

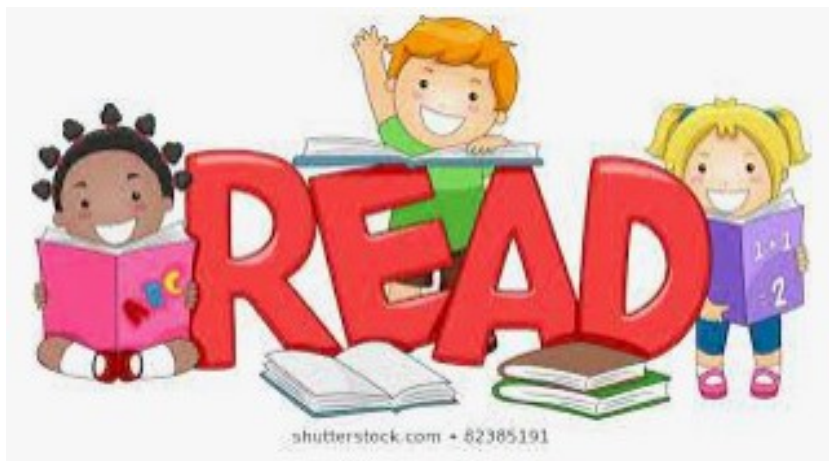
# Reading Recovery: Dialogic Reading

Staffordshire County Council's Recovery Plan has been devised in the context of COVID-19. This plan incorporates a number of projects across SCC services including the Educational Psychology Service to support educational settings in the aftermath of emergency restrictions. The EPS has devised materials in a number of areas with the aim of providing educational settings with support that can be accessed immediately in the new academic year, without the need to refer into the service directly. If you would like support with the implementation of this approach, please contact your link EP.

**AIM:** This leaflet aims to provide parents and teaching staff information on how to introduce dialogic reading approaches with their child or pupils.

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## What is Dialogic Reading?

Dialogic reading is an evidence-based intervention programme developed by Whitehurst et al.; (1988) which seeks to actively engage children in shared book reading. The programme is based on three key principles:

- Encouraging the child to participate (providing practice at using language);
- Providing feedback to the child (regarding language use); and
- Adapting your reading style to the child's growing linguistic abilities (providing appropriately scaffolded interactions to facilitate language development).

This intervention encourages the child to become the storyteller over time, and the adult's role is to prompt the child by asking certain questions expanding on the child's responses and providing feedback through praise, imitation and correction. The adult's role is also to scaffold the child's learning by continually encouraging the child to use a little more language than they are already. In other words, the adult adapts their own reading style depending on the child's maturing development. The intervention also places emphasis on following the child's interests as well as encouraging them to talk and develop an enjoyment of reading and looking at books.

Dialogic reading is a technique that is ideally used to build early literacy skills in Nursery/ Reception aged children. However, a teacher/parent may find the principles in dialogic reading helpful for children slightly older, those in KS1. In a school setting, the approach is more effective if it is delivered in a small group, this will give all the children an opportunity to answer/ ask questions. It is beneficial to use a range of 'real' picture books in order to stimulate discussion and interest.

## Research

Reading to young children is important in getting them ready for school. Research conducted by the U.S Department of Education reviewed 8 studies of dialogic reading and concluded that dialogic reading had 'positive effects for oral language...potentially positive effects on print knowledge...and potentially positive effects on early reading/writing' (2007). Researchers have concluded that the way we read with children is just as important as how frequently we read to them. 'When children are active participants in the reading experience, they demonstrate greater

language gains than when they listen passively to stories' (Pearson Early Education, 2006).

Hargrave & Senechal, (2000) examined the effects of reading on the acquisition of vocabulary of 36 preschool children who had poor expressive vocabulary skills, averaging 13 months behind chronological age. The researchers examined whether the beneficial effects of reading would be greater when children were active participants as compared to children who participated in a regular shared book-reading situation. Book reading occurred in groups of eight children, and all children were exposed to the same books, read twice. The results of this study revealed that children with limited vocabularies learned new vocabulary from shared book-reading episodes. Children in the dialogic-reading condition made significantly larger gains in vocabulary introduced in the books, as well as gains on a standardized expressive vocabulary test, than did the children in a regular book-reading situation.

Dialogic reading has been found to increase:

- Expressive vocabulary (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003; Hueber, 2000a, 2000b; Jordan, Snow & Porche, 2000; Fielding-Barnsley, 2000).
- Expressive language (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000).
- Story Comprehension (Jordan, Snow & Porche, 2000).
- Receptive Vocabulary (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Arnold et al., 1994).

Hattie, (2012) suggests that dialogic reading is seen as an effective tool for learning, 'student involvement is what happens during and not at the end of an exchange, and teachers can learn so much about their effect on learning by listening to students'. Thus, dialogic reading is also known as an interactive storytelling approach.

## How to set up a Dialogic Reading Group

Before beginning the group, it would be useful to carry out an early literacy skills check-

- Does the child recognise that print has meaning?
- Do they know that we read from left to right?
- Carry out a vocabulary check- do they know the first 100 words?
- Does the child recognise colours?
- Do they talk in single words or longer sentences?
- Do they understand action words e.g. walking, running, climbing?

With this information in mind, you may wish to identify a Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Target (SMART) alongside building a child’s early literacy skills.

In a school setting, identify a small group of children and read together in a quiet area. There are two levels of questioning that staff can use to enhance a child’s literacy skills, PEER and CROWD (Whitehurst, 1998).

If reading with your child at home, pick an enticing picture book and choose a time when your he/she isn’t too tired when beginning this approach.

It has been suggested that each dialogic reading session should last between 10-15 minutes and ideally this should take place three times a week.

Level 1: PEER

Step	How do you do it?	How does it help?
P= PROMPT	Ask the child a question or invite them to talk about something on the page.  You can prompt the child to name an object on the page or talk about something in the story.	Focuses attention.  Engages the child.  Helps the child understand the plot.  Builds vocabulary.
E= EVALUATE	Think about what the child says. Is the answer correct? What information can you add?	Prompts the adult to correct the child’s response and add information.
E= EXPAND	Add a few words to the child’s response e.g. “ <u>Blue</u> car.”  In some cases, gently provide the correct response.	Builds vocabulary.  Encourages the child to say just a bit more.
R= REPEAT	Ask the child to repeat the expanded or correct response.	Encourages the child to use language.

Initially, begin with level one questioning techniques. Once the child can give an independent response move on to level two.

Level 2: CROWD

Prompt	How do you do it?	How does it help?
C= Completion	Ask the child to complete a word or phrase (you could put a post it note over a word).	Encourages the child to listen and learn language.
R= Recall	Ask the child details about what happens in the story.  Ask the child a question about the characters.	Builds a sense of story.  Helps the child recall details.
O= Open-ended	Ask the child to tell what is happening in the picture.	Opportunity for the child to practise their language skills.
W= Wh-prompts	Point to something in a picture and ask the child to name the object or action.	Build vocabulary.
D= Distancing	Ask questions that relates to the child's real life.	Helps the child to make connections.  Provides the child with opportunity to practise their expressive language skills.

## References

To see clips of dialogic reading being used with a small group of children click on the following links: -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBwjIR6KKE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH3AWoenTBg>

Information about questioning in dialogic reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCvxv6d75aA>

A clip about the benefits of dialogic reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mLvvJ8a8uw>

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/dialogic-reading-effective-way-read-aloud-young-children>

### Further reading

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