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Shared reading occurs when an adult and child read a book aloud together, with an intent to improve the child’s oral language.

In the early years prior to school, it is most likely that an adult will be reading to a child.

An important aspect of shared reading is the conversation that occurs between the adult and child during the reading session.

Pausing while reading a picture book and taking the time to discuss details in the story can help expand a child’s vocabulary to include words and concepts they may not hear on a daily basis.

There are a number of ways you may approach this.

Add detail to describe objects or characters in the story.

Make careful observations together about who characters are, their traits and their characteristics.

*A cat was walking along and discovered a magnificent tree. What kind of cat do you think it is Finn?*

*A black and a white cat.*

*And where is it on the page? Can you see it?*

*There’s the black and white cat. Found it.*

Discuss details in pictures, such as the position of objects.

*He’s right next to the tree. Can you see the cat? Where is he now? Where’s the black and white cat? Next to the tree. Can you point to him for me? Can you show me?*

*I think that one is it.*

*He’s next to the tree. Oh look, there’s butterflies.*

Discuss implied features of characters.

*I love this tree sighed the cat and he stretched his paws around its trunk and hugged it.*

*The cat seems to be very kind, doesn’t he? He’s only been kind and gentle with all of the animals in the story. He’s been kind with the butterflies, and he’s been kind with the birds. A very gentle and kind cat.*

Use names with characters. In storybooks, if characters do not already have names, choose a name and use it when discussing the book.

*He’s a very kind cat. What do you think we should call him? Should we call him Cuddles because he is kind to all of the animals and he likes cuddling the tree?*

*Cuddles the cat? Okay.*

Pausing while reading a picture book and taking the time to discuss details in the story during shared reading sessions can have an impact on the oral language development of a child, which can have a direct influence on literacy development including reading.

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