading and writing ability. Parent's responsiveness and support in the home environment, low socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs are areas that research shows influences emergent literacy development (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Manz, Hughes, Barnabas, Braciello & Ginsburg-Block, 2010).

Research conducted on parent-child reading interaction indicates that it has a significant influence on early literacy performance (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). Dialogic

reading, print- referencing and “Read It Again!” are used in preschool settings and Head Start programs to increase the emergent literacy skills of children. These same techniques and others adapted to stories and everyday activities have been compiled in a resource to give families easy and effective strategies for building literacy skills.

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INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

The first five years of a child's life are an important period for speech and language development. It is during these years that children build the foundations for later literacy acquisition (Paul, 2007; Roth, Paul & Pierotti, 2006). Infants begin life with the ability to learn any language in the world (Roth et al., 2006). As they are exposed to the one spoken in their environment babies all over the world learn language in the same way. The first sounds are ones made during the opening and closing of the infant's mouth. This progresses to cooing and the infant experimenting with sounds and vocal movement. Around seven months infants begin to babble and learn that sound has meaning and it is an important part of turn taking and communication (Paul, 2007; Roth et al., 2006). This is when infants focus on the sounds of the language spoken to them. When children begin to say words, they learn that these words are symbols for objects in their environment and that they use these words to express their thoughts and feelings (Roth et al., 2006). This same concept continues as children learn that individual letters represent sounds and these letters when combined, form the words that characterize what they see and feel in their environment. A child's early expressive language relates to later literacy development (Paul, 2007: Roth et al., 2006).

Emergent literacy skills are those that help a child when learning to read and write. They are not formally taught but are an important part of a child's ability to

succeed in school (Paul, 2007; Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). These skills include phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print concepts, narrative awareness, vocabulary and oral language (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2008) has identified four variables related to literacy skills. These variables are alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness and memory, rapid naming of letters and objects, and writing letters. Alphabet knowledge is the understanding of the nature of letters and print symbols (NELP, 2008). A child learns during shared storybook reading and from the print that is present in the child's environment. The child learns the names and the print representation of letters and that letters are joined together to make words. Phonological awareness is having knowledge of the sound structure of oral and written language (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Phonological awareness includes rhyme awareness, alliteration awareness, and phoneme, syllable and word awareness. (Ezell & Justice, 2005; NELP, 2008) Children build emergent literacy skills as they play with sounds and words and see that they can manipulate and join these sounds together to form words and sentences.

Children learn from their environment and because of this, many environmental factors can affect their literacy development. In a 2005 study, Roberts, Jurgens and Burchinal, found that the parent's responsiveness and support in the home environment are strong predictors of children's language and early literacy skills. Often parents want to help their children learn, but the stress of daily life and cultural beliefs can affect

how parents interact with their children. Low socioeconomic status (SES) relates to increased risk for later reading problems (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) showed that children from low SES backgrounds are likely to have weaker skills in alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, print concepts and oral language. The stress of financial uncertainty and other issues that are associated with poverty, such as single-parent status, community violence, unemployment, etc., can affect a parent's ability to provide an emotionally supportive environment with the materials needed to foster emergent literacy skills (Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Manz, Hughes, Barnabas, Bracaliello, & Ginsburg-Block, 2010). Cultural beliefs are another factor that can influence emergent literacy development. Some cultures believe the child is ready to learn to read upon reaching school age and parents from those cultures may not see the need to read to their child before then (Manz et al, 2010).

One area researched is how family reading behaviors affect children's emergent literacy skills. Parent-child reading interaction has been shown to be a significant factor in predicting early literacy performance (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). Different approaches to shared reading have been the focus of several studies. A meta-analysis by Mol, Bus, de Jong, and Smeets (2008) looked at parent-child dialogic reading in which the child is an active participant in the storytelling. Dialogic reading was found to be successful in facilitating expressive language and in changing the home literacy activities of families with 2-to 3-year-old children but was not as successful with children at risk for school

failure (Mol, 2008). Once this interactive type of reading is learned, it is one which parents continue to use, providing evidence of the possibility of influencing parent-reading style to assist in furthering a child's literacy development (Huebner & Payne, 2010). State- and federally-funded preschool programs, in which 47% of the 3-to-5-year-old children are from low SES backgrounds, are the environment for studying these techniques. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). A print-referencing style of reading was found to accelerate print knowledge of 4-to-5-year-olds, which is an important aspect of literacy development (Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kaderavek, & Fan, 2010). "Read It Again!" (RIA) is a low cost language and literacy curriculum for use in a preschool setting. In a study using the RIA program, Justice, McGinty, Cabell, et al. (2010), found that children in a class receiving RIA had higher language scores on assessments of grammar and vocabulary, and literacy scores on measures of rhyme, alliteration and prints. These are just a few examples of the techniques available that are evidenced based methods to influence children's literacy development. Knowing parents are open to learning new reading strategies, and that they will continue to use these new strategies, leads to the question of how to make these techniques easily accessible and user friendly for families with preschool children who are at risk for poor literacy development. The following guidelines provide ideas for easy activities for parents to use or as a resource for materials that can help families with the literacy development of their preschool children.

Rationale

I created a literacy development resource consisting of activities and books for children that clinicians, teachers or parents may use. This resource employs materials that are readily available and easily implemented activities. It consists of activities that parents can use in their daily lives to encourage emergent literacy skills. It also has reading lists with books that are appropriate for young children and techniques to use when reading that will promote the emergent literacy skills necessary for these children to succeed in school. Research showing the relationship of emergent literacy skills and school readiness highlights the importance of giving children the best opportunity to achieve these skills. Federally- and state-funded Head Start and other preschool programs are addressing this issue in the classroom but the home is the place where children spend the majority of their time and where the most learning before age 5 will occur. Having a readily available resource for parents will add another approach to help children to achieve the literacy skills needed to be successful in school.

Method

This resource, consisting of information and activities for the literacy areas of vocabulary and language development, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and print and narrative concepts, was created because of a need for easy and inexpensive emergent literacy materials for parents to use. These areas were chosen based on the research that indicates their correlation to literacy development. The activities are

designed to make use of what is readily available in the child's environment. A script was created for each area to give parents specific examples making it easy to implement. In order to make the suggested books readily obtainable they needed to be available at local libraries. The online catalogs of libraries across the state of Iowa were accessed to determine if the books could be easily found. Books that were found in the majority of libraries were included in the list. Scripts were again provided to aid parents with putting into practice the techniques listed.

Emergent Literacy Areas with Related Books and Activities

Vocabulary and Language Development

Children need to learn many words and how to use them to talk about things in their world. This will help them understand the words when they are learning to read. One of the easiest ways to help children learn these skills needed for reading is talking to them. You can name objects and talk about what is happening during the day. When your baby makes sounds, say them back to your baby. This will help your baby to understand that those sounds are important. It will also show how a conversation goes back and forth. Children say their first words at about 12 months and by the time they are in first grade they may know ten thousand to twenty thousand words. They learn these words in everyday life through activities such as grocery shopping, book reading, talking at mealtime and so forth.

Activities to help your child learn words

- Talk to your child during the day about what you are doing and what your child sees. .
- When talking about objects give the name and its size, color, shape, category etc. (“Look at the puppy! He is so small. He is white with brown spots. Here is an apple. It is red and sweet.”)
- Use words like in, out, on, under etc. (“Your truck is **under** the table. Let’s go sit **on** the sofa. Put your shoes **in** the closet please.”)

- Use words that help describe things. (soft, hard, hot, cold, pretty, squishy, happy, sad etc.)
- Reading stories together will help your child learn new words. Talk about the pictures in the book and any new words in the story. There are touch-and-feel books that say how something feels and then has a picture in the book with a part to touch. These books will help your child to understand what the word means.
- Refer to Appendix C for examples using storybooks.

Alphabet Knowledge

You can help your child learn the letters of the alphabet and how these letters go together to make words. Do this by pointing to letters your child is learning in books, on food packages and signs and in their own name.

Activities for helping your child learn the alphabet.

- Sing the alphabet song
- Write the child's name and say each letter as you write it.
- Look for other words that begin with the same first letter as the child's name. (Make sure the letter is capitalized so that it will look the same; e.g. "Hanna, look Hyvee starts with an "H" just like your name. The Hamburger Helper box has two "H"s. Can you show them to me?")
- As your child learns letters look for them on signs, on food boxes, and in books. Point them out or ask your child a letter's name.

- Play the Alphabet” game: Start with the letter A and look for it in words and on signs, then go on to B and so on.
- Find an alphabet book at the library. When you read it, have your child show you the letter. (A is for Apple. “Show me the letter ‘A’ in the word Apple?” or “Here is the letter ‘A’ in the word Apple.”)
- Some books will have many words that begin with the same letter. These books can be a fun way to look for the letters your child is learning.
- Refer to Appendix C for examples using storybooks.

Phonological Awareness

This section will be about helping your child learn sounds and how they can be put together to make words. Your child can learn to tell you the first and last sound of a word when asked. Your child can play with the sounds and make rhyming words by changing the first sound. Your child will learn that words are made up of parts or syllables.

Activities for helping your child learn about sounds in words.

- Read books with rhyming words.
Talk about the words that rhyme and see if your child can think of any more. (“Bug and rug rhyme. They sound the same except for the first sound. Can you think of another word that sounds like bug and rug?” Have some words ready like mug, hug and even nonsense words like ‘zug’ that rhyme. Dr Suess books are good rhyming books but there are many other books at the library.
- Say silly rhyming words during daily activities.
Bath time, “Rub-a-dub dub you’re in the tub, rub-a-dub-dub we will scrub, scrub, scrub.
“Sit in the chair and I can comb your hair and you can hold your bear”
Play with the child’s name “Hannah, banana, fee-fie-foe-fanna”

- See how many words and non-words you can come up with “Bat, cat, sat, rat, fat, hat, mat, pat, lat, dat, gat, zat, etc.”
- Sing nursery rhymes (See appendix A for list of nursery rhymes with words)
- Talk about how words can have several parts or syllables and clap out each part
The word “dog” has one part so it would have one clap. (“dog”).
The word “baby” would have two claps (“ba” and “by”)
The word “banana” would have three claps (“ba” “na” “na”)
- Talk about the parts of words when you are doing things during the day.
Making spaghetti for dinner: (“spa · ghe · ti”, “noo · dles”, “milk”)
Brushing teeth at night: (“tooth · brush”, “wa · ter”, “tooth · paste”)
Pick out words from stories and clap out the number of syllables.
- Talk about the beginning sound of words and the number of words said
- Refer to Appendix C for examples using storybooks.

Understanding Print

Children will look at the pictures when they listen to you read but not notice or look at the printed words on the page. Even though children have not learned to read yet, it is important to help them understand that the printed words on the pages of the book have meaning. Reading books with your child is a good way for your child to learn about the meaning of the words on the pages of books. Printed words are an important part of everyday life. You can show your child how you use printed words for things you do each day.

Print has meaning activities.

- Let your child see you when you are writing grocery lists, paying bills, writing letters, etc.
- When making a grocery list allow your child to make one too with three items on it. Your child can write the list however he or she is able, even if it is scribbles, and then carry it in the store and tell you when you come to an item on their list. (Write the items on your own list and star them so you can help your child remember them. Be sure to talk about the items on your child's list on the way to the store to help with remembering them.)
- Point out the word on your own list and on the item you are buying. ("Here is the rice. It says 'rice' right here on the box and it says 'rice' here on my list.").
- Children can sign their name on the pictures they draw. If your child can only scribble that is okay. After your child writes the name, you can write it correctly and say, "This is how I write your name." As your child learns to print letters, you can write the name so your child can copy it.
- Have your child tell you about the picture that was drawn and you can write the words your child tells you.
- Your child can make a book by drawing pictures and "writing" the words or telling you the words to write.
- When you read a book, point to the words as you read them.
- After you read a book several times, stop before the end of the sentence and let your child finish it. Point to the word as your child says it and say, "You just read this word!".
- Refer to Appendix C for examples using storybooks.

Understanding words we use to talk about books and reading

There are words people use when talking about a book. Some of these words are title, author, illustrator, beginning, ending, front, back, word, sentence, paragraph, chapter, and characters. Using these words when you read a book will help your child learn about literacy.

- Author- the person who wrote the book
- Illustrator- the person who drew the pictures
- Beginning/ending- use these words as you read books and as you talk about what happened in the story.
- Point to words and talk about where to start reading and that you read from left to right. You can talk about sentences and paragraphs as you read longer stories.
- Characters- the people or animals in the story.
- Talk about the difference between pictures and the letters that make up the words.
- As your child begins to learn letters, point them out as you read and talk about the difference between upper case and lower case.
- Refer to Appendix C for examples using storybooks.

Types of books that are good for reading with your child

- Books with five words or less per page and large bold print for very young children.

- Books with 2 or 3 sentences on a page are good when your child is able to sit and listen for a longer time.
- Words or phrases that are said many times in the book allow your child to join you in telling the story.
- Books with pictures that are large, colorful, and fun to look at provide support for talking about the story as you read it.
- Letters and words that are part of a picture help your child to notice the words.
- Board books, touch and feel books, and books with flaps to lift and look under are good for infants and younger children.
- Books that talk about anything your child likes are good because children can relate the topic of the books to their own experiences.

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Appendix A

Nursery Rhymes

Alchin, L.K. Nursery Rhymes Lyrics and Origins
e.g. Retrieved November 2007 from Rhymes.org.uk

John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt

John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt,
His name is my name too.

Whenever we go out,
The people always shout,
There goes John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.

Dah dah dah dah, dah dah dah dah

Diddle Diddle Dumpling

Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John,
Went to bed with his trousers on;
One shoe off, and one shoe on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John!

London Bridge is Falling Down

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair Lady.

Pat a cake Pat a cake

Pat a cake, Pat a cake, baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can;
Pat it and prick it and mark it with a 'B',
And put it in the oven for Baby and me.

Itsy Bitsy Spider

Itsy Bitsy spider climbing up the spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
Now Itsy Bitsy spider went up the spout again!
Also known as Incy Wincy Spider!

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go.
It followed her to school one day, which was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play, to see a lamb at school.
And so the teacher turned it out, but still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about till Mary did appear.
"Why does the lamb love Mary so?" the eager children cry;
"Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know" the teacher did reply.

Little Miss Muffet

Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet
Eating her curds and whey,
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her
And frightened Miss Muffet away

Little Boy Blue

Little Boy Blue come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow the cow's in the corn.
But where's the boy who looks after the sheep?
He's under a haystack fast asleep.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the King's horses, And all the King's men
 Couldn't put Humpty together again!

Five Little Monkeys

Actions:

Five little monkeys -- with one hand hold up the number of fingers to match the verse.

jumping on the bed -- bounce your fingers (monkeys) up and down on your other hand (the bed)

One fell off -- hold up one finger

and bumped his head -- hold head with both hands and rock head back and forth

Mama called the Doctor and the doctor said -- dial the phone with one finger

No more monkeys jumping on the bed -- shake index finger ("no no")

Words:

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
 One fell off and bumped his head.
 Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,
 "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Four little monkeys jumping on the bed,
 One fell off and bumped her head.
 Papa called the Doctor and the Doctor said,
 "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Three little monkeys jumping on the bed,
 One fell off and bumped his head.
 Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,
 "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Two little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped her head.
Papa called the Doctor and the Doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

One little monkey jumping on the bed,
He fell off and bumped his head.
Mama called the Doctor and the Doctor said,
"Put those monkeys straight to bed!"

Star Light, Star Bright

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?
Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky

Websites with nursery rhymes:

<http://www.rhymes.org.uk/index.htm>

<http://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/index.htm> (also contains activities and printables)

Appendix B

A List of Books

Books with Repeated Lines

Are You My Mother? by P. D. Eastman

Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

Bear Wants More by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

Blue Hat Green Hat by Sandra Boynton

Chicka Chicka abc by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell (a lift-the-flap book)

Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed by Eileen Christelow

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

Have You Seen My Cat? by Eric Carle

1, 2, 3 to the Zoo by Eric Carle

Is Your Mama a Llama? by Deborah Guarino

I Went Walking by Sue Williams

Jesse Bear What Will You Wear? By Nancy White Carlstrom

The Napping House by Audrey Wood

The Little Old Lady Who was Not Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams

A List of Touch-and-Feel Books

(Books that have something to touch on the page that helps shows what a word means.)

Baby at the Farm by Karen Katz

Baby Loves Peekaboo! by Dawn Srett

Farm Animals by Dawn Sirett

I like Bugs by Lorena Siminovich

Pat the Bunny by Dorothy Kundhardt

Spot's First Colors by Eric Hill

Spot's First Numbers by Eric Hill

That's Not My Baby ... his hat is too soft. An Usborne touchy-feely book.

A List of Lift-the-Flap Books

(Books with a flap the child lifts to find a hidden picture)

1,2,3, Count With Me. [illustrations, Georgie Birkett]

Come and Explore with Dora: a great adventure with 10 places to discover. By Ellie Seiss

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell

Elmo's Alphabet Soup by Naomi Kleinberg

Flaptastic Farm by Dwell Studio

Maisey's Amazing Big Book of Learning by Lucy Cousins

Maisey Goes to Bed by Lucy Cousins

Tuck Me In by Dean Hacoen

Who's Hiding at the Zoo? [editor, Christine Gunzi]

Who's Hiding in the Pond? [editor, Christine Gunzi]

Appendix C

Storybook Examples of Reading for Literacy Learning

Examples for learning vocabulary

This example is using the book *That's not my baby... his hat is too soft* (An Usborne touchy-feely book). This is a touch and feel book, which is a great way for children to hear the words and touch and feel what the word means. The book begins with a baby on the cover and the title "That's not my baby... his hat is too soft." The baby's hat is made of a soft material for your child to touch and feel.

Parent: Read, "That's not my baby his hat is too soft."

Child: Help your child feel the hat while you say, "This is a soft hat. Feel how soft the hat is." Read the next page and repeat the word silky as you have your child feel the mittens. Read the next pages and talk about the words fuzzy, squashy, and fluffy. This will help your child to learn new words.

You can also talk about what the baby is doing and look for a little mouse each time you turn the page. Show your child the mouse on the first page and then on the next page say, "I see the mouse on this page too! Can you find it?"

You can take any book you read and talk about new words that your child does not know. In the book *Just Me and My Dad* (Mayer, 1975) you might use the words camping, pitched, canoe, and launched.

Parent: "We went camping, just me and my dad. Do you know what camping is? What do you think you would do if you went camping?"

Child: "I think there would be bears!"

Parent: "When you are camping, you are sleeping outside in a tent. Sometimes you can camp in the mountains, by a beach, or even in your own back yard. I do not think we would see any bears around here but let's see if they see any in the story."

Parent: "My dad was tired so I pitched the tent." When you pitch a tent, you set it up so that you can sleep in it. Look at this picture; he is all tangled up in the tent. Do you think his dad will help him pitch the tent?"

Parent: Read “I wanted to take my dad for a ride in our canoe, but I launched it too hard.” Point to the canoe and say, “Here is the canoe. It is just like the one that we saw on the top of the car at the beginning of the story. What are they going to use it for?”

Child: “Go in the water?”

Parent: That is right, it is a type of boat that goes in the water.

This word “launched” is a new one. What do you think it means?”

Child: “He pushed it in the water.”

Parent: “He did push it in the water and that is what launched means, to put the canoe in the water so it is ready for them to get in and float. But, you don’t want the canoe to sink in the water!”

Examples for Phonological Awareness

These examples are from the book *Green Eggs and Ham*. (Seuss, 1988). These are different ways to help your child learn about and play with sounds.

Rhyming

Parent: “Would you eat them in a box? Would you eat them with a fox?” I heard two words that rhyme. Box and fox rhyme. They sound the same except for the first sound. Box starts with “buh” and fox starts with “fuh” and they both end with “ox”. Can you think of another word that rhymes with box and fox?”

Child: “Bed”

Parent: “That is a good try. Bed starts with the same sound as box but it does not rhyme. It has to sound the same *except* for the first sound. Let’s try the word sox and see if it rhymes. Box, fox, sox do sound the same. I bet we can find more words that rhyme in this story.

What is the first sound of a word?

Parent: “I do not like them, Sam-I-am. I do not like green eggs and ham. Listen to the word “Sam” The first sound in the word Sam is sssss. You try that sound.

Child: ssssssss

Parent: Now say Sam and see if the first sound is ‘sssssss’. “Ssssam”

When you come to the page “You may like them. You will see. You may like them in a tree!” ask your child about the word “see”. What is the first sound in the word “see”? When they have learned the alphabet children may sometimes say the letter name. Say, “yes that is the name of the letter, but what is the sound we hear?” As you read look for other words that begin with the same sound and ask your child about them.

How many words are there?

Parent: Let’s play a game to see if you can tell me how many words I say. When I say “eat them” you hear two words (clap with each word). Now you try one. “In a box” Clap for each word you hear. “In... a...box.” We have to clap three times.

Practice this game with other sets of words. Use only one to three words for your child to count

How many syllables do you hear?

Parent: We are going to listen to words and figure out how many parts the words have. “I do not like them here or there. I do not like them anywhere.” Listen to the word “here” it has one part (clap as you say the word “here”). Now listen to the word “anywhere” it has three parts (clap for each part as you say “an...y...where”). Good, we can practice this with more words in the stories we read. (Use words that have one, two and three syllables or parts.)

Examples for understanding print and words about books

These examples come from the book *The Napping House* (Woods, 1984). This book has repeated lines that make it a good one for letting your child “read” the words.

When you read this book point to the words with your finger as you read.

Parent: “The **title** of this book is *The Napping House*. The title tells us what the book is about. What do you think this book is going to be about?”

Child: “Taking a nap?”

Parent: “It looks like they are sleeping on this bed! We can read the book and find out, but first I wanted to show you these two names on the front cover of the book. This one says by Audrey Wood. She is the **author** or the person who wrote the book. Then right here it says illustrated by Don Wood. The **illustrator** is the person who drew the pictures for the book.

Turn to the page where you will begin reading the story and say, “Look, here is where I will start reading, right at the **top of the page**. Each page repeats the words from the page before and always ends with “..in a napping house, where everyone is sleeping.” As you read about the snoring granny, the dreaming child, and the dozing dog and the other animals point to them in the picture. After you have read the book a few times pause before the word “sleeping” to let your child finish. You could also pause after the words snoring, dreaming, dozing, snoozing and slumbering so your child can “read” the words. If your child does not remember the words, help by pointing to each one in the picture and then by saying the word if necessary.

The book *Ten Little Fish* (Wood, 2004), has the words printed at the top and bottom of the pages.

Parent: “Look, here are the fish we will read about in the story and down at the **bottom of the page** (point to the words) are the words that tell us the story. We start here on the **left** and read to the **right**. We keep reading on the next page from **left to right**.” When you turn the page say, “now the words are at the **top of the page**” and point to the words as you read them. On the next page, ask your child “where are the words on this page?” If your child just points to words say, “that is right now they are at the **bottom of the page**.”

When your child is able to sit for longer books, *Little Bear's Visit* (Minarik, 1961), is a good book to help your child learn about chapters.

Parent: This page has the word contents at the top. The **contents** tell us the name of all the chapters in the book and on what page they begin. A **chapter** is a section of the book. In *Little Bear's Visit*, there are four chapters. The title of each chapter will give us a clue to what that part of the book is about.

Two PhD supervisor professors who I know in Finland, the country of education prestige, have told me privately that most people who come to do a PhD should not be there in the first place. I asked why. They said that they lack the ability to do even basic research; to formulate their own questions; and to search for their own answers. They rely on their professors to spoon feed them their own research. This took me by surprise. Economic status also plays a role, and that is largely determined by the parent. Wealth provides options not available to others, such as access to the "good" schools (note: be careful when looking for "good" schools look for factors that research says benefit academic achievement API scores are not the whole story).