



Book Reading Checklist for Educators:

How am I building children's early literacy skills?

The road to literacy starts long before children begin to read and write on their own. As an educator, you play a key role in building the “emergent literacy skills” that prepare young children for success in school: **oral language, vocabulary, story comprehension, print knowledge, and sound awareness.**

While frequent book reading is important for helping children learn, exactly *how* you share the book also makes a difference.

The Hanen Centre developed this book reading checklist to help you take a look at how you've been sharing books with children and what other things you might do to maximize children's learning.

Part A – How You Share Books

Take a moment to think about how you typically read to children...

	Once a week	A few times a week	Often
How often do you read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** Children who are read to frequently become better readers.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you read the same book over and over again on different days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** Reading the same book many times gives children opportunities to think more deeply about the story and to remember and use new words. Plus, children love repetition!

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you pause during the reading to talk about what interests the children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** When you pause during the book reading to talk about the story and what interests the children, you provide lots of opportunities for them to think and talk about the story and to hear and use new words.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you ask questions during the reading and explain what is happening to make sure the children understand the story?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** Talking about the important parts of a story (for example, the characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolution) makes it easier for children to make sense of the story, and it prepares them for understanding the stories they will read later on.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you ask questions to encourage the children to think about the story (e.g. Questions that start with “Why...?”, “What do you think about...?”, “What would you do if...?”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you talk about the story and make connections to your own lives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ask the children to guess what might happen next in the story?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** To fully understand a book, children need to use their problem-solving and reasoning skills to find meaning beyond what’s written on the page or found in the illustrations. You can encourage this by connecting the story to the children’s knowledge and experience and asking them what they would do in the same situation as the main character.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you explain what unfamiliar words mean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you relate new words to the children’s experience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you repeat new words in different situations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** Studies show that the more words children understand as preschoolers, the better their reading comprehension will be later on. You can build children’s vocabulary by stressing new words, talking about what the word means and relating it to the children’s experience.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you track the words with your finger as you read to the children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you show the children how we read from left to right and from top to bottom on a page?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you point out upper and lower case letters and punctuation marks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** There are many things children must learn about print before they can read and write on their own. For example, they’ll need to know that letters of the alphabet combine to make words and that print is read from left to right. As you read with the children, you can point out and talk about some of these print ideas to help them learn.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Do you draw children’s attention to letters and make the sound that the letter makes (e.g. “That’s the letter ‘S’. ‘S’ makes the sound sss?”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you draw children’s attention to words that rhyme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

↳ **What we know:** To be prepared to read, children must understand that words can be broken down into smaller sounds, and that letters correspond to certain sounds. One fun way to build this “sound awareness” is to draw children’s attention to two rhyming words and ask them to think of a third word that sounds similar (for example, “Look, ‘bear’ rhymes with ‘chair’. Do you hear how they sound similar at the end? *Bear. Chair.* Can you think of another word that rhymes with ‘chair’?”)



Part B – How The Children Participate in Book Reading

Children will learn early literacy skills best when they are paying attention and are actively involved (for example, by pointing out the pictures and thinking and talking about the story.)

Think about how the children in your classroom participate when you share books together...

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
The children listen to the whole book.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The children point out things in the pictures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The children make comments or ask questions about things in the book.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The children answer my questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The children act out parts of the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Take the Next Step!

Would you like children to be more attentive or actively involved when you share books?

Take a look back at Part A to see what you've been doing when sharing books. Are there some new things you could try to enhance children's learning?

Jot down your ideas below.

Notes

The Hanen Centre supports parents and professionals to help young children develop the best possible early language and literacy skills. For more tips on making the most of book reading to build children's early literacy skills, go to www.hanen.org/literacy-in-the-classroom