

## BONUS RESOURCES from:

10 STRATEGIES that WORK to Support Young Children's Language Development

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### Brainstorming Open-Ended Questions, Statements, & Conversation Starters

This resource can be used to identify open-ended questions, statements and conversation starters that can be used throughout the day to support children's language development.

Please select 2-3 centers or times of day to brainstorm a few open-ended questions, statements, or conversation starters you might use to encourage and extend young children's language.

<b><u>Arrival</u></b>	<b><u>Block Area</u></b>
<b><u>Circle Time</u></b>	<b><u>Drawing &amp; Writing Center</u></b>
<b><u>Library Center</u></b>	<b><u>Science Center</u></b>
<b><u>Dramatic Play</u></b>	<b><u>Manipulatives/Table Toys</u></b>
<b><u>Snack or Lunch Time</u></b>	<b><u>Dismissal</u></b>

# Supporting Language Development: Open-Ended Questions, Statements, and Conversation Starters

This resource provides a few open-ended questions, statements and conversation starters that can be used throughout the day to support children's language development. You may wish to post a few of these around your classroom. Feel free to brainstorm and add your own!

<p><b><u>Arrival</u></b> Tell me about some of the things you did last night. What did you have for dinner? What TV shows did you watch?</p>	<p><b><u>Block Area</u></b> Tell me about your building. What would the inside of your ... look like? What will you do next?      How will you do that?</p>
<p><b><u>Circle Time</u></b> Tell me about...What was your favorite...? What do you think about...? How many ways can we...?</p>	<p><b><u>Drawing &amp; Writing Center</u></b> Tell me about what you're working on. What would you like me to write about what you just told me?      Tell me about how you...</p>
<p><b><u>Library Center</u></b> What do you think this story will be about? What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that? How do you think the story will end?      Why? How do you think that character felt...? What would you have done if you were...</p>	<p><b><u>Science Center</u></b> How would you describe this? What do you think would happen if...? How are they alike? How are they different?</p>
<p><b><u>Dramatic Play</u></b> Who are you going to be today? How will you do that? What's your favorite thing to do in Dramatic Play? How can we find out...? What ingredients are you using? Why?</p>	<p><b><u>Manipulatives/Table Toys</u></b> Tell me about your... What would happen if...? What are some other ways to build this? What do you think would happen if...?</p>
<p><b><u>Snack or Lunch Time</u></b> Discuss any of these topics: field trips, special events in class/world, weather, movies, funny thing saw on way to school, strange dreams, things thinking about, great book you're reading, or what's new with your/their families.</p> <p>You might also place a prop on the table to spark discussion (e.g., a gourd).</p>	<p><b><u>Dismissal</u></b> What was your favorite part of the day? Tell me about some of the things you did today. What else did you do? How did you do that? Tell me something you want to do tomorrow.</p>

**Title:**

**Author:**

**Introduction:**

**Vocabulary:**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> reading)**

(For 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

(3<sup>rd</sup> reading)

**While you read...**

**PROPS:**

**After the Story:**

## Techniques to Support Vocabulary Learning - Part I

**During Read Alouds:** When you read aloud to preschool children, children are “reading the pictures” and developing interests in books, learning about book and print concepts, and learning about story structures (e.g., characters involved in a plot, with a conflict and a resolution). Children are also being exposed to rich language (e.g., new vocabulary, sentences that are frequently longer and more grammatically complex than language used in everyday interactions).

Below you'll find a list of a few strategies to maximize children's vocabulary learning during story book readings. Remember to vary these strategies with different books, and to focus on a few at a time. Remember that children's interest and enjoyment of the story is crucial!

- **1) Act out a word or invite children to act out a word with you.** This is easiest for verbs (actions) and emotions. For example page 1 of *Preschool to the Rescue* by Judy Sierra reads, “Once there was a mud puddle, and it was sleepy...” You could turn to the children and say, “Let's all pretend to be sleepy! Yawn, stretch, rub your eyes - oh we're all so sleepy like this mud puddle. I can't wait for naptime today.” Then return to the story - “Let's see what else the book says about the mud puddle.”
- **2) Ask children to guess a word's meaning or explain a word.** For example page 1 of *Preschool to the Rescue* by Judy Sierra reads, “Once there was a mud puddle, and it was sleepy, it was creepy...” You could turn to the children and say, “I wonder what 'creepy' means. Let's look at the mud puddle's face. What do you think 'creepy' means?” Then you can elaborate or extend the children's ideas by adding your own contribution to the definition (e.g., “I think the mud puddle is creepy because he looks a little scary. He looks mischievous, like he wants to cause trouble. I wonder if he will try to trap the pizza truck!”). This strategy can also include giving an example of the word in another context (e.g., “I think the mud puddle is mischievous like Peter in *Peter's Chair* when...” or “My little brother used to be so mischievous...”).
- **3) Support children to “turn'n'talk” to their friends about a word.** This strategy invites children to turn to a partner to say what they think a word means or given an example of that word in their lives. “Turn'n'talks” encourage turn taking, good listening skills, and allows more children to explain what their thoughts and experiences related to the word than when asked of a larger group. For example page 5 of *Preschool to the Rescue* by Judy Sierra reads, “Bad luck, I'm stuck!” You could turn to children and say, “Turn and talk to your neighbor about why you think the pizza man says he is stuck? What happened?” or “Once I got gum stuck on my shoe and the zipper on my coat always gets stuck. Turn and talk to your partner about something getting stuck”. This technique will need some “practice” modeling and trying out before the book, including the routine of coming back together as a whole group.

- **4) Show a few prewritten words at the beginning of the story and ask children to listen for them.** You might write 2-3 words on a dry erase board, sentence strips, or large index cards, and explain to the children, "There are these really interesting words in this book. I want you to listen really closely and when you hear these words...I want you to put your finger on your chin." (You might pick words that rhyme, or start with the same sounds such as 'gluey, gooey.' You could: 1) define the words at the beginning of the book, or 2) ask children to guess the meanings of the words, or 3) wait until they are heard in the context of the story to talk about them.) For example page 6 of *Preschool to the Rescue* by Judy Sierra reads, "The police car was stuck in the mud. Stuck in the gluey, gooey mud.' What do you think 'stuck' means?"
- **5) Use puppets.** You could photocopy illustrations of a few characters, and put them on popsicle sticks to use during the story reading, or during a repeat reading or a retelling. For example, for *Preschool to the Rescue* by Judy Sierra you could photocopy each of the vehicles that gets stuck in the mud, and invite children to pretend to be each vehicle "driving" towards you (you could be the mud puddle) and hug them all to pretend that they are stuck in the mud! (This technique is especially fun and engaging for the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of a story book.)
- **6) Use props.** This technique involves selecting one or two props to stand in for slightly unfamiliar objects in the story (e.g., apron, oven mitts, backhoe, ladder, etc). Showing the children the actual object (and letting them touch it during or after the story) can help them remember the word better than just looking at the illustrations. You can also pretend something is standing in for something else (e.g., you could pretend a long block is a spatula and use it to act out flipping pancakes with the spatula, etc).
- **7) Use repetition.** Repeat the unfamiliar words as many times as possible, and encourage the children to use the words, too (e.g., In *Preschool to the Rescue*, you can use the word 'vehicle' on almost every page; you could ask, "What's that new word to describe this truck?" to encourage children to use the word 'vehicle' also). The more you and the children use these words, the more likely they are to be acquired/learned.
- **8) After the read aloud, post the vocabulary words around the room/Library or add these words to the Writing Center.** Write words on sentence strips, with rebus', and refer to them in print as you discuss them verbally. Reference them during discussions. Adding them to the Writing & Drawing Center might encourage children to 'write' them and use them.

**Keep in mind that different strategies may be better suited for different children, different books/words, and different times of the year. Tailor your use of these strategies. Most importantly - have fun and focus on the children ENJOYING the read aloud!!**

# Read Aloud Recommendations to Support Language Development

By Sarah E. Dennis, Ph.D.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Reading:

- Prediction from cover (What do you think will happen in this book?)
- Prediction within story (What might happen next? Why do you think that?)
- Vocabulary techniques (e.g., acting out, talking about)
- Making connections to text (from own lives, other books, world)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:

- What do you remember about the story? (BASIC retelling)
- What do you remember about new vocabulary words?
- Further discussion of characters' emotions & motivations
- Further discussion of making connections to text  
(text to self - connecting book to personal experiences;  
text to text - connecting book to other books;  
text to world - connecting book to knowledge about the world)

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading:

- What do you remember about this story?
- What's happening here?
- How's this character feeling?
- Why is he/she doing that?
- What would you do if you were in that situation?
- Does anyone remember what happens next?
- Does anyone remember those new words we discussed?
- What do you think happens AFTER the story ends?  
(Make up a SEQUEL!)

## You can also:

- Invite children to complete the rhyming pair (e.g., pause when it's time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> rhyming word, and let the children say it).
- Invite children to say the refrain of a repetitive book.
- Invite children to act out the story or retell using puppets

TIER 2 words  
(K-2<sup>nd</sup>)

absolutely	craving	festive	nestle	snarl
absurd	creature	foolish	nibble	snarl
admire	critters	forlorn	notice	sneak
admit	cross	fortunate	nuisance	soaring
adventure	crouched	gasp	opposite	soggy
advice	curious	gaze	ordinary	splendid
amazed	dashed	glance	panic	sprout
amusing	dazzling	gleeful	partial	squint
announce	decide	glisten	patience	sternly
annoy	definitely	gloomy	peculiar	stingy
appear	delighted	gnaw	peer	strange
appetite	description	grasp	perfect	stroll
appropriate	deserves	grumpy	persistent	struggle
argumentative	detest	hermit	pounce	suggestion
arrive	devotion	hero	precious	surrounded
astonished	dignified	hoist	prefer	suspect
autumn	disagreeable	horrible	prod	suspicious
avoid	disappear	humble	protect	throbbled
balcony	disappointed	ignored	prowl	timid
beckoned	distance	imagine	quiver	toppled
bellow	distinguished	immense	radiant	tour
biggest	disturb	impatient	rambunctious	triumphant
bother	dread	impress	raucous	trust
budge	drowsy	impressed	realize	uncooperative
bunch	eager	impressive	reflection	vanished
cautiously	eerie	incredible	refreshed	warn
cellar	embarrassed	informed	regret	weary
charming	emergency	initiate	reluctant	wisdom
cherish	emotion	insisted	remarkable	wise
chores	enormous	inspect	remind	wonder
clever	entirely	instead	reply	yank
clutch	envious	investigate	rescue	yelp
coaxed	envy	lean	resist	
comforted	especially	leisurely	ridiculous	
commotion	essential	lovely	rummage	
communicate	examine	lunge	satisfy	Beck, I. L.,
complain	except	masterpiece	scowl	McKeown, M.
concentrate	exhausted	meadow	scrumptious	G., & Kucan, L.
context	exquisite	measure	scurry	(2002). <i>Bringing</i>
continue	extraordinary	menacing	search	<i>words to life.</i>
contrary	faded	mischief	sensible	NY: Guilford
convince	faith	miserable	shabby	Press.
cozy	familiar	morsel	shocked	
	fearless	mumble	shriek	
	feast	murmur	skyscraper	
	ferocious	mysterious	slump	

## Brainstorming Tier 2 VOCABULARY

Please select a few Tier 2 vocabulary words you might use to help young children's language develop.

<u>Sand &amp; Water</u>	<u>Block Area</u>
<u>Circle Time</u>	<u>Drawing &amp; Writing Center</u>
<u>Library Center</u>	<u>Science Center</u>
<u>Computer</u>	<u>Manipulatives/Table Toys</u>
<u>Dramatic Play</u>	<u>Meal Time</u>



## Samples of Tier 2 vocabulary words to help young children's language develop

### Sand and water

Pour  
Sift  
Dip  
Measure  
Storage  
Experimenting  
Funnel  
Pump  
Examine  
Smooth/rough  
Height/depth  
Float/sink  
Liquid  
Volume

### Library

plot  
story  
beginning  
middle  
end  
conclusion  
sequence  
conflict  
problem  
situation  
solution/resolution  
characters  
relationships  
facial expressions  
emotions  
publisher  
publishing company  
copyright  
binding  
bound  
spine  
front/back cover  
title page  
dedication

### Table Toys

Attach  
Join together  
Stack  
Height  
Stretch  
Fasten/unfasten  
Connect/disconnect  
Detach  
Secure  
Pile  
Load  
quantity  
separate  
remove  
edge

### Block Area

Construct/construction  
Structure  
Design  
Frame  
Erect  
Foundation  
Carpenter  
Architect  
Blueprint  
Protection  
Assemble  
Organize  
Materials  
Landscape  
Machinery

### Writing Center

Story  
Illustration  
Picture  
Characters  
Blending  
Lines  
Circular  
Arrange  
Above/below  
Underneath

### Computer

Compact disk  
Program  
Hardware/software  
Monitor  
Screen  
Loading  
Eject  
Insert  
Mouse  
Control  
Keyboard  
Cursor  
Exit  
Characters  
Typing

### Art Area

Stroke  
Line  
Pattern  
Shades  
Diagonals  
Wavy  
Curves  
Paler  
Intricate  
Detail  
Concentrating  
Array  
Circular  
Coil  
Overlapping  
Select  
Range  
Collage  
Mosaic

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- 1. Asking open-ended questions during play (and ALL times of day)**
- 2. Asking open-ended questions during Read Alouds (before/during/after)**
- 3. Acting out words/inviting children to act out words**
- 4. Asking children to guess a word's meaning, or explaining a word**
- 5. Inviting children to "turn-n-talk" to their friends about a word's meaning**
- 6. Showing WRITTEN words before story**
- 7. Using Puppets**
- 8. Using Props**
- 9. Using Repetition**
- 10. Rereading books multiple times (but doing different things each time)**
- (11. Using TIER 2 words ALL the time!**
- (12. Working with parents to help them learn about supporting their child's language development**
- (13. Assessing your own practice, setting goals, working towards constant growth**