



Communication and Language: Enriching talk and exploring reading

LESLEY CURTIS and ANDREA VAUGHAN

The North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership

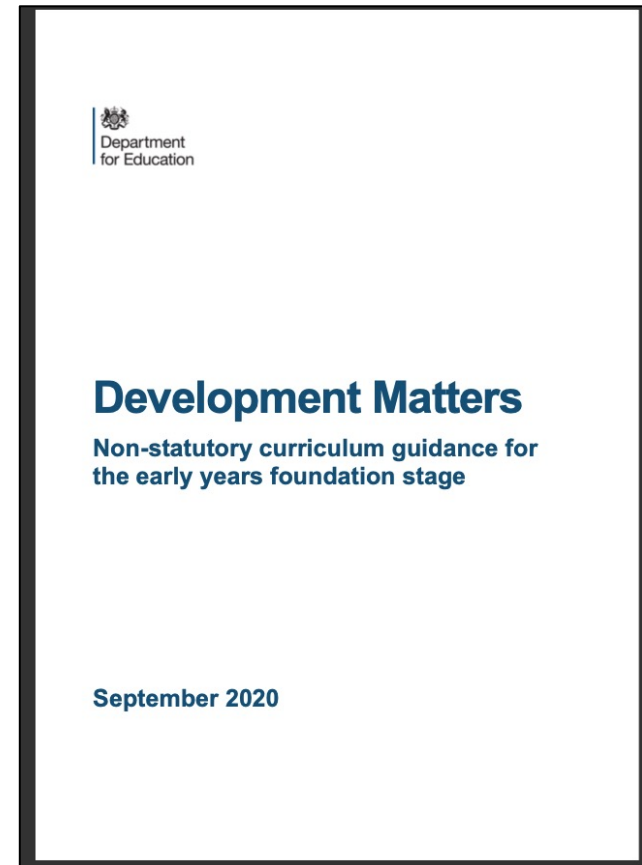
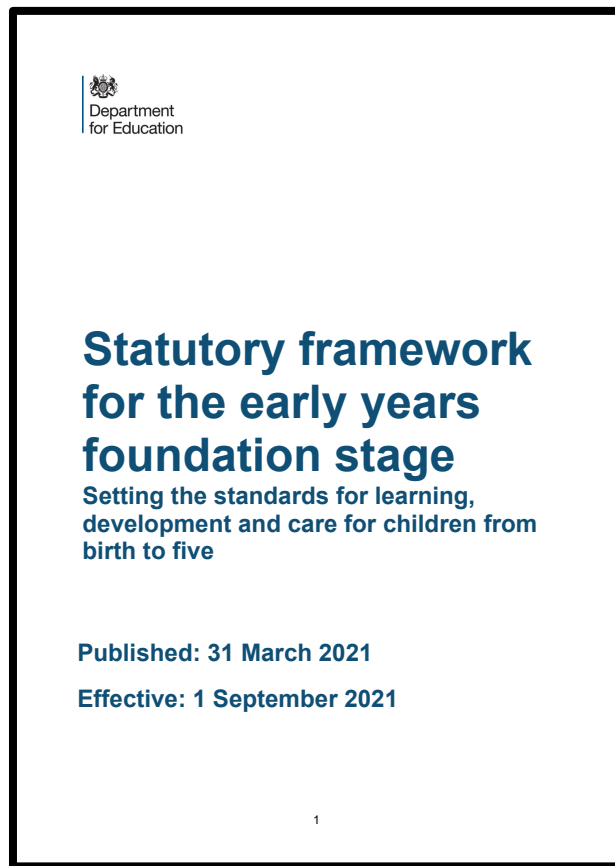


Aims

- Become familiar with the changes to EYFS for Communication and Language
- Understand best practice for teaching communication and language
- Explore how children really learn language
- Examine how books are an effective teaching tool for language development
- Look at practical examples of how we can improve children's language capabilities



Draft Statutory Framework EYFS and revised Development Matters



Why early language development?



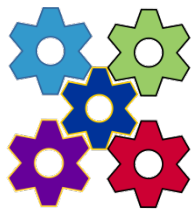
Improving early child development with words TEDx Talk 2014 (Brenda Fitzgerald)

Not just a word gap

More than the amount of words:

- Understand the *concepts* that lie beneath the words
- *Quality* of words
- Bump into new words through *books*
- Develop children's *competency* in objects and number





Education Endowment Foundation



PREPARING FOR LITERACY

Improving communication, language and literacy in the early years

Guidance Report



1

Prioritise the development of communication and language



2

2. Develop children's early reading using a balanced approach



3

Develop children's capability and motivation to write



4

Embed opportunities to develop self-regulation



5

Support parents to understand how to help their children learn



6

Use high quality assessment to ensure all children make good progress



7

Use high quality targeted support to help struggling children



Language *and* Literacy



1

Prioritise the development of communication and language



Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.

High quality adult-child interactions are important and sometimes described as talking with children rather than just talking to children.

Adults have a vital role to play in modelling effective language and communication.

Use a wide range of approaches including shared reading, storytelling, and explicitly extending children's vocabulary.



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Exploring Vocabulary

- Children learn **on average 7-8 new words** a day
- A child who enters school in the lowest 20% of vocabulary knowledge will need to learn **20 new words, every day for the next 3 years to catch up** (Biemillar, 2006)
- Hart and Risley (2005) suggest that children need **to hear and use new vocabulary at least 6 times in a context that is meaningful to them** in order to be able to say those new words.

“Word meanings are dynamic rather than static formations. They change as the child develops; they change also with the various ways in which thought functions.” (Vygotsky, 1978:30)



Communication and Language in the *revised* EYFS

- The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's **back-and-forth interactions** from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development.
- The **number and quality** of the **conversations** they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial.
- By **commenting** on what children are interested in or doing, and, echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.



Communication and Language in the *revised* EYFS

- **Reading frequently** to children, and **engaging them** actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to **use and embed new words** in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive.
- Through **conversation**, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with **support and modelling** from their teacher, and **sensitive questioning** that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.



How do children learn language?

Six principles of word learning:

- ***Frequency*** matters
- Make it ***interesting***
- Make it ***responsive***
- Focus on ***meaning***
- Be ***clear***
- ***Beyond*** the word

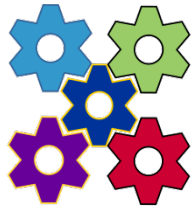
**Lessons from the crib to
the classroom:
how children really learn
vocabulary**

(Justin Harris and
colleagues, 2010)



Number and quality of conversations

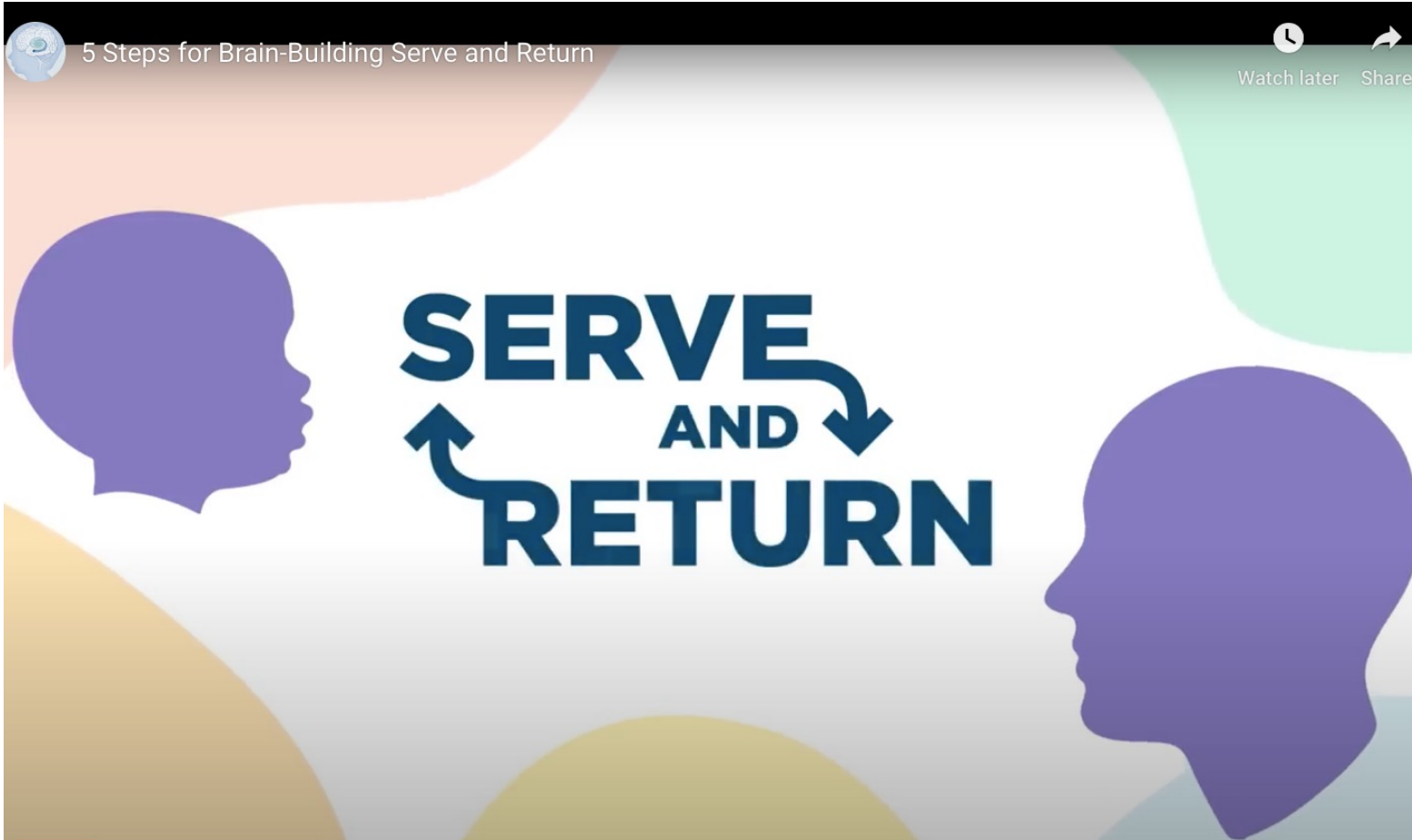




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Conversation Strategies



Get involved

- Be interested and genuine
- Use humour and have fun



Model conversations

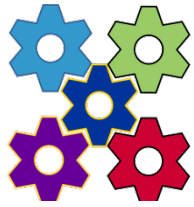
- Model listening and responding
- Use verbal and non-verbal cues



Develop, extend, sustain

- Comment
- Inform and explain
- Pretend and project
- Talk about feelings
- Questions/Prompts





A very SHORT conversation

Harvard Centre for the Developing Child talks about 'serve and return' but is this enough if we don't capture thought WITH language?

Extended narrative Is it SST?

Educator: What did you have for lunch?

Child: Sandwiches and a yogurt

E: Oh that sounds nice, was it?

C: Yep

E: What flavour was your yogurt?

C: Coconut.

E: Is that your favourite?

C: Yes

A LONGER conversation

(Child 2 adds to block tower, child 1 knocks the tower down)

Child 2: Felix! You knocked it!

Adult: But it was an accident wasn't it?

Child 2: There there Felix, I don't need any help.

(Puts final piece on tower)

Adult: Ta Dah!

Child 2: Not Yet! (successfully positions another piece on top, Child 3 hands child 2 another piece but this last block makes the tower fall)

Adult: Oh no! I thought that was going to balance that time. Did you?

Child2: No, I thought it was going to wobble!

Adult: you thought it was going to wobble!

(child starts adding block to the tower)

A LONGER conversation continued...

Child 2: No, not that one Felix!

(Child 1 successfully balances the piece)

Adult: what did you think was going to happen?

Child 2: I don't want this one... (removes the piece from the tower)

Child 1: I'll put it down here ok (balances at the bottom of the tower)

Child 2: That could be the slide

Adult: what could it be?

Child 2: A slide

Adult: A slide? On a birthday cake?

(laughter)

Child 1: That would be a very big birthday cake

And the **conversation** continues on.....

Observe

- BEANS!
- - Watch the clip of Kate as she plays alongside children in her class
- - Listen to her own analysis of her ***conversation***

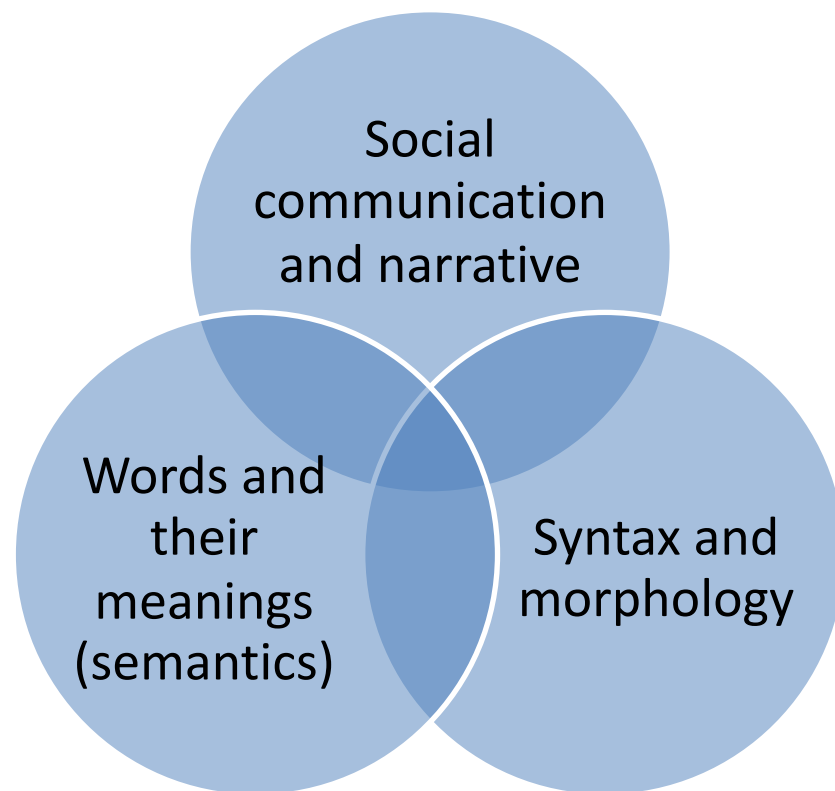
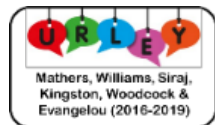
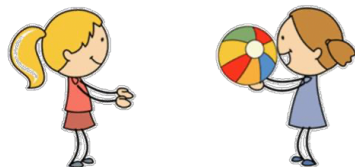
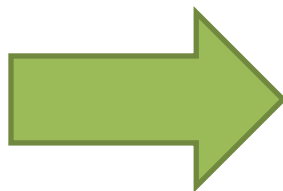
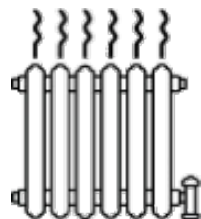
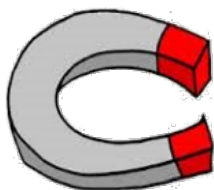


Interactions with ***all*** children

- Who did I *interact* with?
- What was the *topic* of conversation?
- How *long* was the interaction?
 - Short
 - Medium
 - Long



Language development



Examples from revised Development Matters 2020:

Social communication and narrative skills:

- Copy what adults do, taking 'turns' in conversations (through babbling) and activities. Try to copy adult speech and lip movements.
- Start a conversation with an adult or a friend and continue it for many turns.
- Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text; some as exact repetition and some in their own words.
- Talk with others to solve conflicts.



Examples from revised Development Matters 2020:

Words and their meaning:

- Use a wider range of vocabulary.
- Use talk to organise themselves and their play: “Let’s go on a bus... you sit there... I’ll be the driver.
- Talk about their feelings in more elaborated ways: “I’m sad because...” or “I love it when ...”.
- Talk about their feelings using words like ‘happy’, ‘sad’, ‘angry’ or ‘worried’.



Examples from revised Development Matters 2020:

Syntax and morphology:

- Understand ‘why’ questions, like: “Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?”
- Compare sizes, weights etc. using gesture and language - ‘bigger/little/smaller’, ‘high/low’, ‘tall’, ‘heavy’.
- Understand position through words alone – for example “The bag is under the table,” – with no pointing.



Teacher Rating of Oral Language Skills: “TROLL”

- Assessing children’s ORAL language skills...
- What support does this child need?



[illegible]

- Watch the clip of Laura
- What communication style does she show?
- How would you support her?

[illegible]

Children's conversations styles

- Sociable child
- Reluctant child
- Child with own agenda
- Passive child
- Think back to the clip. Which conversation style does Laura reflect and how might this help you to decide what support she needs?



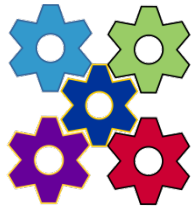
Vocabulary Size

Vocabulary size relates to academic success

Correlations between vocabulary size and life chances are as firm as any correlations in educational research

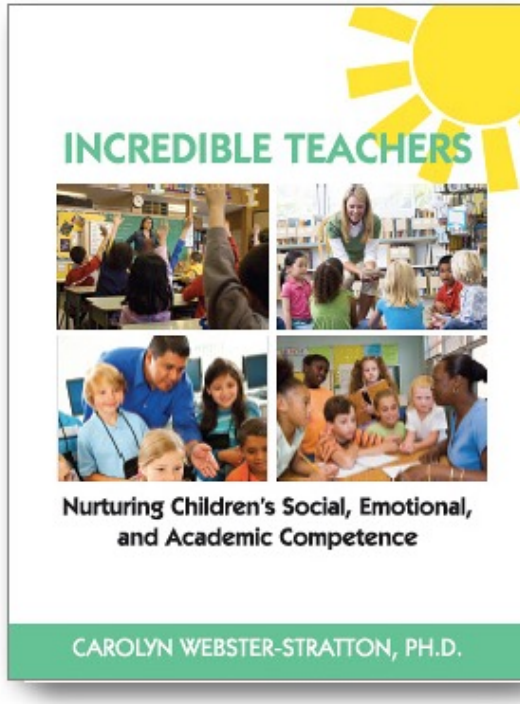
Simply put: knowing more words makes you smarter!





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Descriptive commenting



- Follow the child's lead
- Observe the child closely
- Describe what you can see
- Your commentary needs to be suited to the child's language level
- Describe what the child is doing
- Pause to allow silences. There is provides spaces in which the child can copy comments

Try to use 10 times more ***Descriptive Comments*** or coaching statements than prompts.



What to comment on?

- Objects
- Actions
- Feeling
- Describing words

"Studies have shown that teachers can help young children expand their language vocabulary and development by modelling words for them and naming actions and objects in their world."

(Webster-Stratton, Reid and Stoolmiller, 2008)



Analysing questions and prompts

- Effective questions
- Prompts / comments / statements
- Other effective *conversation* strategies



Sensitive questions

- Ask questions that children WANT to answer
- Questions should prompt more than a one word answer
- Sometimes a prompt is more natural than a question: “hmmm, I wonder what is going on here...?”
- Ask questions that have no right or wrong answer.
 - How do you think she felt?
 - What else do you think Fred could have done?
 - Why do you think...?



Would you like to tidy up now?

Iram Siraj & Laura Manni (2008)

- Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY)
- 5808 questions from 400 hours of observation in preschool classrooms

**Lower order
thinking
questions**



**Higher order
thinking
questions**



It's time to tidy up

- Tidy up time is an excellent opportunity to add vocabulary
- Watch out for:

“Put that away”

“Laura, can you put this over there please?”

“Put them back”

- Rather it is better to use precise language:

"Danny, put the cuboid block on the middle shelf"



Books and Reading

“Reading and writing FLOAT
on a *SEA*
of
TALK”

(Prof. James Britton, 1972)



Communication and Language in the *revised* EYFS

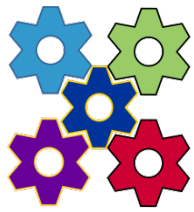
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What does this mean for our practice?

- Making the early years environment **irresistible**
- Make **every interaction** count
- Introduce **new and interesting** vocabulary
- Ask sensitive questions that children **want** to answer
- Read and **re-read**, favourite stories – conversations when reading – books **everywhere!**
- Use **descriptive commenting**
- Be the child's **play partner**





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Breadth of vocabulary



- 90% vocabulary encountered when **reading** (not used in everyday speech)
- Fiction does not necessarily provide more academic vocabulary and syntax
- Complex **vocabulary** and **ideas** must be grasped to achieve academic success



Stanovich, K.E. (1993)





How **irresistible** are your books and book areas?

ECERS-E Item 2 pg. 26

5.1 A variety of types of books are accessible to children

7.1 Book area is comfortable (rug and cushions or comfortable seating) and filled with a wide range of books varied style, content and complexity



What works...

Children hearing books and stories aloud and being encouraged to have conversations about them with their teacher and peers;

“**Reading to children** from books beyond their reading level is helpful and two reasons for this are, it contributes to the incidental learning of **new vocabulary** and increases exposure to **literacy language**.” Clay, (2001)

Reading the same book several times helps with **language learning** (Horst *et al*, 2011)

Shared Reading: Interactive shared reading: "sharing books with young children has a significant, substantial, and positive impact both on young children's **oral language** skills and on young children's **print knowledge**" (NELP, 2008, p:155)

Dialogic Reading. Having a dialogue or conversation while reading. (Zevenbergen, Whitehurst, & Zevenbergen, 2003)

*“one of the most important things we can do with people learning '**written-ese**' is to enable them to hear many, many times a day what 'written-ese' sounds like, as well as many, many times to see different kinds of written-ese all around them”*

A story every day adds up...

- One story per day in nursery and reception = 390 stories
- Two stories per day in nursery and reception = 780 stories
- Two stories per day in nursery and reception and one story per day at home during these two years = 1,145 stories



Dialogic reading prompts



Completion prompts

Recall prompts

Open-ended prompts

Wh Prompts

Distancing prompts

Dialogic Reading

- Clip of dialogic Reading

Why this? Why now?

Planning for progress in a rich reading curriculum.

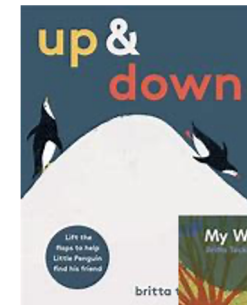
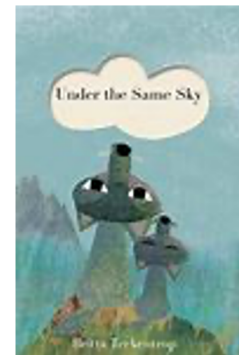
- Which books have been selected to read with children ***across the year?***
- What ***knowledge*** will be taught?
- Do books become more ***challenging*** as children progress?
- Are lesser experienced children given ***extra practice?***



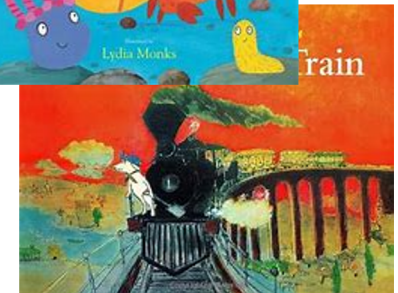
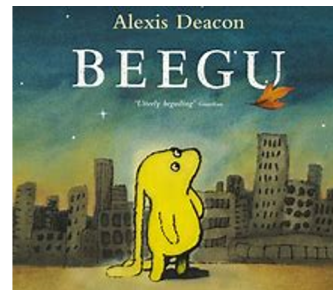
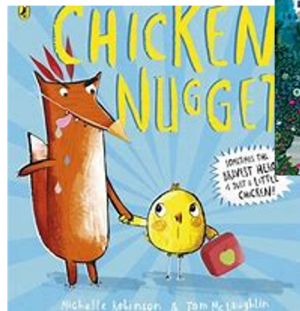
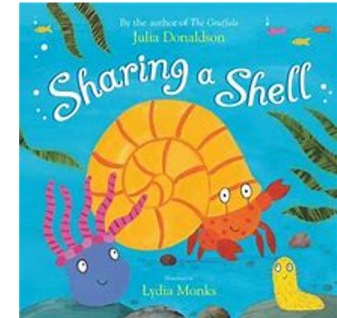
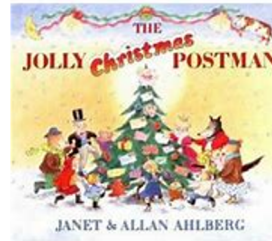
Texts that teach....

- Types of texts
- Rhyming texts
- Story books
- Traditional tales
- Non-fiction
- Online texts/apps
- Books with pictures/Picture books

What makes a text easy,
what makes a text hard?



What helps...



Over and over and over and over again.....

Reading the same book several times helps with language learning (Horst *et al*, 2011)

Print referencing

What are concepts about print?
Why are they important?
How can we check them?
How can we teach them?

“ unless adults strategically and deliberately highlight print, children spend less than 6% of read-aloud time focusing on print” p63

Print Referencing During
Read-Alouds: A Technique
for Increasing Emergent Readers'
Print Knowledge

Tricia A. Zucker, Allison E. Ward, Laura M. Justice

Four domains to explore;

1. Print Meaning
2. Book and Print Organisation
3. Letters
4. Words

Don't forget ...

“One of the main objectives for the [practitioner] during reading is to build positive attitudes about reading by showing their enjoyment and interest”

(Strickland, 1989)

- Reading should be fun!
- Be prepared but don't lose the enjoyment of reading by over-focusing on your plan – stay tuned in to the children.



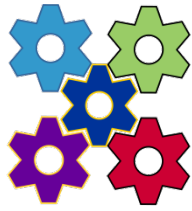
Thank you for listening



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