

Dialogic and shared reading for young children to support language and literacy



Driver Youth Trust

What's the idea?

Reading with young children is an important activity to support early language and literacy. During shared reading, adults and children talk about and around the book, rather than focus just on the text. The adult encourages children to play an active, rather than passive role. There are different approaches to shared reading:

1. Dialogic reading involves having a dialogue around the text, with the adult asking questions to help deepen understanding. There is a structured approach based on a PEER sequence (Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Repeat).
2. Shared book reading involves an adult sharing a book and using comments, prompts and questions to encourage children to take a more active role.

What does it mean?

Reading provides lots of opportunities for children to hear new vocabulary embedded in varied grammatical sentences. Studies show that children who share books regularly with an adult in the preschool years (0-5 years) learn language faster, enter school with a larger vocabulary and become more successful readers in school (Mol et al., 2008).

Although reading is important in its own right, a shared reading style is most effective at boosting children's language development; it supports greater understanding, can promote inference and reasoning skills and allows children to play a more active role in the story-telling process.

What are the action points for teachers?

Dialogic reading by its nature is a shared experience. In the classroom, this means making time to share books with small groups of children if possible, rather than the whole class.

For staff who are less confident in using a dialogic reading approach, sharing books can be a good starting point and professional development can be key, which would include examples of how to share books, modelling of shared reading in practice and details of the more structured dialogic approach.

Working with parents can also support shared reading. Research has shown positive changes in how parents shared stories with their children when given guidance on dialogic reading (Law et al., 2018).

THE DRIVER YOUTH TRUST IS A CHARITY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE OUTCOMES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE WITH LITERACY.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Check out the LUCID website for resources on how to support engagement with parents.
- » Read about the PEER sequence in dialogic reading.
- » Read about the link between socioeconomic status and language development.