

February 2022

# SPOTLIGHT ON LITERACY



Read to Me  
PROJECT

SIBLINGS READING SUCCEEDING

A Read to Me Project Newsletter for Educators

Volume 2.2

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## Literacy-building Ideas for Students *Storytelling and Literacy*

Telling stories is universal and primal. Imagine going an entire day without sharing a single experience, frustration, joy, fear, hope or explaining anything to anyone. *Unimaginable*, right? Yet, to tell any kind of story, share any type of information, we need words and lots of them. We begin growing our vocabulary the moment we are born and the more words we hear, see, and experience, the more words become ours to use. A baby's brain sparks at one million times per second which offers incredible opportunities to learn and communicate. This is why it is so critical to speak to and read to little ones every day.

Your Read to Me Project program coordinator encourages your student participants to make up their own stories about a book's illustrations as they read aloud to the little ones at home. Your students are also coached to talk about the story while frequently using "I wonder..." statements. (*I wonder what will happen next. I wonder why the monkey is climbing the tree.*) This adds engagement and more words into the experience and benefits everyone sitting with the book. The more words both the student and little one come to understand, the more confident they become in communicating questions, opinions and ideas. The more questions asked, the more curiosity is sparked and the more the children learn.

As a teacher, when a student realizes that new information is sparking her brain, you might notice an "aha!" expression on her face. In that teaching moment, the student is inspired and excited to learn more. Reading aloud to little ones gives them early literacy knowledge, and storytelling skills give students the confidence to share both what they have learned and their thoughts about it.

*I first encountered the Read to Me Project three years ago, and have had their book bins in my classroom yearly. Most of my grade 4 students have younger siblings, and they love the idea of supporting their little ones as they prepare for school readiness. My book bin managers gain confidence and independence through managing the books and their fellow students, and all of my readers -- even those without little ones at home -- learn how to read aloud creatively. Read to Me Project benefits every child in my class.*

-Diana Garret  
Grade 4 Teacher  
Greenfield, CA

## Did You Know? *The stats are in!*

Read to Me Project is in 4 districts, 14 schools, and 84 classrooms this year. This translates into more than 2,900 students and little ones who are participating.

The mid-year reporting numbers are in and participating student readers have made a good start at hitting their goal of reading 100 days this school year. However, they are a bit short on the goal for average weekly days read.

With the encouragement and support of our wonderful teachers, we can boost the students' numbers of days read from the current average of 3 days to 4 or more days a week. Support of regularly scheduled book check-outs is *the way* to keep the students' interest and activity levels up. We train and encourage the book bin managers to initiate the weekly book check-out for their class and with reminders and words of support from the teachers, participating students will hit their reading frequency goal every week.

Here are a few tips that will support the student Readers and Book Bin Managers:

- Post a day and time of check-out reminder where all students can see it.
- Assure the book-bin managers that they have your permission to initiate the scheduled book check-outs.
- Set a tone of importance with your class. This will reflect your commitment, and the school's financial commitment, to the program.
- Continue to praise the efforts, commitment, and dedication of your readers and book bin managers throughout the year.

**Thank you for championing your students in their quest to become leaders, better readers, and achievers!**

### Program Timeline



Aug/Sept	October	Nov/Dec	Jan/Feb	March	May
Teachers' program orientation	1 <sup>st</sup> coaching session	2 <sup>nd</sup> coaching session	3 <sup>rd</sup> coaching session	Small group check-in	Book bins collected
Full-class orientation	Small group check-in	Small group check-in	Small group check-in	Student survey	Teacher survey
1 <sup>st</sup> Book bin delivery		Optional holiday book wrap event	Book bin swap		End-of-yr. Awards
Bin manager training					

**Student Coaching Sessions 1 & 2 support:**

- CCSS.ELA.RL.4.1 *Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.*
- CCSS.ELA.RL.4.7 *Make connections between the text of a story and a visual or oral presentation of the text.*
- As well as, CCSS.ELA.RL.4.3, CCSS.ELA.SL.4.1, and CCSS.ELA.SL.4.2

[Click for more information about program alignments with Common Core Standards \(password: rtmp2021\)](#)

### Educator Approved *Storytelling in the classroom*

Engaging in collaborative discussions, sharing ideas, paraphrasing text, and connecting content of what is read and presented are all Common Core skills. Read to Me Project's "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children" and "Storytelling Toolbox" support these skills. The "Ways" are specific and simple. For example, students learn how to make their voice interesting and about the use of facial expressions and gestures when reading aloud. Once students experience the power of their voice, they can apply these skills to asking questions, sharing their opinions and making class presentations

One of the Alisal teachers who includes Read to Me Project in her classroom underscored the benefit of storytelling skills in her class:

*Storytelling really captures the minds of children but it is not necessarily limited to our language arts block. With my students, I have found that integrating storytelling into other content areas such as science and math, really help them make connections and understand the concept(s) better. Being able to visualize a broad concept in concrete characters or story elements has elevated my students' comprehension of the topic or concept being taught. At the*

same time, by engaging my students in these stories, I have noticed in our language art block that students seem more prepared to have collaborative conversations and critically analyze the texts we read each week. Overall, integrating storytelling throughout the educational day has shown me numerous benefits for my students.

### **For Educators** ***Reinforcing reading at home and independent study assignments.***

The Read to Me Project website has a section that provides you with tools that can reinforce your students' reading at home and ideas for independent study assignments that align with Common Core Standards.

Check-out "[for Educators](#)" (password: **rtmp2021**) to discover [independent home study and activities](#) and fun reading [videos](#) for your students to watch in class or at home.



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**Read to Me Project**

