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Literacy-building Ideas

Learning to Listen is an Important Key to Literacy

Vision Readers* help their little ones become better listeners by reading to them at home. The young siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews gain active listening skills that cultivate a deeper foundational knowledge of words, ideas and sentence structure. Once in kindergarten, the young students will draw from this rich foundation to develop strong speaking, reading and writing skills. Research repeatedly tells us that when a young child is exposed to words through conversation and stories, they grow the vocabulary necessary to ask and answer questions and to formulate and share ideas. The National Early Literacy Panel concluded that a young child's *ability to use language and to listen to and understand the meaning of spoken and written words is related to their later literacy achievement in reading, writing, and spelling*. Being read to with consistency, offers preschoolers an opportunity to gain skills that will directly support their ability to succeed in school. At the same time, reading to a younger family member provides the older student the opportunity to gain confidence using her or his voice, and a chance to practice and further develop their own reading skills.

The National Institute For Literacy notes that *"Shared storybook reading provides an especially good platform for conversations with children."* These conversations lead to a child not only gaining a broader word base, but to want to use their words to describe the world they are experiencing. Children who are read to often, learn how to express their thoughts and feelings, and even to tell their own stories.

Developing listening and speaking skills are addressed in California's Common Core Standards (Speaking and Listening Standards K-5, p. 33, #1,2,3, 5 & 6). These standards are supported by *Read to Me Project's 9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children*, especially "Talk About the Pictures," "Use I Wonder Statements," and "Make Your Voice Interesting."

* Read to Me Project "Vision Readers" are those students in a participating class who have an infant, toddler, and/or preschooler living in the same household to

My class of 4th grade students, located in the Alisal Union School District, was one of the four to pilot the Read to Me Project in 2011. When this idea was first shared with me, I immediately knew the project was going to have a tremendous positive impact in our school and community. Throughout my years of teaching and as an instructional coach, I observed students deepening their appreciation and love for reading, language & literacy. I witnessed how this program provides wonderful opportunities to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing by offering students choice in the book content they checked out and then practiced reading with expression to their brothers and sisters.

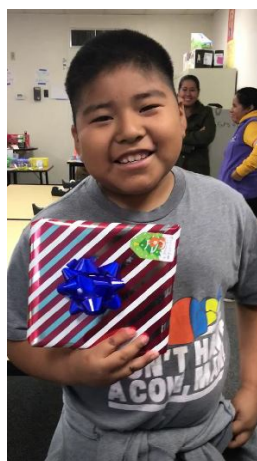
Additionally, students looked forward to spending quality time with younger siblings each day before and after school. These simple routines provided opportunities for nurturing the children's curiosity while supporting a

strong foundation of creativity, imagination, and plenty of time to "play" with languages before formally being introduced to academic vocabulary in school. Furthermore, older siblings shared how they appreciated opportunities to model good reading habits and enjoyed being role models for their family members.

I'm so grateful for the Read to Me Project and honored to be a part of this wonderful program's lasting legacy.

Respectfully,

William Franzell
Program Manager II,
Alisal Virtual Academy
Alisal Union School District



whom they are reading.

Read to Me Project "Quest Readers" are students in participating classrooms who do not have a little one to read to at home, but are receiving RtMP support and encouragement to read to anyone... a grandparent, parent, stuffed animal, or even a pet.

Did You Know?

Read to Me Project puts books into the hands of preschoolers. Before the winter break, 860 books, in a variety of titles, were



given to students in Monterey and Tehama County schools. Coordinators delivered the selections of new books, which were specifically curated for children five and under, to each classroom. Participating students were given the opportunity to pick out a book and wrap it as a holiday gift for their little one. The students share that they love having a present to give.

"My brother shook the gift thinking it was a game or puzzle. He loved the book and looked at the pictures -and tried to read it."

"When my little sister opened her book for Christmas she loved it so much and asked me to read it to her right then. She always asks me to read it. My mom even likes the book a lot and asked if she could use it to practice English. She's trying to learn and the book is easy for her to practice, so now after I read it to my sister, my mom reads it to her too."

"My little sister likes having her own book that belongs to her."

"My little sister screamed! She was so excited and wanted me to read the book over and over."

The act of giving and receiving a book reinforces everything important and wonderful about children sharing time together with a story.

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Fifth grade students at Cesar Chavez Elementary in Greenfield are writing poetry and reading it out loud to their classmates using the skills they are cultivating with their Read to Me Project coordinator.

Maria, a Read to Me Project coordinator and a 5th grade teacher both report positive results from the program. Maria says she is seeing an increase in vocabulary among participating students and the teacher shared that her class achieved 2nd place as most words read school wide through their Accelerated Reader program, which she attributes to the support of the Read to Me Project.

The Read to Me Project supports Common Core Standards. Coaching session #3, "Make your Voice Interesting" and session #4, "Student Survey" support:CCSS.ELA.RL.4.7 by making connections between the text of a story and a visual or oral presentation of the text. The coaching sessions also align with CCSS.ELA.SL.4.1, CCSS.ELA.SL.4.2, CCSS.ELA.W.5.1, CCSS.ELA.W.5.6 and CCSS.ELA.W.5.8.

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

Resources

"Arnie the Doughnut," written and illustrated by Laurie Keller, and read by Chris O'Dowd, is a great example of how students can have fun and be effective when reading out loud to their little ones by making their voices interesting. *Storyline Online* is a free online storytelling platform produced by SAG-AFTRA Foundation. <https://storylineonline.net/>

The Read to Me Project website has a section just [For Educators \(password: rtmp2021\)](#). Find fun reading [videos](#) for your students that reiterate the content of student coaching sessions and model the "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children."



Contact

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Read to Me Project

