

# **BUILDING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUDS**



## **LEARNING GUIDE - MODULE 1**

### ***READING-ALOUD TO YOUNG CHILDREN: AN INTRODUCTION***

# READING-ALoud TO YOUNG CHILDREN: AN INTRODUCTION

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Building Language and Literacy Skills through Interactive Read-Alouds* is a set of modules for adult learners. Designed for preschool teachers, caregivers, and families, the three modules can be used for self-study or with a group of adults for professional development. Based on the latest research, the modules provide step-by-step guidance, implementation tips, templates, learning activities, photographs, videos, and additional resources. The modules align to the *Indiana Birth-Age 5 Literacy Framework* and the *FOUNDATIONS to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5*.

The set of modules, *Building Language and Literacy Skills through Interactive Read-Alouds* provides targeted support to help teachers, caregivers, parents, and other adults build language and literacy skills with young children. The set of modules includes:

- Module 1: *Reading-Aloud to Young Children: An Introduction*
- Module 2: *Intentional Instruction: The Interactive Read-Aloud Process*
- Module 3: *Dialogic Reading: A Systematic Shared Reading Experience*

All three resources (*Foundations*, the *Framework*, and the *Modules*) are provided by the Indiana Department of Education to support research-based practices that will translate to successful learning outcomes for all children.

The *Modules* were developed by RMC Research Corporation of Arlington, Virginia, for the Indiana Department of Education.

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*The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.*

- Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985)  
U.S. Department of Education

Reading aloud to young children is a precious gift of time and attention that has a significant impact on language development and learning. The simple act of sharing a book with a child provides an emotional bond that translates to good memories surrounding reading and conversations about books. There is no cost involved; visit your public library to borrow books to read to your child(ren). Libraries offer hundreds of children's books and the librarian will be happy to help you select the "just right" book. Rather than buying the latest toy that is advertised on television, read aloud to your child (or students) instead. The new toy is soon discarded, but developing a love of reading provides a lifetime of joy. It begins in the first months of life. All that is needed is an engaging book, a quiet place, and a caring adult who takes the time to read aloud to a child.

The three modules in this series, *Building Language and Literacy Skills through Interactive Read-Alouds*, provide guidance to enhance reading aloud to young children. This module, the first in the series, provides an introduction to the Read Aloud process. Access the module power point and use this Learning Guide to deepen your understanding of the content and record your reflections.



## **Activity 1: Reflect & Respond**

### **Reading Aloud to Young Children**

#### **Initial Survey**

**DIRECTIONS:** Respond to each question. Do not read ahead or try to find the answers online. Simply respond to each question based on what you know at this time.

1. What is a Read-Aloud?
2. How often should a parent read aloud to a child?
3. How old should a child be before a parent begins reading aloud?
4. What types of books should an adult read aloud to young children?
5. What are the basic steps to conducting an effective read-aloud?

**We will return to these questions and answers at the end of module.**



## Tool 1: Observation Template – Observing Your Child

**DIRECTIONS:** This Observation Template enables you to organize observations of your child throughout the week. Record your observations for at least three days. Use small sticky notes to write your comments. These observations will help you focus on your child's preferences.

	<b>OBSERVATION 1</b> DATE: _____	<b>OBSERVATION 2</b> DATE: _____	<b>OBSERVATION 3</b> DATE: _____
<b>My child is MOST alert at this time of the day:</b>	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My child likes to play with these toys:</b>	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My child likes these animals:</b>	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My child laughs when ...</b>	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.



## Tool 2: Observation Template – Observing Your Students

**DIRECTIONS:** This Observation Template enables you to organize observations of your students throughout the week. Record your observations for at least three days. Use small sticky notes to write your comments. These observations will help you focus on your students' preferences.

	<b>OBSERVATION 1</b> DATE: _____	<b>OBSERVATION 2</b> DATE: _____	<b>OBSERVATION 3</b> DATE: _____
<b>My students tend to be MOST alert at this time of the day:</b> _____	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My students show an interest in these topics:</b> _____	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My students like these animals:</b> _____	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.
<b>My students laugh when ...</b>	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.	Place sticky note here.



## Resource 1: Selecting “JUST RIGHT” Books to Read Aloud

### Tips for Selecting “Just Right” books:

- Select a book based on the child’s interests.
- Select a book that is appropriate for your child’s age and/or developmental level.
- Select a book with colorful illustrations.
- Select a book that will encourage a discussion about the story.

**Below are suggestions for appropriate books for children at different age levels. Make a selection, however, based on what you know about your child’s interests and attention span. Remember to find a comfortable place to read – a place where you and your child can cuddle and enjoy the story together.**

### 10 Read-Aloud Books for Infants:

(Board Books and Cloth Books are often the best books to read to infants – babies like to chew the books, so be sure the books are kept clean.)

1. Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
2. Whose Baby Am I? by John Butler
3. Freight Train by Donald Crews
4. Time for Bed by Mem Fox
5. Wow! Babies! By Penny Gentieu
6. Where is Baby’s Belly Button? by Karen Katz
7. Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin
8. Pat the Bunny by Dorothy Kunhardt
9. Sheep in a Jeep by Nancy E. Shaw
10. Have You Seen My Duckling? By Nancy Tafuri



## 10 Read-Aloud Books for Toddlers:

1. The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
2. Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed by Eileen Christelow
3. Maisy (series) by Lucy Cousins
4. Good Dog, Carl by Alexandra Day
5. Llama Llama Red Pajamas by Anna Dewdney
6. Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman
7. Hattie and the Fox by Mem Fox
8. Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins
9. Chicka Chicka, Boom Boom by Bill Martin
10. Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

## 10 Read-Aloud Books for Preschoolers:

1. A Splendid Friend Indeed by Suzanne Bloom
2. Little Bear's Little Boat by Eve Bunting
3. Toot and Puddle by Holly Hobbie
4. Trucks Whizz, Zoom, Rumble by Patricia Hubbell
5. Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
6. Milton the Early Riser by Robert Kraus
7. There's an Alligator Under My Bed by Mercer Mayer
8. Mouse Mess by Linnea Asplind Riley
9. Fox in Socks by Dr. Seuss
10. Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale by Mo Willems

## **10 Read-Aloud Books for Kindergartners:**

1. The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown
2. A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle
3. Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola
4. Koala Lou by Mem Fox
5. Corduroy by Don Freeman
6. Frog and Toad (series) by Arnold Lobel
7. If You Take a Mouse to School by Laura Joffe Numeroff
8. Fancy Nancy by Jane O'Conner
9. The Stray Dog by Marc Simont
10. Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson

## **10 Read-Aloud Books for First Graders:**

1. More Parts by Tedd Arnold
2. How to Lose All Your Friends by Nancy L. Carlson
3. Red-Eyed Tree Frog by Joy Cowley
4. Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus
5. Junie B., First Grader (series) by Barbara Park
6. The Luckiest One of All by Bill Peet
7. Alligator Boy by Cynthia Rylant
8. Doctor De Soto by William Steig
9. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
10. Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber



## Resource 2: Visiting the Library with Young Children

*Libraries offer more than books. They are places of learning and discovery for everyone.*

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/part6.html>

You do not need to wait until your child is reading to visit the public library. A weekly visit to the library will encourage your child's interest in books and learning to read.

### **Ten tips to enjoy visiting the library with your toddler or preschooler:**

1. Tell your toddler or preschooler about the library before you visit. Point out the library when you drive by the building.
2. Practice using quiet "library voices" and discuss why people whisper in some areas of the library.
3. Discuss how to handle library books. Teach your child how to hold a book and carefully turn the pages.
4. Begin your first visit to the library with a walking tour to preview the different sections of the library.
5. Introduce yourself and your child to the librarian. (Librarians can help you select "Just Right" books that are appropriate for your child. Be sure to ask about children's programs and other library services.)
6. Sign-up and attend Story Time with your child. (Remember, the Children's Librarian is NOT a babysitter.)
7. If your child is old enough, obtain a library card for him/her.
8. Help your child select one or two books to check-out. (Increase this number as your child becomes "library savvy" and understands how to care for library books.)
9. Designate a special bag or basket for library books. This will help your child carry his/her library books, protect the books, and keep track of the library books when you arrive home.
10. Schedule a weekly trip to the library with your child. Designating a specific day is often helpful.



## Resource 3: The Reading Nook

### A Reading Nook at Home



Select a special area in your home where you and your child can enjoy looking at books and reading together. It may be a favorite chair, the sofa, or an area in the child's bedroom.

Teach your child to take care of books and other reading materials. Designate a shelf or bookcase to store your child's books. You can use your imagination to create a Reading Nook or it can simply be a special place to keep library books and your child's personal books.



Photos accessed from:  
<http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/quiry/kids-reading-nook/p/240>



### A Reading Nook at Preschool

Preschoolers should have access to a variety of children's books and magazines in the preschool classroom. There should be a special reading center or book nook. The classroom library should have approximately 5 to 8 books per child (Morrow, 2005).



This is a photo of the Book Nook at Grace Pre-School in Ripon, Wisconsin.



## Activity 2: Observe, Reflect, & Record

### Observation Protocol

**Directions:** As you view the following video clips, record your observations, reflections, and suggestions.

#### What Does It Look Like?

#### Reading Aloud to an infant, a toddler, and a preschool class

##### A. Reading aloud to an infant (Meet Ali and Jace)

1. What is the physical and emotional interaction between the mother and baby?
2. Describe the book Ali selected to read to Jace.
3. Does Jace appear to be engaged in the Read-Aloud? Reflect and describe.
4. What is your overall impression of this Read-Aloud session?

##### B. Reading aloud to a toddler (Meet Kristin and Isabel)

1. What is the physical and emotional interaction between the mother and toddler?

2. Describe the book Kristin selected to read to Isabel.
  
3. Does Isabel appear to be engaged in the Read-Aloud? Reflect and describe.
  
4. What is your overall impression of this Read-Aloud session?

**C. Reading aloud to a preschool class (Meet Linda Price and her preschoolers)**

1. What is the physical and emotional interaction between the teacher and her students?
  
2. Describe the book Ms. Price selected to read to her students.
  
3. Are the students engaged during the Read Aloud? Reflect and describe.
  
4. What is your overall impression of this Read-Aloud session?



## Read-Aloud Points to Remember

- **Make reading an important part of every day.**
- **Children who love books are usually successful readers.**
- **Young children can only sit still for a few minutes and listen to a story, but as they mature, their attention spans will increase.**
- **Talk about the pictures.**  
You do not always have to read the book to tell a story (consider a Picture Walk with infants and toddlers).
- **Let your child turn the pages.**  
Babies need board books and help to turn pages, but your toddler can do it with minimal help.
- **Show your child the cover page.**  
Explain what the story is about.
- **Show your child the words.**  
Run your finger along the words as you read them.
- **Silly sounds are fun to make.**  
Grab an animal book and practice making animal noises together.
- **Choose books that your child can relate to.**  
Select books that relate to what is happening in your child's world - starting preschool, going to the dentist, getting a new pet, or moving to a new home.
- **Make the story come alive.**  
Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story. Ask questions about the story. (e.g., What do think will happen next? What is this?)

- **Let your child ask questions about the story.**  
Use the story as an opportunity to engage in a conversation and to talk about familiar activities and objects.
- **Let your child tell the story.**  
Children as young as 3 years old can memorize a story and many children love an opportunity to express their knowledge.
- **Take advantage of your local library.**  
Sign-up for a library card (one for you and one for your child). This is the first step to accessing hundreds of (free!) children's books. Check to see if the library offers story hours or special events!

Adapted from: Reach Out and Read  
<http://www.reachoutandread.org/parents/readingtips/>

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### **Additional Modules in the Series:**

## **BUILDING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUDS**

**Module 2** focuses on the Interactive Read Aloud process and how families, caregivers, and preschool teachers can build children's background knowledge, concepts of print, and emergent literacy skills through Read-Alouds and intentional instruction.

**Module 3** focuses on Dialogic Reading, a systematic shared reading experience. This Read-Aloud approach was designed to build language skills with young children from impoverished environments. Research indicates that Dialogic Reading makes a difference, increasing language skills for ALL children when implemented with fidelity.





## **Activity 3: Reflect & Respond**

### **Reading Aloud to Young Children**

#### **Reflective Survey**

**DIRECTIONS:** Respond to each question. After completing this survey, go back to Activity 1 and compare your answers? Did your responses change? Do you have a deeper understanding of the Read-Aloud process?

1. What is a Read-Aloud?
2. How often should a parent read aloud to a child?
3. How old should a child be before a parent begins reading aloud?
4. What types of books should an adult read aloud to young children?
5. What are the basic steps to conducting an effective read-aloud?



## Resource 4: On-Line Read-Aloud Resources

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### **A Child Becomes a Reader: Birth to Preschool**

[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs\\_details.cfm?from=&pubs\\_id=261](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs_details.cfm?from=&pubs_id=261)

This 36-page booklet is part of the Partnership for Reading, a collaborative effort by the National Institute for Literacy, the U.S. Department of Education, and the NICHD to bring the findings of evidence-based reading research to those with an interest in helping all people learn to read well. The booklet, which is based on the findings of the National Reading Panel, describes activities that parents can do with their children, from birth to age five, to improve reading skills.

### **American Association of School Librarians (AASL)**

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/el/elread>

This website provides suggestions for how school librarians can assist families plan and implement effective Read-Alouds.

### **Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)**

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/index.php>

The goal of the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) is to promote the adoption and sustained use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices. This site has resources for early childhood intervention practitioners, parents, and other caregivers of children, birth to five years of age, with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and those at-risk for poor outcomes. Of particular relevance are the CELL Practice Guides for Practitioners and Parents – one is called “Reading Together Out Loud.” Many of the other guide topics also have applications to reading aloud.

### **¡Colorín Colorado! Fun and Effective Ways to Read with Children**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/families/home/funways/#three>

Experts believe that reading to your child every day is one of the most important things parents can do. Here are ideas for using this reading time to build your child's literacy skills while keeping it fun for both of you. Suggestions included for 0-3 years old, preschool, Head Start, or day care, and elementary school.

### **¡Colorín Colorado! Tips for Parents of Babies**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/25310/>

It's never too early to read to your baby. As soon as your baby is born, he or she starts learning. Just by talking to, playing with, and caring for your baby every day, you help your baby develop language skills necessary to become a reader. By reading with your baby, you foster a love of books and reading right from the start. These tips offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader.

### **¡Colorín Colorado! Tips for Parents of Toddlers**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/25337/>

Being a toddler is all about action. Encourage continued language development and interest in books and reading by keeping things lively and engaging. Everyday experiences are full of opportunities to engage in conversation and develop language skills. These tips offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader.

### **¡Colorín Colorado! Why Reading to Your Kids in Spanish Will Help Them Become Better Readers**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/21012/>

While it is important to encourage and support your child's efforts to learn English, research shows that children who are read to in their native language (such as Spanish) will have an easier time learning to read in their second language (such as English). This article provides information about the research done on this topic, and suggestions of ways that you can help your child develop his or her literacy skills in your family's native language.

### **Developing Early Literacy: Executive Summary of the National Early Literacy Panel**

[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs\\_details.cfm?from=&pubs\\_id=5749](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs_details.cfm?from=&pubs_id=5749)

This publication summarizes the report of the National Early Literacy Panel and examines the implications of instructional practices used with children and addresses issues of instructional practices for young children so that parents and teachers can better support emerging literacy skills. One of the instructional practices that were found to enhance early literacy skills was interventions that involved reading books to children, including shared book reading and those that encouraged reader-child interactions, such as dialogic reading. The National Early Literacy Panel was supported by the National Institute for Literacy, the NICHD, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Office of Head Start to

examine the implications of instructional practices used with children from birth through age 5 years.

### **Get Reading to Read**

<http://www.getreadytoread.org>

This website provides resources for educators and families to support the development of early literacy skills before children enter kindergarten. Resources include screening tools, checklists, games, and instructional tips.

### **Help My Child Read Reading Resources**

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/read/resources/edpicks.jhtml>

Publications include:

- *Helping Your Child Become a Reader* brochure
- *Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read, A Parent Guide*
- *Reading Tips For Parents*
- *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*

### **Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), Publications for Parents**

<http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/publications.html>

Publications include:

- *A Child Becomes a Reader: Kindergarten Through Third Grade*
- *Dad's Playbook: Coaching Kids to Read*
- *Shining Stars: Kindergartners Learn To Read*
- *Shining Stars: First Graders Learn To Read*
- *Shining Stars: Second and Third Graders Learn to Read*

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

<http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200303/readingaloud.pdf>

The article, *Reading Aloud with Children of All Ages*, by Derry Koralek, provides information and suggestions for reading aloud to children from birth to elementary school.

### **National Network for Child Care (NNCC)**

<http://www.nncc.org/literacy/better.read.aloud.html>

This site provides suggestions for families, caregivers, and teachers plan and implement Read-Alouds. Ideas to enhance the Read-Aloud experience are included for: The Carrot Seed by Ruth Kraus; Corduroy by Don Freeman, Milton the Early Riser by Robert Kraus, and other books.

## **PBS Parents Reading and Language**

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/readinglanguage/>

An online resource filled with information about children's reading and language development from birth through the early school years.

## **Reach Out and Read**

<http://www.reachoutandread.org/parents/readingaloud/>

*Reach Out and Read* partners with doctors to "prescribe" books and encourage families to read together. This website provides information, tips, and ideas for families on reading aloud to young children, including a book list with descriptions of books appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, as well as multicultural titles, books in Spanish, alphabet and counting books.

## **Reading is Fundamental**

<http://www.rif.org/>

This website provides numerous resources that families and teachers can access to help children learn how to read. One section of the site, *Let's Read as a Family*, provides resource links and tips to support reading in the home.

## **Reading Rockets: *How to Read With a Squiggly Baby (or Toddler!)***

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/35051/>

Parents know they should read with their child every day. But reading together requires that your baby or toddler will actually sit still long enough for a book! If you've got a squiggler in your house, see if these tips help your reading time go a little more smoothly. In English and Spanish.

## **Reading Rockets - I Love Storytime: The Best Way to Read to Your Toddler**

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/28954/>

Reading to your toddler is one of the best ways to boost language skills. This article has shares 12 tips to help make sure your toddler gets a head start on reading.

## **Ready Set Read Early Childhood Learning Kit**

<http://www2.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/RSRkit.html>

This Web site has an activity guide for parents and caregivers in English and Spanish that focuses on language and literacy activities for children birth to age five.

## **Teaching our Youngest: A Guide for Preschool Teachers and Child Care and Family Providers**

<http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/early/teachingouryoungest/index.html>

Prepared by the Early Childhood-Head Start Task Force, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this guide draws from scientifically based research about what pre-school teachers and childcare providers can do to help children develop their language abilities, increase their knowledge, become familiar with books and other printed materials, learn letters and sounds, recognize numbers and learn to count. It includes a section on reading aloud to children.

## **The Read and Rise Initiative**

<http://www.powersimple.com/ember/nationalurbanleague/readandrise.html>

For African-American and Latino parents, this National Urban League initiative provides basic tools for helping children achieve reading success. The website includes a guide, magazine, and tips.

## **Tips for Parents About Reading**

<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/node/2768>

This publication by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Comprehensive Center presents information and ideas for helping children through grade eight succeed with reading.

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