

# More to Think About: the Rationale of What We Do





## Reading—a Team Sport

Photo: Walt S eng. Courtesy: FCI.



An article by Fred Rogers and Hedda Sharapan, Associate Director of Public Relations, Family Communications, Inc.

A friend of ours recently had a “reading lesson” from his 4-year-old nephew, Philip. As a young man in his early twenties, our friend didn’t have much experience with children, so he asked Philip if he had an idea of something they could do together.

“Sure,” said Philip, “would you read to me?”

So they gathered some books and sat on the couch with them. The uncle opened one of the books and began to read aloud. “Not yet,” interrupted Philip. He proceeded to snuggle in closer and draped his uncle’s arm around him. “Now you can read!” he said. He taught his uncle something important about reading that day. He seemed to be saying, “We’re not just here for the words and pictures in the book! I’m here for the whole warm experience of being read to by someone who cares about me!”

What a fortunate boy Philip is! He obviously had a history of all those warm feelings connected with his reading.

Something tells me that the best way for children learning to read and learning to love to read is by sitting close to their favorite grownups who love to read to them. When those children grow up and pick up a book for themselves, they pick up all the warm feelings they had when those who loved them read to them years before. My Grandmother McFeely often told my sister and me, “If you love to read, you’ll never be lonely.” Before we even knew how to read, she (and our mother and dad) read to us—in a warm and nurturing atmosphere.

People don’t have to be actors to read stories effectively to children. All we need is simply to appreciate the child we’re reading to and appreciate the book we’re reading. That’s such a powerful way to say books are important. Passing on to children good feelings about books and reading is a gift that can nourish them all through their lives. And isn’t it amazing how some of the simplest things in life can turn out to be the most important?

## Getting Ready to Read—share your love of books with the little ones you love

Besides my parents and grandparents, who often read to me, there was someone else in my childhood who helped me get ready to be a reader—“Aunt” Sara.

The librarian at our local public library in Latrobe, “Aunt” Sara McComb was one of my real “neighbors” when I was growing up. I think she knew every book in the place. And I know she knew every child and what we were interested in. She was an “appreciator” of books. You could tell she liked books—often just by the way she held them. At times, it looked as if she was even hugging a certain favorite she was about to offer. And besides liking books, you could tell, she liked you.

One of the things I liked best about “Aunt Sara” was the way she’d tell stories and read books by showing her own delight in the pictures, the characters, and what was happening in the stories. What I learned from her, and from my own years of experience with young children, is that you don’t have to be an actor to read a story to children. What children want is for us to talk with them and listen to them. They want us to recognize that their story—the one they bring to our story—is important.

Because Aunt Sara liked us, we liked her and her books. There’s a lot of Aunt Sara in my life today, just as there’s a lot of you in the children in your families—that will help them in the lifelong learning and growing.

Photo: James McGoon. Courtesy FCI.





# Beginning with Books®

## CENTER FOR EARLY LITERACY

As educators of young children, we know that parents play an important role in their child's early literacy development. Our role is to help parents become aware of ways they can support their child as they learn to read and write. Here are a few points that you can share with the parents of children in your care.

### *HABITS THAT HELP CHILDREN LEARN TO READ & WRITE*

#### **READ with your child daily.**

- **choose** books that match your child's interests
- **read** many different kinds of books
- **read** with expression
- **discuss** the book with your child
- **ask** questions about the story
- **talk** about the author and illustrator
- allow your **child** to read or **tell** the story to **you**
- let your child **predict** what might happen next using clues from the illustrations or story
- point out letters and words in **everyday** situations
- help them **read** familiar signs, logos, or even cereal boxes
- build your child's **vocabulary** by **introducing** new words from books
- let your child see **you** read
- **visit** your local **library**

#### **TALK with your child daily.**

- participate in give-and- take **conversations** with your child
- **sing** songs, nursery rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters, and jokes
- **listen** and show interest in your child's conversations
- **name** and point out everyday objects

#### **WRITE with your child daily.**

- **model** writing behaviors such as **writing** grocery lists or paying bills
- let your child **write** and **draw**
- write down your child's **own** stories
- have paper and writing tools **accessible** for your child

**HAVE FUN AND MAKE THIS A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE FOR ALL!**

## How Programming Brings a Story to Life

An article by Patte Kelly, Senior Librarian, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

As a librarian I devour resources like this manual. Fingerplays, games, art projects, songs, flannelboards, puppets and other story stretchers are an important component of every library storytime. Recreating the story in different forms helps each preschooler understand the story in his or her own way. And pulling out a puppet can pull in the child who has difficulty sitting still. One child may understand best by drawing her version of the story, while another learns by acting it out. Story stretchers gently lead children to concepts in math, science, and the arts. The recent proliferation of books and websites that feature these activities is a testament to their usefulness.



Lindsay Barrett George's *Inside Mouse, Outside Mouse* with its lively whiskered protagonists begs for story extensions, and this manual fills the need. The preposition theme comes to rollicking life in the obstacle course activity. And the Traveling Trunk is a treasure chest of possibilities. Let the merry mouse fun begin!

