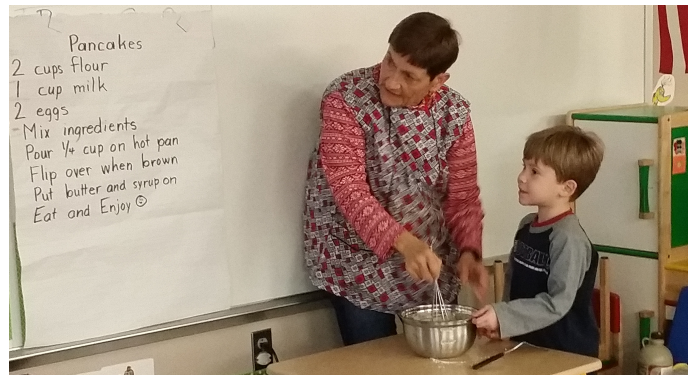




StoryPals

Program Guide

RRSC created this program to provide additional reading experiences to children ages 3-5, especially those who have limited access to books and reading at home. RRSC recruits and trains volunteers to use the shared reading technique called dialogic reading. RRSC creates StoryPals kits containing books, prompts, and instructions. Typically, preschool teachers identify children to participate. Each volunteer is matched with a child or a small group of children. They meet once or twice a week during the school day. The goal is to provide personalized experiences with good books in order to increase children's basic literacy skills and readiness for kindergarten. Although this program was designed for volunteers working in preschools, the training would also benefit caregivers and families.



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The Need for StoryPals

Approximately one third of U.S. children enter kindergarten without the early literacy skills and background knowledge necessary for learning to read. Young children living in poverty are more likely to lack access to good children’s books and have less shared reading time at home than middle class peers. About one fourth of preschool children and families in Story County are categorized as living in poverty. The adults in their lives are often not familiar with dialogic reading.

The Dialogic Reading Model

StoryPals uses dialogic reading in working with preschool-age children.

“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.” Whitehurst, Grover J. (Russ), Ph.D. “Dialogic Reading: An Effective Way to Read to Preschoolers.” Reading Rockets. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 Mar. 2015

www.readingrockets.org/article/dialogic-reading-effective-way-read-preschoolers

Dialogic reading aims to let each child become the storyteller of the books. The method is described in Appendices H, I, and J of this StoryPals Guide.

RRSC StoryPals

Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) created this innovative program for preschoolers using the evidence-based dialogic reading method. It is a way for the community, in partnership with preschools, to provide personal enriching reading experiences for children ages 3-5, especially those who have limited access to books and reading at home.

The StoryPals Coordinator makes arrangements with the preschool and recruits, trains and supports volunteers. To start a session, a volunteer chooses a book from the StoryPals Kit and records the date and book chosen. That same book may be used for two or three sessions in a row. The volunteer shares the book using dialogic reading questioning techniques. After several sessions with the same book, the children should be doing most of the “reading” and the StoryPals volunteer is listening.

Each reading session lasts about 20 minutes and is followed by a few minutes for the volunteer to write down observations. Typically, the volunteer repeats the process with a second child or group for a total of 1 hour.

Desired Results and Indicators

Our desired result is all “Story County Children Read to Succeed.” StoryPals contributes to this result by using the evidence-based dialogic reading method to provide additional enriching reading experiences for children ages 3-4, especially those who have limited access to books and reading at home. The school identifies the children.

A mid-term indicator of the contribution of StoryPals to early literacy is the percent of children who regularly participated in StoryPals who then enter kindergarten with basic language and literacy skills as measured by school districts.

A side benefit of StoryPals is that the caring adults who participate have greater knowledge of early literacy and increased skills in talking, reading and share healthy relationships with young children.

Performance Measures Examples

1. Number and percentage of participating preschool children
2. Number of volunteers trained in dialogic reading
3. Number of hours volunteers spend sharing reading with preschool children.
4. Number of StoryPals kits with quality picture books in kits
5. Number and percentage of families with StoryPals preschoolers who record reading minutes at home and communicate about their children’s progress
6. Number of preschoolers who improve in literacy skills, such as vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention, and the pleasure of learning, as reported by school teachers
7. Number and percentage of participating preschool children who can tell the stories of the books during StoryPals sessions
8. Actual cost of serving an individual child with the StoryPals program
9. Testimonials of staff and parents
10. Photos and videos

Starting a StoryPals Program

Step 1: Identify literacy needs

Contact leaders of local preschools to learn about their children's literacy needs. Describe StoryPals. Ask for an estimate of how many of their children would benefit from shared reading experiences with caring community members.

Contact other community agencies and caregivers who serve children in their first five years. Learn about the literacy needs of children who live in families with low incomes or other risk factors.

Step 2: Plan

- Prepare a StoryPals Coordinator job description. It can be either a paid or volunteer position. Helpful qualifications include: (1) an understanding of early childhood language and literacy development, (2) an understanding of good quality children's books, (3) experience recruiting, training and supervising volunteers, and (4) excellent communication and organizational skills
- Recruit candidates and select a StoryPals coordinator. The coordinator completes StoryPals training that includes how to teach dialogic reading and how to set up and maintain a program.
- The coordinator and preschool leader set up procedures, a check-in and check-out system, and safe spaces for children and volunteers to meet.
- Teachers identify children to participate based on their need for additional literacy support and suggest whether they meet with volunteers individually, in pairs, or in groups of three.
- A schedule is developed for weekly StoryPals session times (once or twice a week) that is good for kids and convenient for teachers and volunteers.
- The StoryPals Coordinator recruits prospective volunteers who fill out an application, including their schedule of availability and information required for background checks.
- Background checks are done by the StoryPals Coordinator or the preschool.

- The principal and teachers communicate with families about the StoryPals program and get permission for their children’s participation.
- The StoryPals Coordinator provides a brochure for all families with tips for talking and reading with children at home.
- The StoryPals Coordinator creates StoryPals kits.
- The StoryPals Coordinator creates Story Pals training materials and nametags.
- The StoryPals Coordinator schedules volunteers.
- The StoryPals Coordinator and teachers agree on a procedure for times when a volunteer will be absent, including who the volunteer should contact and whether a trained substitute will be called or if the session will be rescheduled.

Step 3: Implement

- The StoryPals Coordinator reviews dialogic reading techniques with the preschool staff and learns from them about the children’s needs and interests.
- The StoryPals Coordinator produces StoryPals kits that contain children’s books with accompanying dialogic reading prompts and instructions and maintains and updates the StoryPals kits.
- Create a StoryPals training manual.
- The StoryPals Coordinator recruits and trains community volunteers to use dialogic “shared reading” techniques. Each volunteer is matched with a child or a small group of children.
- The preschool principal welcomes volunteers, explains school procedures, provides a facility tour, and introduces them to staff.
- StoryPals volunteers meet in the school during the school day for 15 or 20 minutes once or twice a week.
- The StoryPals Coordinator provides supervision and ongoing support to volunteers.
- The StoryPals Coordinator provides a folder for each child at the preschool site for volunteers to access and collects the feedback data.
- StoryPals volunteers provide personalized attention and share a joy of good books. They follow the techniques of Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, and Repeat, so

over time the adult reads less and the child talks more. This increases children's interest in reading, vocabulary, basic literacy skills, and readiness for kindergarten.

- Develop a procedure for when volunteers must be absent and have trained substitutes.
- Keep individual student achievement confidential, but give staff, volunteers, parents, and stakeholders population level results, so they know the impact of their collective efforts.
- Create a plan in collaboration with the school for regular communication with families.
- The StoryPals Coordinator ensures that volunteers are appreciated and may suggest a joint celebration for community, school and family participants at the end of a semester or year.

Step 4: Evaluate

- Teachers use observations and district assessments to record children's oral language and literacy skills development before and after a series of StoryPals sessions. They share this population level data with RRSC.
- StoryPals uses a pre- and post-screening tool, Ready to Read.
- The StoryPals Coordinator collects assessment data from staff and volunteers. This includes inputs (such as costs, feedback about training and kits), outputs (such as numbers of children, numbers and hours of volunteers, number of sessions, attendance, weekly notes of volunteers), and outcomes (such as assessments of children's language and literacy development and parent reports of reading at home).
- The StoryPals Coordinator also collects photos, videos, parent surveys, quotes and stories.
- The StoryPals Coordinator provides a brief monthly report to the RRSC board and a final report to the RRSC board, the preschool, and any funders.

Step 5: Revise

The StoryPals coordinator convenes a group of stakeholders to review the program implementation and results. Suggestions are made for what to continue and what to change to get desired results. An example is volunteers asked for more hands on activities to provide fun ways for children to tell the stories.

Although RRSC developed the StoryPals program to use in preschools, the training would also be effective for caregivers and families with children birth to age eight.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does StoryPals cost?

These are some items to consider in an annual StoryPals budget.

StoryPals Coordinator

The time commitment for an individual to coordinate a StoryPals program averages about 16 hours a month or 50 hours a semester. Starting up a new program will result in more hours, but once the program is working smoothly, expect about 50 hours a semester, depending on the size of the program. This could be either a paid or a volunteer position.

StoryPals Kits

In the summer of 2014, RRSC received a \$250 Mini Grant from United Way of Story County to start developing StoryPals kits.

Each kit consists of a portable filing storage container filled with twelve or more developmentally appropriate children's books. Book pages are labeled with possible dialogic reading prompts. There is also a laminated dialogic reading guide designed for each book in the kit.

The estimated cost of a StoryPals Kit is about \$250.

- 12-16 quality children's books, including wordless books
- Portable file storage box
- Hanging file folders
- Printed book labels and laminated dialogic reading guides
- Additional printed materials

- Paid labor is extra, and it takes about 10 hours of time to order books and materials, and to assemble each kit.

Volunteer Supplies

The estimated cost of volunteer supplies is about \$6 per volunteer for nametags, folders, printed training materials, and thank you cards.

How can StoryPals engage families?

The StoryPals program offers an excellent opportunity to encourage families to be more involved in learning about and nurturing their young children’s language and literacy development and readiness for kindergarten. There are a variety of ways to reach parents. Ask school staff for their recommendations.

First, personal 1:1 conversation is a tried and true method for building relationships. Consider a get-acquainted orientation or a family night. Demonstrate dialogic “shared” reading. Give the families the opportunity to practice with their own children and give new books to take home to continue reading. Teachers may include StoryPals information during conferences with parents.

Use physical media, including books, handouts, reading logs, and newsletters. If you have a lending library for children to borrow interesting books to share with their family, provide a reading log for families to fill out and incentives for the number of minutes read.

Technology also offers many options for regular contacts in a cost-effective way.

- RRSC uses social media, including texting, Facebook and Instagram.
- The RRSC website offers interactive media resources for families and caregivers.
- Electronic media like video clips, audio, and e-books are ways to communicate.
- Mass media, including TV, movies, and radio are communication tools.

Hosting a celebration for children, families, volunteers and school staff at the end of the StoryPals sessions would be a time for children to share about books they enjoyed, for adults to share what they appreciated, and to recognize total attendance and minutes read.

What kind of assessments do you use for StoryPals?

Assessments of children by the school district

In a Memo of Understanding, RRSC, Ames Community School District, and United Way of Story County agreed to annually share the following Ready for School-Preschool population level data.

Total Populations of Northwood Preschool in Ames, Iowa

- Number and percent of all students entering preschool who are proficient/not proficient on the Northwood Preschool Screener
- Pre-reading: Number and percent of all 4 year old preschool students identified as proficient/not proficient in pre-reading skills at the end of each year on GOLD Objectives 16a, 16b, 17b, and 18a.

Subgroup of all children participating in StoryPals

- Number, percent and attendance of preschool children participating in StoryPals and their progress on Northwood Preschool Screener
- Teachers complete a StoryPals Pre- and Post- Evaluation form for each participant. The principal reports group-level data, but not individual student data.

Assessments of children by Raising Readers in Story County

Subgroup of all children participating in StoryPals at Northwood Preschool in Ames

- StoryPals volunteers fill out progress reports at the end of each meeting. These formative assessments are available to both the StoryPals Coordinator and the children's teachers.
- Another pre- and post-test option is the *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Tool. It is a reliable, research-based series of questions for children before they enter kindergarten to determine whether they have the early literacy skills they need to become readers.

Get Ready to Read Screening Tool

Screening Tools

Transitioning to Kindergarten Toolkit

Skill-Building Activities

Early Learning & Childhood Basics

Get Ready to Read Screening Tool

Screening Tools

Get Ready to Read Screening Tool

[How to Use the Tool](#)

[Start Using the Tool](#)

[After Using the Tool](#)

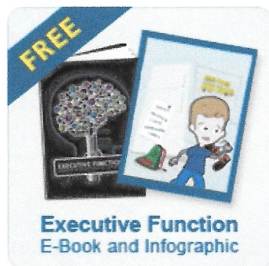
Supportive Materials for GRTR Screening Tool

Early Learning Observation Rating Scale

Supportive Materials for ELORS

Research & Reports

Do You Prefer Information in Another Language?



The *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool is a reliable, research-based series of questions for children in the year before they enter kindergarten, to determine whether they have the early literacy skills they need to become readers. The screening tool is part of a flexible program, not a curriculum, which complements most early literacy and early reading programs. Educators can use the screening tool and activities as a part of a regular classroom program.

The tool was designed to be used by parents and early education providers. It is easy to use even if you don't have formal training in education. The tool is most appropriate for children in the year before they enter kindergarten, children who are 3-5 years old.

The early literacy skills that this tool looks at are:

- **Print knowledge** refers to a child's understanding of books, printed letters, and words.
- **Linguistic awareness** refers to a child's understanding of how words and language works.
- **Emergent writing** refers to a child's first efforts to create and use print in a meaningful way.

[How to Use the *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Tool](#)

[Start using the *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Tool](#)

[After Using the *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Tool](#)

A new and updated "print only" version of the *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool is also available. It:

- Expands the targeted age range from 3-5 years
- Includes more questions, for a total of 25
- Is available in English or Spanish

To learn more about the new *Get Ready to Read!* screening tool and to order copies of it, [visit the Pearson Early Learning website](#). You can also order it by phone: (800) 627-7271.

[Find More Resources on this Topic](#)

Suggested Tip!

Be Ready for Reading

Bring a book to your child's next doctor's appointment to ease the wait. And, leave a book where you keep your reusable shopping bags to make the shopping cart a rolling reading room



How did StoryPals start in Story County?

RRSC created StoryPals for the Ames Community School District Northwood Preschool in February 2014 and served 35 children that semester.

Before the summer of 2104, RRSC trained volunteers in the neighboring community of Nevada in dialogic reading techniques. In the six-week summer Nevada Food for Thought program, a limited number of volunteers served 83 children ages three to six. We learned it is difficult to do dialogic reading with large groups of children.

In the fall of 2014, RRSC implemented a StoryPals program in the Nevada school district that served 35 preschool children both semesters during the school year. Volunteers typically met once a week for 20 minutes with two children at a time.

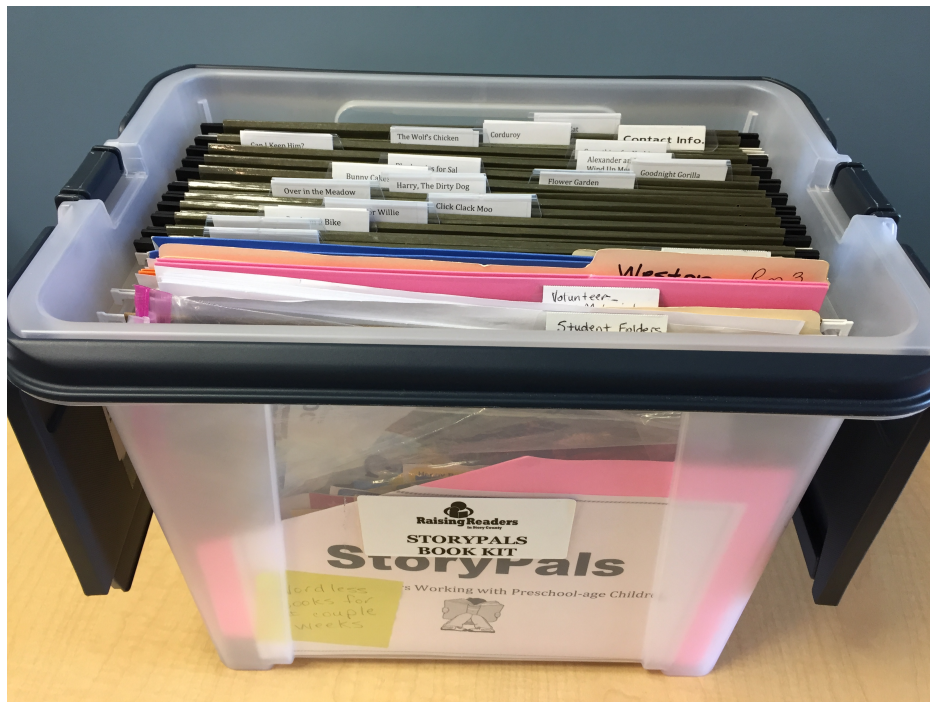
During the 2015 spring semester, Ames StoryPals served 42 children at Northwood Preschool. Volunteers met students twice a week for 20 minutes. In 2016 the Northwood Preschool principal identified fewer students, but created a schedule so volunteers can work with their same pals spring and fall semesters.

APPENDIX A



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

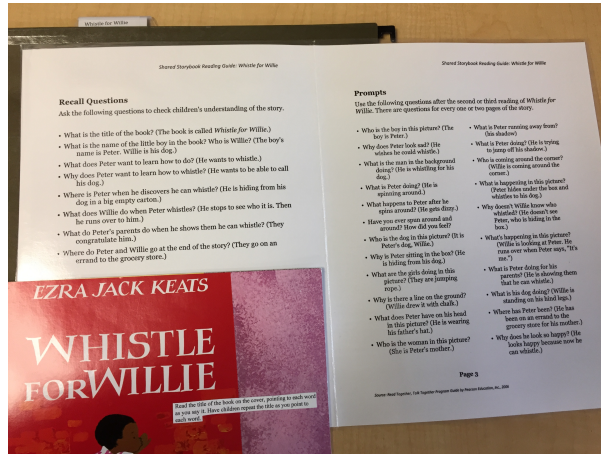
STORYPALS KITS AND MATERIALS



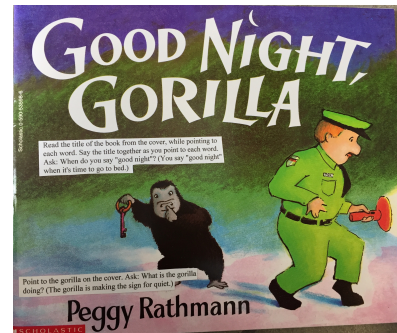
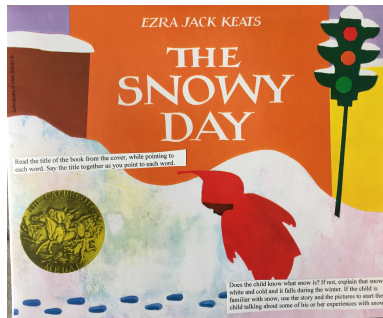
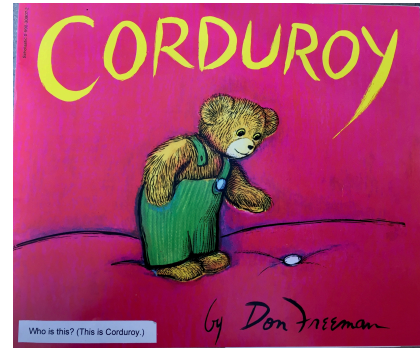
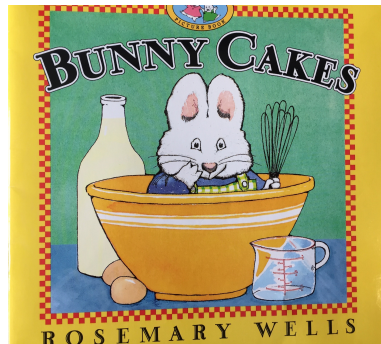
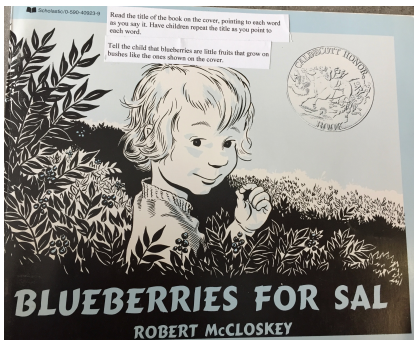
Each StoryPals Kit consists of a portable file storage box with hanging file folders. The individual file folders contain children’s books with dialogic reading guides, materials used by volunteers, and a folder for each participating child.

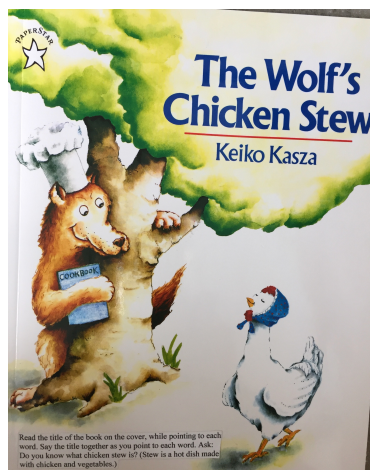
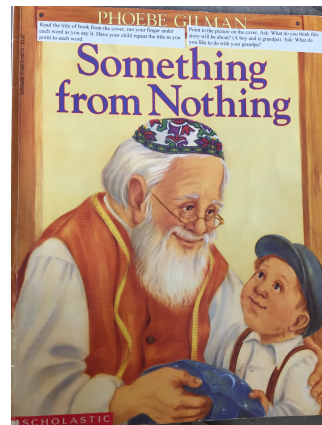
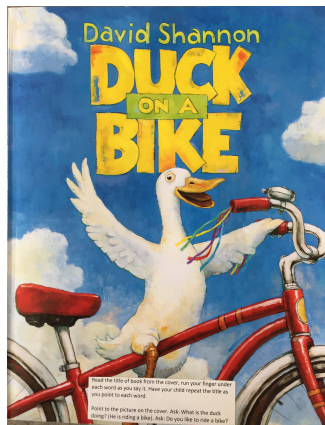
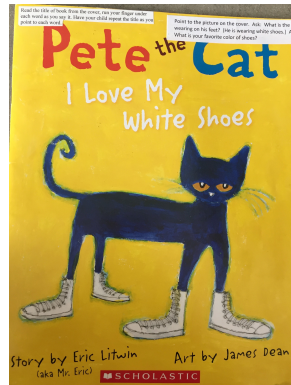
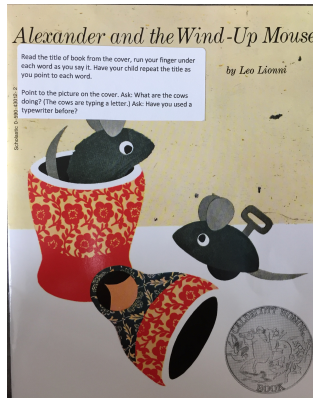
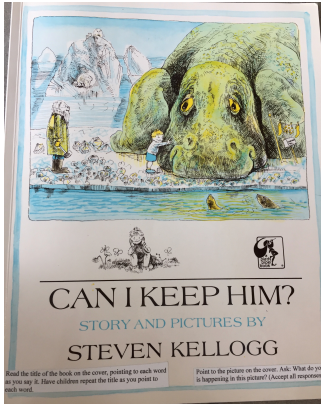
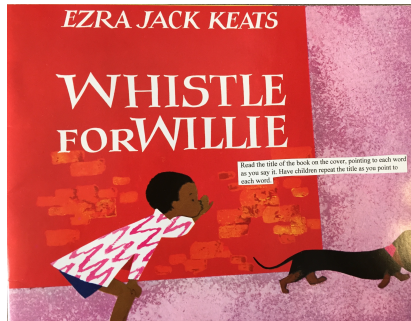
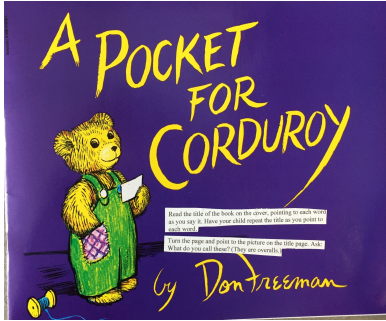
Children's books in the StoryPals Kit

There are 12 – 16 folders that each contain a developmentally appropriate child's book. The book pages are labeled with possible dialogic reading prompts. There is also a laminated dialogic reading guide for each book.



This is a sample collection of 16 books in one kit:





Sample StoryPals Book Guide

Whistle for Willie Guide page 1

Shared Storybook Reading Guide: Whistle for Willie

Whistle for Willie

by Ezra Jack Keats

Summary of the Story

Peter learns to whistle so that his dog will come to him.

Introducing the Story

- Read the title of the book on the cover, pointing to each word as you say it. Have children repeat the title as you point to each word.
- Point to the picture on the cover. Ask: Who do you think Willie is? (Willie could be the boy or the dog, but in this story Willie is the name of the little boy's dog. The little boy's name is Peter.) What is the little boy doing? (He is whistling for Willie.)

Reading the Story for the First Time

- Read the story, moving your finger under the words as you read.
- After reading, ask: Can you whistle? How would you whistle to make your dog come to you?

Recalling the Story

- After you have finished reading, ask children the recall questions below. Continue to ask these questions when you reread the book, until he or she knows the answers.

Reading the Story Again and Again

- Give open-ended prompts on each page. For example, ask: What's happening on this page? What is Peter doing? Do less reading of the words to the story each time you read, leaving more and more of the "reading" or retelling to the children.
- Give prompts about objects or activities in the pictures. For example, ask: Where is Peter hiding? Use your finger to point to what you are asking about. Evaluate children's response. Expand it by giving more information. Ask the children to repeat the answer. If he or she needs help in answering a question, ask that question again the next time you read the book.
- You may wish to discuss the prompts shown below.

Extra Activities

- Children can read *Whistle for Willie* to each other.
- Have children use simple props and dramatize the story while you read it aloud.
- Peter has a dachshund. What other dogs do children know about? They can draw a picture of a dog they know of. Help them label the picture with the dog's name.

Shared Storybook Reading Guide: Whistle for Willie

Recall Questions

Ask the following questions to check children's understanding of the story.

- What is the title of the book? (The book is called *Whistle for Willie*.)
- What is the name of the little boy in the book? Who is Willie? (The boy's name is Peter. Willie is his dog.)
- What does Peter want to learn how to do? (He wants to whistle.)
- Why does Peter want to learn how to whistle? (He wants to be able to call his dog.)
- Where is Peter when he discovers he can whistle? (He is hiding from his dog in a big empty carton.)
- What does Willie do when Peter whistles? (He stops to see who it is. Then he runs over to him.)
- What do Peter's parents do when he shows them he can whistle? (They congratulate him.)
- Where do Peter and Willie go at the end of the story? (They go on an errand to the grocery store.)

Shared Storybook Reading Guide: Whistle for Willie

Prompts

Use the following questions after the second or third reading of *Whistle for Willie*. There are questions for every one or two pages of the story.

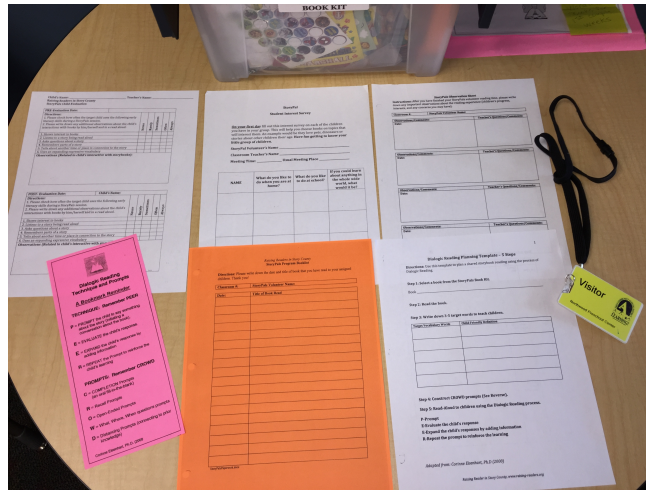
- Who is the boy in this picture? (The boy is Peter.)
- Why does Peter look sad? (He wishes he could whistle.)
- What is the man in the background doing? (He is whistling for his dog.)
- What is Peter doing? (He is spinning around.)
- What happens to Peter after he spins around? (He gets dizzy.)
- Have you ever spun around and around? How did you feel?
- Who is the dog in this picture? (It is Peter's dog, Willie.)
- Why is Peter sitting in the box? (He is hiding from his dog.)
- What are the girls doing in this picture? (They are jumping rope.)
- Why is there a line on the ground? (Willie drew it with chalk.)
- What does Peter have on his head in this picture? (He is wearing his father's hat.)
- Who is the woman in this picture? (She is Peter's mother.)
- What is Peter running away from? (his shadow)
- What is Peter doing? (He is trying to jump off his shadow.)
- Who is coming around the corner? (Willie is coming around the corner.)
- What is happening in this picture? (Peter hides under the box and whistles to his dog.)
- Why doesn't Willie know who whistled? (He doesn't see Peter, who is hiding in the box.)
- What's happening in this picture? (Willie is looking at Peter. He runs over when Peter says, "It's me.")
- What is Peter doing for his parents? (He is showing them that he can whistle.)
- What is his dog doing? (Willie is standing on his hind legs.)
- Where has Peter been? (He has been on an errand to the grocery store for his mother.)
- Why does he look so happy? (He looks happy because now he can whistle.)

Vocabulary

The words listed below come from the story and its pictures. As you page through the book, ask children to name the objects listed or talk about the actions portrayed. Words are listed for every two pages of story. Ask about other objects and actions shown in the pictures as you see fit.

- traffic light, wall, leaning
- dog, spinning
- being dizzy
- hiding, empty carton
- door, jump rope, smiling
- cat, house plant, barber pole
- hat, mirror, wallpaper
- dress
- crack in the sidewalk
- jumping, shadow
- looking around
- running
- whistling, tie, mustache
- groceries

Volunteers' Materials in the StoryPals Kit



Bookmark with Dialogic Reading techniques (PEER) and prompts (CROWD) (Appendix C)

Pre- and Post- Evaluation for participating children (Appendix E)

StoryPals Student Interest Survey (Appendix G)

Dialogic Reading Planning Template: 5 Steps (Appendix H)

StoryPals Observation Sheet (Appendix I)

StoryPals Booklist Form (Appendix J)

Nametag for each volunteer.

Children's Folders in the StoryPals Kit

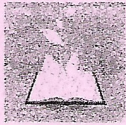
Each child's folder contains the StoryPals Pre- and Post- Evaluation Form, the StoryPals Interest Survey, the StoryPals Observation Sheet, and the child's StoryPals Booklist.

APPENDIX B



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

BOOKMARK: DIALOGIC READING



**Dialogic Reading
Technique and Prompts**

A Bookmark Reminder

TECHNIQUE: Remember PEER

P = PROMPT the child to say something about the story (initiating a conversation about the book).

E = EVALUATE the child's response.

E = EXPAND the child's response by adding information

R = REPEAT the Prompt to reinforce the child's learning

PROMPTS: Remember CROWD

C = COMPLETION Prompts (an oral fill-in-the-blank)

R = Recall Prompts

O = Open-Ended Prompts

W = What, Where, When questions prompts

D = Distancing Prompts (connecting to prior knowledge)

Corinne Eisenhart, Ph.D. (2008)

APPENDIX C



STORYPALS: CHILDREN’S PRE- POST- EVALUATION

Child’s Name: _____ Teacher’s Name: _____
 Raising Readers in Story County
 StoryPals Child Evaluation

PRE-Evaluation Date:						
Directions: 1. Please check how often the target child uses the following early literacy skills during a StoryPals session. 2. Please write down any additional observations about the child’s interactions with books by him/herself and in a read aloud.		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Shows interest in books						
2. Listens to a story being read aloud						
3. Asks questions about a story						
4. Remembers parts of a story						
5. Tells about another time or place in connection to the story						
6. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary						
Observations (Related to child’s interactive with storybooks):						

POST- Evaluation Date:		Child’s Name:				
Directions: 1. Please check how often the target child uses the following early literacy skills during a StoryPals session. 2. Please write down any additional observations about the child’s interactions with books by him/herself and in a read aloud.		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Shows interest in books						
2. Listens to a story being read aloud						
3. Asks questions about a story						
4. Remembers parts of a story						
5. Tells about another time or place in connection to the story						
6. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary						
Observations (Related to child’s interactive with storybooks):						

APPENDIX D



STORYPALS: STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY

StoryPal

Student Interest Survey

On your first day fill out this interest survey on each of the children you have in your group. This will help you choose books on topics that will interest them. An example would be they love pets, dinosaurs or stories about other children their age. **Have fun getting to know your little group of children.**

StoryPal Volunteer's Name _____

Classroom Teacher's Name _____

Meeting Time: _____ Usual Meeting Place _____

NAME	What do you like to do when you are at home?	What do you like to do at school?	If you could learn about anything in the whole wide world, what would it be?

APPENDIX E: Dialogic Reading Planning Template

Dialogic Reading Planning Template – 5 Steps

Directions: Use this template to plan a shared storybook reading using the process of Dialogic Reading.

Step 1: Select a book from the StoryPals Book Kit.

Book _____

Step 2: Read the book.

Step 3: Write down 3-5 target words to teach children.

Target Vocabulary Words	Child-Friendly Definition

Step 4: Construct CROWD prompts (See Reverse).

Step 5: Read-Aloud to children using the Dialogic Reading process.

P-Prompt

E-Evaluate the child's response

E-Expand the child's responses by adding information

R-Repeat the prompt to reinforce the learning

Adapted from: Corinne Eisenhart, Ph.D (2008)

APPENDIX F: StoryPals Observation Sheet

StoryPals Observation Sheet

Instructions: After you have finished your StoryPals volunteer reading time, please write down any important observations about the reading experience (children's progress, interests, and any concerns you may have).

Classroom #:	StoryPals Volunteer Name:
---------------------	----------------------------------

Observations/Comments:	Teacher's Questions/Comments:
Date:	

Observations/Comments:	Teacher's Questions/Comments:
Date:	

Observations/Comments:	Teacher's Questions/Comments:
Date:	

Observations/Comments:	Teacher's Questions/Comments:
Date:	

APPENDIX G: StoryPals Booklist Form

Raising Readers in Story County
StoryPals Program Booklist

Directions: Please write down the date and title of book that you have read to your assigned children. Thank you!

Classroom #:	StoryPals Volunteer Name:
Date:	Title of Book Read

APPENDIX H



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

StoryPals Training: The Dialogic Reading Method

from Read Together, Talk Together

The PEER Sequence is a short conversation between the child and the adult. This approach to sharing a book is used after you have read a book through at least once. It can be used while reading almost every page of a book. The goal is simple: to let the child become the storyteller of the book. Then the adult reads less over time. Listen to the child talk. Follow what is being shared by the child.

PEER Sequence:

Prompt the child to say something about the book or page to get them engaged in the story and help build their vocabulary.

- Ask the child a question about something on the page
- Have the child name an object on the page
- Have the child talk about something in the story. This gets

Evaluate the child’s response to help you figure out what information to add. Is their answer correct?

Expand the child’s response by rephrasing or adding a little more information to it.

- Expand on what the child said. This will help to build their vocabulary.
- If the child gave an incorrect answer, help him with the correct answer.

Repeat the child’s response to make sure that the child has learned something from it.

- Have the child repeat your expansion. This, too, will help their vocabulary.

CROWD: There are 5 types of prompts to use to begin the PEER Sequence.

Completion

Completing a common word or phrase in the story provides children with information about the structure of language that is critical to later reading.

- It encourages them to listen for their part.
- This prompt is typically used in books with rhyming or repetitive phrases.

Recall

Recall prompts help children to understand a story's plot and to describe sequences of events.

- Ask your child questions about what happened in a book they have already read. For example, ask them about what happened in the story or ask them questions about what happened on the page that's just been read. "Can you tell me what happened to the caterpillar in this story?"
- Recall questions can also be asked at the end of a book to summarize the action or main point or at the beginning if the story has been previously read. This is a good memory challenge. It is best used with children ages 4 and 5.
- This technique works well for nearly every kind of book, except alphabet books.

Open-ended

Open-ended prompts help children increase their expressive language and help them develop their vocabulary and narrative skills.

- Have your child talk about what is happening in the pictures in the books you read together. For example, while looking at a familiar page, you might say, "Tell me what is happening in this picture."
- This works best with pictures that have rich detailed instructions.



Wh- questions

Such prompts teach children new vocabulary by repeating words in the book.

- Have your child answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions about the story and its pictures. For example, you might say, “What’s the name of this?” while pointing to an object in a book.
- These prompts are best used with children ages 4 and 5.

Distancing

Distancing questions help children with their vocabulary, conversational skills and narrative skills. Such prompts help children form a bridge between books and the real world.

- Ask children to relate the pictures or words to their own experiences.
- These prompts are best used with children ages 4 and 5.





StoryPals Training: DIALOGIC READING

Guidelines for Dialogic Reading in Small Groups

Level I. Dialogic Reading Session (First Reading of Book)

- The ultimate goal of Level I is to encourage children to talk during story time to increase their language skills.
- Do this by encouraging children to label the pictures.
- Gradually encourage children to say more about the picture.

Level I Steps:

1. Ask 'what' type questions
 - What is that?
 - What is she pulling?
2. Evaluate child's answers
 - "Yes, that is a wagon."
3. Have all the children repeat the new word
 - "Everyone say wagon."
4. Follow answers with more questions
 Questions about an aspect of the object
 - What color is the wagon?
 - What shapes can you see on the wagon?
 - Questions about the object is used for.
 - Who uses a wagon?
 - What can you do with a wagon?
5. Help each child as needed
6. Praise (a lot!) and encourage each child
7. Shadow each child's interests
8. Have fun!

Level I Guidelines:

1. Each book should be read numerous times. At the first reading the adult does most of the talking-but not all! Start with a few 'what' type questions.
2. For each additional reading of the same book the child should be engaged in more of the talking. Encourage the children to talk more about the pictures.
3. The adult needs to develop the habit of having the whole group repeat new information.
4. The adult needs to ask each child questions in such a way that the children can stay involved and engaged in the answer.

Remember:

- Follow the child's interests (but maintain the story line)
- Everyone gets a turn
- Respect each other – listen to each other

**Level II. Dialogic Reading Session
(Second Reading of Book)**

There are two new goals for Level II:

1. We want the child to come up with his/her own description of a picture from the book.
2. The child should start to use longer phrases when responding.

1. Ask open-ended questions.

- What do you see here?
- What's happening on this page?
- Can you tell me more about the kittens?

Open-ended Questions:	Examples of Open-ended Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended questions are hard at first. Encourage any attempt from the child to answer • Help child as needed • Once the child has gotten used to the new format of open-ended questions, encourage them to expand their responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's happening here? • What do you see in this picture? • Tell me more. • What else do you see?

2. Expand what the child says.

Repeat back child's answer with a few more words. Have child repeat longer response.

<p>Expansion Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add only one or two words to child's original response. - keep it short and simple. • Be sure to repeat back at least part of what the child said. • Give feedback some of the time. • Pause after an expansion to see if child will repeat without a prompt. • Sometimes ask the child to repeat the expansions. • Stress the new word(s) and speak slowly 		
<p>Ways to encourage longer descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model a good answer. Make comments about the picture using sentences at about the same level as the children, then pause. "She's pulling the boy in the wagon." • Say part of a sentence and have them fill in the last part. "She's pulling _____." • Say something incorrect about the picture then pause to see if they will correct you. "She's pulling the cow in the wagon." 		
<p>Examples of Expansions:</p>		
<p>Child: "a mouse" Adult: "a mouse hiding"</p> <p>Child: "he on that" Adult: "Right, he is on the couch."</p>	<p>Child: "it eating" Adult: "The ladybug is eating."</p> <p>Child: "boat" Adult: "A big boat."</p>	<p>Child: "I sawed it" Adult: "You saw the cat."</p> <p>Child: "Bird up there" Adult: "The bird is flying."</p>

3. Have fun!

Raising Readers in Story County www.raising-readers.org

Level III. Dialogic Reading Session (Third Reading of Book)

The goal of Level III is to have the children use the new vocabulary while talking about the story plot and/or the children's personal experiences; not just the pictures.

Level III. Goals:

1. Reinforce the vocabulary
2. Link the vocabulary with the story plot
3. Link vocabulary with personal experiences
4. Gain verbal fluency with the new vocabulary

Level III. Guidelines:

- Always use a book that is very familiar to the children.
- Start each new book with Level I then Level II questions before using Level III.
- Continue to repeat what the child says and use expansions.
- Continue to provide models as needed.
- Remember to have a mix of all levels of questioning with straight reading.

Level III. Questions to Ask:

1. Ask **recall** questions that **refer** to the story plot or narrative.
 - "What did he do next?"
 - "Why was he sad?"
 - "What happened at the end?"
2. Ask **distancing** questions that refer to the child's **personal experiences** and remote events.
 - "Did you ever see one?"
 - "What did it do?"
 - "Do cats go to school?"
 - "What do cats really like to do?"
 - "Have you ever gone camping?"
3. Have the children take turns telling the story. Provide help when needed with vocabulary words, but let them direct the story telling. The focus is on verbal fluency not on getting every detail correct.
 - Either you or the children can hold the book.
 - The children can tell the story as a group or each child can take turns telling about each page.
 - The children can ask questions of the other children (take the role of teacher).
4. **Enrichment Activities:** reinforce vocabulary throughout the day that has been introduced in the DR sessions.

Level III. Talking (Act out story)

- They can describe what they are doing
- They can speak the lines
- They can describe which character they are, what they would be wearing, and what they did in the story
- Writing (make book), Art (draw picture)...

APPENDIX J



“Helping Children Grow Up with Books and a Love of Reading”

DIALOGIC READING



Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst is the Herman and George R. Brown Chair and director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution. His research primarily focuses on program evaluation, teacher quality, preschools, national and international student assessments, reading instruction, education technology, and education data systems.

Previously, he was the director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which is the research arm of the United States Department of Education, and U.S. assistant secretary for Educational Research and Improvement. Prior to these positions, Whitehurst served as Lead Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

A program he developed to enhance school readiness in children from low-income families, Dialogic Reading, is widely used in preschools around the world. He was a pioneer in delivering college-level instruction through the internet, for which he was awarded the Microsoft Innovators in Higher Education Award in 1996.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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.