



Reach Out and Connect Workshop #26 Reading with Children with Disabilities

We are excited to present strategies and tips for reading with young children of different abilities and how families can work with their child at their level to engage in early literacy practices. We are also thrilled to have two special guests.

Sasha Bueno,
Family Educator

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Q: What is an emergent reader?

A: Emergent literacy is the term used to describe the reading and writing experiences of young children before they learn to write and read conventionally.

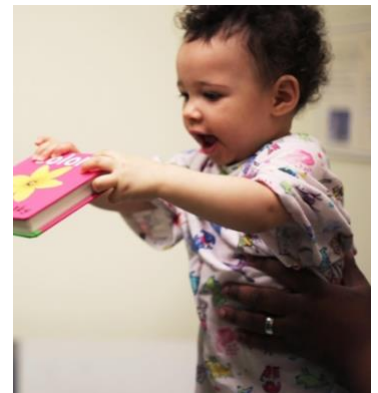
These young children are working to understand how we use print and words. Hearing the sounds that make up words, learning the alphabet, and developing their listening and speaking skills will eventually allow students to use speaking, reading, and writing to interact with others. They are making discoveries and learning about literacy when they explore books, see print within the natural environment, interact with older kids and adults who can read and write, and see models of how and why print is used.

Families can help support their young children by doing reading and writing activities every day. Regular participation in reading and writing activities plays a central role in supporting understandings about print for **ALL** students. But, the way families support that early literacy engagement may look a little different. That is what we will be talking more about today!

Q: What are some ways I can engage my young child with literacy?

A: Here are some tips.

- **Use Multiple learning styles**—visual, auditory, tactile, musical, kinesthetic, and more. Maybe looking at an apple isn't enough. Maybe they need to hold an apple, bite it, do an apple puzzle, make an apple shape with their body. Using multiple learning styles is great for all young children, but especially for children with disabilities because it allows for the use of multiple senses and unique experiences.
- Create **environments filled with print**, including books, crayons, print-rich toys, and even print-rich clothes and room decorations. Children cannot help but not see print all around them (e.g., labels, signs, recipe books, mail, posters).
- **Choose books** with topics that will interest your child. For example, if they like trains, choose books with trains. You can also choose books to focus on certain skills. For example, if you are working on expressing emotions, choose books with photos of people expressing different emotions.
- **Use the Pictures** and talk about what you see. It improves their ability to recognize pictures, what's happening in it, and then make predictions about what will happen next. By looking at people's faces and body language in a story, they also learn nonverbal cues of communication.



Q: What are some helpful strategies I can use for my young child with disabilities?

A: There can be a false understanding that because a child has a disability, they are not capable of or ready to develop early literacy skills. However, all children can show progress with access to rich emergent literacy activities, interactions, and the appropriate adaptations to literacy materials.

For a child who is vision or hearing impaired, **modify the environment** using visual, tactile, and sign language alphabets. **Labeling** the environment for students is another way to expose them to literacy, through braille, large print, or tactile labels. For a student who is hard of hearing, **read books with pictures of everyday activities** or with flaps in them to add another fun way to communicate. For a child who is vision impaired, **choose tactile books** that have different textures as a part of the story.



Children with ADHD may have trouble sitting down to read a book. That is okay. **Read books in small doses** and then take movement breaks. Or you can **incorporate movements into your reading experience**, like doing jumping jacks after you read a page.

When reading with children on the Autism Spectrum, **choose books that have photos and drawings of babies and people's faces**. This can help your child recognize emotions. Read the same story again and again. The repetition will help them learn language and find books that have lots of repetition and rhymes.

Q: What types of books can I read to my child? What local supports are there New York to help my child develop emerging literacy skills?

A: We have created a [book list](#) with all kinds of stories that can be used especially for active learners, visually and hearing-impaired learners, and books that feature characters with disabilities.

- **New York Public Library Resources:**

- [Sensory booklist](#)
- [At Home Storytime Guides](#) to recreate storytime at home
- [At Home Play Guides](#) to recreate sensory play activities at home
- [Online Storytime](#)- New storytime posted every weekday and entire archive can be found [here](#)
- [STEAM storytime](#)- storytimes on demand that include interactive hands on [activity guides](#)
- Place holds for pickup at 50 locations with [Grab & Go](#) and check out e-books with [Simply E](#)
- [Get a library card from home via simply E](#)
- [One to One live tutoring with Brainfuse](#)
- [BookFlix](#) - Pairs fiction videos with a read-along feature and nonfiction read alouds
- [Tumble Books](#)- E-books available as Read-alongs for Early Readers
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For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.