

Excerpted from Chapter 1 of **Teacher's Guide for Read, Play, and Learn!**
Storybook Activities for Young Children

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WHAT IS READ, PLAY, AND LEARN!?

Read, Play, and Learn! is a play-based, storybook-oriented curriculum that you and the children with whom you work are going to enjoy. Utilizing storybooks as a framework for providing highly stimulating experiences for learning, this curriculum offers a functional approach to educating young children. **Read, Play, and Learn!** allows you to incorporate skills training across all of the developmental domains while letting children select what is motivating to them and have fun while learning.

Using the charm of storybooks, you, the facilitator, with your learners' parents/caregivers and other team members, provide a theme-based approach to encouraging and supporting each child's growth and development. The curriculum consists of this Teacher's Guide and a series of instructional modules, each designed around a popular storybook. The modules creatively build from the concepts, ideas, actions, and events of the stories in order to make learning more relevant for children. Each module is used for 2 weeks or longer as appropriate to your needs. Each day begins with the reading of the story followed by a range of activities for the many centers of a preschool or kindergarten class or a child care program. The re-telling and rereading of the storybooks each day enhance emergent literacy skills, whereas the many suggested activities help promote children's growth across the core domains of development.

The design of this curriculum not only gives you a fun way to teach children between the chronological ages of 3 and 6 years, but it also shows you, through the inclusion of specialists in the planning process, how to incorporate therapeutic interventions for children functioning at a younger age, even those as developmentally young as 1 or 2 years. Employing themes in the classroom enables children to engage in a variety of activities suited to their developmental abilities and all relating to the same concepts. Repetition of these concepts across numerous and diverse situations encourages the generalization of knowledge and skills. Vocabulary, actions, and information related to the themes contained in the story-books are expanded into activities that enhance cognitive (problem-solving), social-emotional, communication and language, and sensorimotor skills. Emerging literacy development is also encouraged through the child's familiarity and comfort with the story-book and the activities and environment developed for the module.

Although the curriculum presents ideas for centers and activities for 2-week units related to individual stories, each story is intended to serve as a flexible foundation for team planning for children of all developmental levels. The activities may be spread out over a longer period of time or may be deleted or adapted as dictated by the length of the day and needs and interests of the children. It should also be noted that the storybooks used for the curriculum framework are not the only books to which the children are exposed. Throughout the day at the Literacy Center and during reading time, many other books will be available and will be explored and read. The storybook serves as the thematic core around which other books can be integrated.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM?

In **Read, Play, and Learn!**, the desired educational and developmental outcomes result from play activities and experiences that all derive from and relate to the expansion of concepts and actions presented in various storybooks. Reading the story and dramatizing the story are accentuated first in the **Read, Play, and Learn!** modules as they lay the foundation for the other centers and activities within the classroom. Areas, or centers set up around the room with various activities related to the story, are designed to provide toys, materials, and experiences to address specific developmental outcomes.

Individualization of instruction takes place as a result of the adaptations provided for each child within the center and the interactions among the child, other peers, and you, the facilitator, who is encouraging learning while the children are hard at play. Not only can children become involved in the telling and dramatizing of the story, but they can also have developmental needs and literacy skills reinforced through the supplemental activities in the various play areas. Infusion of emerging literacy development into a play-based, storybook-oriented curriculum is a potent means of presenting the written word, visual symbols, concepts about print, and sequential storytelling within a meaningful context for children.

The goals of **Read, Play, and Learn!** are as follows:

1. To enable all children to actively participate through play in classroom activities that are relevant, challenging, and designed to promote independent learning and facilitate developmental progress
2. To provide a literature-based framework for learning for all children that encompasses cognitive, social-emotional, communication and language, and sensorimotor development
3. To encourage learning across the above domains (Goal 2) in a literacy-rich environment that expands children's competence and methods of expression

and broadens their desire to learn to read, write, and communicate through numerous modalities, including print

Thus, **Read, Play, and Learn!** is a transdisciplinary play-based curriculum (TPBC). This term represents a very important way of thinking about planning for young children's learning because it encompasses the perspectives of the different domains of development and focuses on building your curriculum with activities that are motivating to each child. (The origins of the TPBC concept, as well as related readings on transdisciplinary play-based assessment and intervention, are described briefly later in this chapter; see page 14.)

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM?

The **Read, Play, and Learn!** curriculum is presented in a series of individual booklets, or instructional modules. Each module features a different popular children's story and presents engaging, theme-based activities to accompany that story. (The storybooks themselves are available through local libraries or bookstores as well as on the World Wide Web; you can try such sites as www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com; complete bibliographic data appear in each module.) Suggestions for additional stories are provided at the back of each module, some of which may be appropriate substitutions if you have trouble obtaining the recommended storybook. Before using any of the modules, be sure that you are thoroughly familiar with the contents of this Teacher's Guide.

The Storybook Modules

The storybook modules range in topic from seasonal themes to predictable sequences, from emotional issues to culture heritages. Some are based on storybooks that are just plain fun. The storybook modules of **Read, Play, and Learn!** are offered in easy-to-use booklets that are sold in boxed sets referred to as "Collections." Collections 1 and 2 each contain eight modules, and together they span a typical fall-to-spring school year:

Collection 1

1. The Kissing Hand, by Audrey Penn
2. Somebody and the Three Blairs, by Marilyn Tolhurst
3. Picking Apples & Pumpkins, by Amy and Richard Hutchings
4. The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything, by Linda Williams
5. The Knight and the Dragon, by Tomie dePaola
6. Abiyoyo, by Pete Seeger
7. Night Tree, by Eve Bunting

8. The Snowy Day, by Ezra Jack Keats

Collection 2

9. A Porcupine Named Fluffy, by Helen Lester

10. First Flight, by David McPhail

11. Friends, by Helme Heine

12. The Three Billy Goats Gruff, by Janet Stevens

13. The Three Little Javelinas, by Susan Lowell

14. A Rainbow of Friends, by P.K. Hallinan

15. Franklin Has a Sleepover, by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark

16. The Rainbow Fish, by Marcus Pfister

Throughout the chapters of this Teacher's Guide, you will find illustrative examples drawn from these stories.

You can use the modules in the sequence suggested by these collections or in any other order that suits your needs, that suits the time of year or your geographic location and climate, or that suits the interests of your learners. Users are also invited to develop additional modules following the same or a similar format. New modules may be developed by brainstorming with a team around creative activities and experiences or a favorite book. Selected ideas should be organized into center-based applications and sequenced to be sure that the various play areas across the day are interrelated.