



GIFT BOOKS

Program Guide

RRSC created the innovative Gift Books program to distribute new and gently used books to children who have few books at home. RRSC collaborates with partner agencies to reach families with low incomes and other challenges. These partners include Women Infants and Children (WIC) Clinics, food pantries, Early Head Start, Head Start, Good Neighbor, and Salvation Army. Books are also distributed through Little Free Libraries and activities in low-income neighborhoods. This popular program encourages children to read more by offering selections of free books to match their interests and reading levels.



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The Need for Gift Books

In 2007 Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) realized many Story County children, especially those in families with low incomes, had few good quality books to call their own. These families may not regularly visit the public library due to lack of time, transportation or overdue fines. They may not regularly attend well-child checkups where Reach Out and Read books are distributed. They may not attend good quality preschools.

Scholastic, Inc. created a Family and Community Engagement Research Compendium with five sections: Early Literacy, Family Involvement, Access to Books, Expanded Learning, and Mentoring Partnerships. [Access to Books](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/face/pdf/research-compendium/access-to-books.pdf) reviews the negative impacts when children have few books and the positive impacts when children grow up with many good books and a reading culture in the home and community.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/face/pdf/research-compendium/access-to-books.pdf>

Studies have documented that disadvantaged children have limited access to books.

- Children in families with low-incomes have access to fewer reading materials than children of middle- and upper-income families. (Lindsay, 2010; Krashen 2012)
- Sixty-one percent of low-income families have no books at all in their homes for their children. Low-income children have, on average, four children's books in their homes. (US Dept. of Education, 1996)

Studies suggest access to good books is a key to successful reading development.

- The most effective way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print. Communities ranking high in achievement tests have several factors in common: an abundance of books in public libraries, easy access to books in the community at large, and a large number of textbooks per student. (Newman et al., 2000)
- The only behavior measure that correlates significantly with reading scores is the number of books in the home. (McQuillan, 1998)
- In general, findings of the study Children's Access to Print Materials and Education-Related Outcomes show that providing children access to print materials accomplishes the following: (Lindsay, 2010)
 - Improves reading performance. Among the studies reviewed, kindergarten students showed the biggest increase

- Is instrumental in helping them learn the basics of reading, such as letter and word identification, phonemic awareness, and completion of sentences
- Prompts them to read more frequently and for greater amounts of time
- Improves their attitudes toward reading and learning

RRSC Gift Books

The RRSC Gift Books program was launched to provide greater access to good books for children from birth to age eight who are likely to have few books in their homes. We utilize gently used books, which we collect, clean, and sort, as well as some new books. RRSC gives some of the Gift Books in our programs and shares many others through partner organizations serving families with low incomes.

We typically add value by personally giving the books and letting children choose books that interest them. We tell families about the importance of reading with children. We model [Reading Aloud with Children of All Ages](#), as described in an article compiled by NAEYC for Reading is Fundamental. We model Dialogic Reading, as described in **Appendix C**. Sometimes we add labels or handouts with reading tips and ideas for related activities to do at home or in daycare or preschool.

Desired Result and Indicators

Our desired end result is all “Story County Children Read to Succeed.” The Gift Books program contributes to this outcome by providing good quality books to disadvantaged children and families. Families use these books as they read, talk and play together, all activities that build positive relationships and prepare children for school and learning.

One milestone indicator of progress is the percent of children entering kindergarten with basic language and literacy skills, as measured by school districts in the fall.

A longer-term indicator is the percent of third grade students reading at grade level as measured by school districts.

Examples of Performance Measures for Gift Books

1. Number of RRSC Gift Books distributed annually through specific programs
2. Cost of the Gift Books program
3. Number of volunteers and number of volunteer hours

4. Number and percent of Story County communities in which Gift Books are distributed
5. Number of partner organizations distributing Gift Books
6. Number and percent of families reporting on surveys that Gift Books increased their reading at home
7. Quotes and photos of staff, children, and families enjoying Gift Books

Five Steps to Start a Gift Book Program

RRSC Step 1: Identify early literacy needs

1. The level of poverty is one indicator of how many children and families would benefit from Gift Books.
2. Ask city officials to help identify neighborhoods with a concentration of families with low incomes.
3. Conduct a needs assessment by meeting with local organizations who serve disadvantaged families. These are some questions you could ask.
 - Are their adult clients who have young children employed? How many have an average annual income below the Federal Poverty Level? Are they receiving welfare?
 - What percentage are single parents?
 - What are their primary languages?
 - What percentages are Black, Hispanic, Asian, White, or more than one race?
 - Do they live in low-income neighborhoods? Are some homeless?
 - Are some food-insecure?
 - How many children from birth through age eight do they have?
 - Where do they go for medical care? Do they have insurance?
 - Who are their children's caregivers?
 - Do the children from age three to five attend preschool?
4. Ask if these organizations would like to distribute gift books for children.
 - How would they do it?
 - Do they do home visits?
 - Do families bring their children to the organization's site?
 - How regularly do they see families?
 - If families spend time in a waiting room, would the organization like a Reading Corner with children's books? If there is a TV, would they turn it off?
 - Would the organization like to be a steward for a Little Free Library?

- Are staff members willing to participate in an orientation about children's books and how adults can nurture early literacy?

RRSC Step 2: Plan

1. Form a Gift Books Team.
2. Plan book drives to recycle gently used books.
3. Develop procedures for processing gently used books
4. Identify vendors that provide quality books, discounts, free shipping, and bonus books.
5. Plan to raise funds to purchase some new gift books.
6. Find a safe, dry place to collect, sort, label, and store books. RRSC has set up a Gift Book Center in a room in a local church.
7. Develop a distribution plan that includes training of partner agency staff.

RRSC Step 3: Implement

1. Conduct book drives with community partners.
2. Design and print book labels that acknowledge community donors.
3. Design and print book labels with reading tips for families.
4. Gather cleaning supplies.
5. Recruit volunteers to sort, clean, repair and label books. Consider including a librarian or teacher with experience.
6. Dispose of books you wouldn't want to give to your own child.
7. Collect small boxes or tote bags for distributing heavy books.
8. Purchase some new books to supplement the donated gift books and to fill in gaps, such as bilingual books and books in languages other than English.
9. Provide training for volunteers and partner agency staff in how to use Gift Books to stimulate early language and literacy development and the joy of reading.
10. Consider scheduling experienced readers to model good reading techniques when families gather at Gift Book distribution sites.

RRSC Step 4: Assess

1. Record the number of books distributed, the number and locations of distribution sites, the number of individuals who are trained to process and distribute Gift Books, and the hours donated by volunteers.
2. Record funds raised and funds spent for new books, supplies, and labels.

3. Take pictures with permission, and collect feedback and quotes from families, partner agencies, and volunteers.
4. Share the Gift Book program evaluation with the board.
5. Share successes publicly. Thank the volunteers, the sites, and the community for supporting the program. Reinforce families for using the books with their children.

RRSC Step 5: Revise

1. Continue to make improvements in order to reach more families and to recycle more books that are interesting, developmentally appropriate, and reflect languages and cultures of families.
2. Maintain and repair Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries, which recycle Gift Books.

Benefits of a Gift Books Program

1. Children benefit, especially those most likely to have delayed literacy development and to fall behind in reading.
2. Books that children have outgrown are recycled.
3. The program is relatively inexpensive.
4. The program adds value to partner agencies' services to families.
5. Volunteers can choose among ongoing, short-term or one-time options.
6. A volunteer can be matched with a distribution site to increase ownership and divide the responsibilities.
7. Local children's needs for Gift Books can be anticipated and prioritized.
8. Both gently used and new books can be utilized.
9. Communicating with partner agencies benefits everyone as staff and volunteers become aware of new opportunities for collaboration.

Possible Challenges of a Gift Books Program

1. Sustainable leadership may be a problem without several volunteers as leaders-in-training.
2. Sorting, cleaning, labeling and distributing Gift Books is a time-consuming process.
3. There will be some costs associated with cleaning and storing donated books.

4. Volunteers may feel out of touch if there isn't regular communication, appreciation, and opportunities for feedback.
5. Partner agencies may not update their book needs, including desired frequency, quantities, age levels, and languages, without regular prompting from the team.
6. Poor quality books may be offered to children if the team isn't careful to dispose of books that don't meet Gift Book standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you get the books to give out?

Sources of Gift Books include community donations of gently used and new books, bonus books from large Reach Out and Read orders, and new books RRSC purchases to meet specific needs, such as board books for bilingual families or chapter books.

RRSC has benefited from a variety of successful book drives. Based on these experiences, RRSC created a document, [RRSC Book Drive Tips](#), which is attached in **Appendix A**.

How do you process the donated books?

RRSC processes and recycles over 5,000 Gift Books each year. The Gift Book Team supports book drives, keeps records, trains and supports volunteers, hosts labeling parties, receives requests, and distributes books. It is important to have at least one person who is knowledgeable about good quality, developmentally appropriate children's books. Carol Elbert, a retired youth librarian, is the RRSC Team Leader who provides guidance and training for other volunteers. Carol wrote [RRSC Procedures: Recycling Donated Books](#), which is attached in **Appendix B**.

RRSC suggests these categories for sorting donated books by condition and quality:

1. Excellent, like new, could be used in Reading Corners or Backpack programs
2. Very good, could be used in Reading Corners, BackpackTM programs, or other Gift Book programs

3. Good, could be given through Little Free Libraries, food pantries, MICA, or other Gift Book programs
4. Marginal condition and religious, adult or questionable content, could be given to the public library book sale

How do you distribute Gift Books?

RRSC distributes many books in partnership with others in the community who interact with disadvantaged families. These are some examples.

- Welfare programs: In 2009 RRSC started supplying the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinic with children's books. They adopted the motto "Every child, every visit, a book."
- Food pantries: Bethesda Lutheran Church provides food for both body and mind. RRSC donates Gift Books. Several of their volunteers are retired teachers who read with children and help them pick out books to take home. Before Thanksgiving and Christmas, the church gives out bags of food for a holiday meal. At these two events, RRSC fills tables with an assortment of new Gift Books. We help children who attend to choose books, and we read to them while they wait. We also help adults pick out gift books to give to their children during the holidays.
- Home visitors: RRSC has provided books for children and information about effective reading techniques to home visitors who work with families most likely to benefit. These providers include Parents As Teachers staff, DHS social workers, and MICA Family Development specialists.
- Early Head Start and Head Start: The RRSC Books in the Home program provided a set of high-quality books for each family enrolled in Story County Early Head Start and Head Start programs and donated the same books along with an Early Literacy Educator's Guide to each classroom. Book labels highlighted the 6 early literacy skills of vocabulary, narrative, phonological awareness, print awareness, letter knowledge, and print motivation. The teachers gave the books to families during home visits or parent conferences and encouraged daily reading.
- Human Service agencies: RRSC supplies Salvation Army, Good Neighbor, ACCESS women's shelter, and Story County Dental Clinic with collections of books that can be read on site or taken home.
- Elementary students who need food: United Way of Story County supports the Backpack™ Program of the Food Bank of Iowa. The RRSC Read to Succeed

program donates Gift Books to include in the backpacks, typically before holidays and spring and summer breaks.

- Habitat for Humanity: When a family moving into a home has young children, RRSC gives them a bag of new age-appropriate books to start their home library.
- RRSC supplies books for some preschool family literacy events that are promoting reading at home.
- A few Gift Books are used to maintain Reading Corners in Story County.
- Gift Books are also donated to Little Free Libraries in Story County.

How do you read with children of different ages?

Reading Aloud with Children of All Ages is an article compiled by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for Reading Is Fundamental (www.rif.org). It was written by Derry Koralek and illustrated by Diane Greenseid.
<http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200303/readingAloud.pdf>

Dialogic reading is an effective method of reading to preschool age children. It is described in **Appendix C**.

APPENDIX A



"Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading"

BOOK DRIVE TIPS



Gilbert Elementary 4th graders donated 16 boxes of books to RRSC.

Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) is a non-profit agency that serves Story County families with children birth to age eight. As a way of promoting early language and literacy development, we are committed to ensuring all children have access to good quality books.

Book drives allow RRSC to reach more children with the gift of books and the promise of literacy. RRSC encourages you to take photos of your book drive and email them to contact@raising-readers.org.

Many people have children's books that their family has outgrown or no longer needs. Book drives make it easy for people to donate gently used books to a good cause.

When books are donated to RRSC, volunteers clean, sort, and label them. Then the books are recycled by distributing them to local food pantries, clothing closets, Little Free Libraries, welfare agencies, and other programs that serve disadvantaged Story County families with young children.

RRSC invites local groups to conduct book drives to collect new and gently used children's books from family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others.

Step 1: Get inspired

Anyone can do a book drive. These are a few examples.

Schools and Students

Local schools are effective hubs for book drives and other literacy promotion events. Obtain permission from the district and building first. Principals, teachers, media specialists, and parent leaders usually support these kinds of events and will often organize a book drive in their classrooms or building. Students often involve their parents. Have a visible way to report how many books are collected by each class and by the school as a whole. Consider having some incentives or a celebration at the end of the book drive.

Middle and high school students could organize book drives as a way to pursue an organization's goal to make a difference in the community or for an individual to fulfill community service requirements.

Businesses and Service Organizations

A book drive can help corporations or business to fulfill a mission to give back to the community in which they are located. Instead of exchanging gifts at a holiday party, invite guests to bring new or gently used children's books to be donated to children with few books of their own.

Special Occasion Parties

Plan a Raising Readers Book Drive Party for your book club, service group, office, 4H, Camp Fire, Boy Scouts, elementary classroom, sorority or fraternity holiday party. Request books, one for you and one for Raising Readers, at your baby shower or child's birthday party. Collect books in honor or memory of a special person.

Step 2: Get Organized

Consider inviting schoolmates, coworkers, friends, family, neighbors, and other organizations to help plan and carry out your book drive. You might also engage community and education leaders, librarians, faith groups, elected leaders, business and religious leaders, and youth and family groups. When people are involved, you are likely to get more books donated.

Step 3: Choose a Time

Book drives can be held any time during the year. You might schedule one in conjunction with an established literacy event or holiday, such as one of these.

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday>
- National Readathon Day, <http://global.penguinrandomhouse.com/readathon/>

February

- Valentines Day

March

- Dr. Seuss Read Across America, www.nea.org/readacross/index.html

April

- Week of the Young Child, <http://www.naeyc.org/woyc>
- Drop Everything and Read Day, <http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/dear>
- National Library Week, <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>
- National Volunteer Week, <http://www.pointsoflight.org/signature-events/national-volunteer-week>

May

- Screen-Free Week, <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/screen-free-week-partner-childrens-book-week-may-1---7-2017>
- Children's Book Week, www.cbcbooks.org
- Get Caught Reading Week, <http://www.getcaughtreading.org>

July

- Summer Learning Day, <http://gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-GLR-Calendar.pdf>

September

- Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Day, <http://www.rif.org/whats-new/live-event/>

October

- Teen Read Week, <http://teenreadweek.ning.com>

November

- National Family Literacy Day, <http://holidaysofyear.com/national-family-literacy-day/> sponsored by National Center for Family Learning (NCFL), <http://www.familieslearning.org>

December

Holiday giving

There is no set length of time for a book drive, but most run from two weeks to a month. Donors need time to receive the information, go through their personal libraries, and get the books to the collection site.

Step 4: Choose a Collection Site

Place boxes or bins in a visible and safe location, such as in an entryway or lobby of a school, business, or church. Boxes should be strong enough to hold a large number of books. A plastic storage bin (18 gallons) works quite well. Books can be transferred into smaller boxes or tote bags once the bin is full. It is a good idea to choose one person who will be responsible for checking the collection bin regularly during the book drive.

Place posters advertising the book drive near the book collection bin, and in prominent areas around the venue. Include information such as the start and end dates, the collection site(s), the name of a contact person at the venue, and the phone number and web site of RRSC or other organization who will receive the

books for anyone wanting more information. Only gently used or new children's books appropriate for children are desired. Others will be donated to the public library book sale.

Another option is to target a neighborhood and post signs and deliver flyers saying books placed on the curb would be picked up on a certain day.

Step 5: Publicize your Book Drive

Decide on key messages about the importance of reading and how donated books will be recycled and used. RRSC can help.

Printed promotional materials could include newsletters, posters, flyers, yard signs and local newspapers. Websites, emails, and social media can also announce the book drive and provide reminders and updates. Schools, business, and local organizations will have established ways to communicate with families, employees, and members. Take photos to document your activities.

Step 6: Wrap up

Notify RRSC of when you will count the books. Pack the books in small boxes or tote bags since books are heavy. Schedule a time to deliver the books or arrange for them to be picked up.

Celebrate your successful book drive. Report the results, collect quotes, and take more photos. Thank your team and the donors. RRSC will also add our personal and public thanks for your book drive.

RRSC contact information:

Executive Director Kim Hanna

Voice mail: 515-239-5667

Email: contact@raising-readers.org

Website: www.raising-readers.org

APPENDIX B



"Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading"



PROCEDURES: RECYCLING DONATED BOOKS

Step 1: Develop guidelines for acceptable quality and condition

Consider the following possibilities of what you might not accept:

- Missing covers
- Missing pages
- Scribbles
- Torn pages
- Magazines
- Religious content
- Adult content
- Stickiness or dirt
- Textbooks
- Outdated nonfiction
- Encyclopedia sets
- Coloring books or sticker books

Be clear about the intended age level. The mission of Raising Readers is to serve children birth to age eight. If a donated book is for ages over nine, determine if Raising Readers has a program where that will be useful. Perhaps it can be distributed through other organizations such as food pantries or human service agencies.

Usable books, which don't meet the program needs of Raising Readers, can be given to the public library book sale. Be willing to throw away books that smell bad or are a mess or that you wouldn't give to your own child.

Step 2: Mend and clean donated books

In general, mend a torn page with matte finish or frosted tape rather than shiny. However, if the page is glossy or coated, a gloss tape will be less noticeable. You don't want to use cellophane tape because it turns yellow and brittle.

Clear package tape may be used to reinforce the spine of a book that is beginning to tear.

Try using nail polish remover to remove felt pen marks from a cover.

Try using hairspray to remove ballpoint pen ink from a cover.

Sometimes pencil and crayon marks can be removed without damage to print by using an art gum eraser.

If a book cover or board book is soiled, try cleaning it with a damp cloth. You may want to wipe each page of a board book and then stand it on edge to air dry. A plastic coated surface can be wiped with glass cleaner or rubbing alcohol. To avoid removing the color, test a small area first. (This is the voice of experience.)

If a book will be used in a public Reading Corner, you may want to reinforce it to give it a longer life. Hard cover books with paper dust jackets will benefit from having the paper cover laminated or enclosed in a plastic cover and then attached to the book cover with fiber tape. Public libraries often put dust jackets in clear plastic covers that are designed for that purpose and available from library supply companies. Talk to public library staff for advice and information about what they use. For a very reasonable cost we have laminated dust jackets in the Ames Community School District Production Services.

APPENDIX C



"Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading"

DIALOGIC READING



Dialogic Reading: An Effective Way to Read to Preschoolers

By: Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst

Dialogic reading works. Children who have been read to dialogically are substantially ahead of children who have been read to traditionally on tests of language development. Children can jump ahead by several months in just a few weeks of dialogic reading.

Over a third of children in the U.S. enter school unprepared to learn. They lack the vocabulary, sentence structure, and other basic skills that are required to do well in school. Children who start behind generally stay behind – they drop out, they turn off. Their lives are at risk.

Why are so many children deficient in the skills that are critical to school readiness? Children's experience with books plays an important role. Many children enter school with thousands of hours of experience with books. Their homes contain hundreds of picture books. They see their parents and brothers and sisters reading for pleasure. Other children enter school with fewer than 25 hours of shared book reading. There are few if any children's books in their homes. Their parents and siblings aren't readers.

Picture book reading provides children with many of the skills that are necessary for school readiness: vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention, the pleasure of learning, and on and on. Preschoolers need food, shelter, love; they also need the nourishment of books.

It is important to read frequently with your preschooler. Children who are read to three times per week or more do much better in later development than children who are read to less than three times per week. It is important to begin reading to your child at an early age. By nine months of age, infants can appreciate books that are interesting to touch or that make sounds.

What is dialogic reading?

How we read to preschoolers is as important as how frequently we read to them. The Stony Brook Reading and Language Project has developed a method of reading to preschoolers that we call dialogic reading.

When most adults share a book with a preschooler, they read and the child listens. In dialogic reading, the adult helps the child become the teller of the story. The adult becomes the listener, the questioner, the audience for the child. No one can learn to play the piano just by listening to someone else play. Likewise, no one can learn to read just by listening to someone else read. Children learn most from books when they are actively involved.

The fundamental reading technique in dialogic reading is the **PEER sequence**. This is a short interaction between a child and the adult.

The adult:

- **Prompts** the child to say something about the book,
- **Evaluates** the child's response,
- **Expands** the child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it, and
- **Repeats** the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion.

Imagine that the parent and the child are looking at the page of a book that has a picture of a fire engine on it. The parent says, "What is this?" (the prompt) while pointing to the fire truck. The child says, truck, and the parent follows with "That's right (the evaluation); it's a red fire truck (the expansion); can you say fire truck?" (the repetition).

Except for the first reading of a book to children, PEER sequences should occur on nearly every page. Sometimes you can read the written words on the page and then prompt the child to say something. For many books, you should do less and less reading of the written words in the book each time you read it. Leave more to the child.

How to prompt children

There are five types of prompts that are used in dialogic reading to begin PEER sequences. You can remember these prompts with the word **CROWD**.

1. Completion prompts

You leave a blank at the end of a sentence and get the child to fill it in. These are typically used in books with rhyme or books with repetitive phrases. For example, you might say, "I think I'd be a glossy cat. A little plump but not too __," letting the child fill in the blank with the word fat. Completion prompts provide children with information about the structure of language that is critical to later reading.

2. Recall prompts

These are questions about what happened in a book a child has already read. Recall prompts work for nearly everything except alphabet books. For example, you might say, "Can you tell me what happened to the little blue engine in this story?" Recall prompts help children in understanding story plot and in describing sequences of events. Recall prompts can be used not only at the end of a book, but also at the beginning of a book when a child has been read that book before.

3. Open-ended prompts

These prompts focus on the pictures in books. They work best for books that have rich, detailed illustrations. For example, while looking at a page in a book that the child is familiar with, you might say, "Tell me what's happening in this picture." Open-ended prompts help children increase their expressive fluency and attend to detail.

4. Wh- prompts

These prompts usually begin with what, where, when, why, and how questions. Like open-ended prompts, wh- prompts focus on the pictures in books. For example, you might say, "What's the name of this?" while pointing to an object in the book. Wh- questions teach children new vocabulary.

5. Distancing prompts

These ask children to relate the pictures or words in the book they are reading to experiences outside the book. For example, while looking at a book with a picture of animals on a farm, you might say something like, "Remember when we went to the animal park last week. Which of these animals did we see there?" Distancing prompts help children form a bridge between books and the real world, as well as helping with verbal fluency, conversational abilities, and narrative skills.

Distancing prompts and recall prompts are more difficult for children than completion, open-ended, and wh- prompts. Frequent use of distancing and recall prompts should be limited to four- and five-year-olds.

Virtually all children's books are appropriate for dialogic reading. The best books have rich detailed pictures, or are interesting to your child. Always follow your child's interest when sharing books with your child.

A technique that works

Dialogic reading works. Children who have been read to dialogically are substantially ahead of children who have been read to traditionally on tests of language development. Children can jump ahead by several months in just a few weeks of dialogic reading. We have found these effects with hundreds of children in areas as geographically different as New York, Tennessee, and Mexico, in settings as varied as homes, preschools, and daycare centers, and with children from economic backgrounds ranging from poverty to affluence.

Dialogic reading is just children and adults having a conversation about a book. Children will enjoy dialogic reading more than traditional reading as long as you mix-up your prompts with straight reading, vary what you do from reading to reading, and follow the child's interest. Keep it light. Don't push children with more prompts than they can handle happily. Keep it fun.

Permission for this article was provided by Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, Ph.D., Director, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.