



3–5 Years

Language/Literacy: Oral Language

WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED: Weeks 2–50

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Understanding and Using Novel Words
- Understanding and Remembering Key Information in a Book
- Interpreting Book Information

OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding and Using Novel Words (after Week 2)

In what way does the child show an understanding of a novel word when he/she:

- responds to a question(s) about the word or the use of the word in the book? Example: Child responds appropriately to the question of which is tiny, an ant or an elephant?
- follows a request that includes the new word? Example: Child puts blocks under a chair (novel word: under) or finds a block that looks like a square (novel word: square).
- uses a novel word introduced in a group activity (recently or some time ago) in a conversation with a child or staff member?

Understanding and Remembering Key Information in a Book (after Week 2; understanding and comprehension are emphasized in the first and second reading of a book)

In what way does the child demonstrate an understanding and recollection of key information in a book recently read aloud when he/she:

- responds to a question(s) about an event or character or plot (sequence of events) in a book?
- retells the story or a significant part of the story offered in a book, perhaps with props or manipulatives?
- draws an object or character or scene from the book?
- talks about book information as part of other activities in the room? Example: After participating in a reading of the book *Wonderful Worms* by Linda Glaser, he/she looks at the worm farm in the science area and describes how worms eat dirt and rotting leaves.
- describes an event or person or item in his/her own life that is aligned with book information? Example: Child tells about an animal on a grandparents' farm after a book is shared on farm animals.

Interpreting Book Information (after Week 3; interpretation is a focus of the third reading of a book)

In what ways does the child demonstrate beginning skill in interpreting book information when he/she:

- responds to a question(s) or talks about why an event in the book might have happened?
- responds to a question(s) or talks about what a book character might have felt (emotion)?

FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reinforce

The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of oral language as a supplement to ELM activity plans focused on book reading.

Understanding and Using New Words

- Use novel words introduced in a book reading during other parts of the day, including the next several days. Invite children to describe what the word means.
- Offer an illustration related to a novel word as an additional source of reference. Examples: Display a picture of an egg as part of the discussion of eggs when reading *Mama, Do You Love Me?*
- Share with families the novel words being introduced during the week in your room. Encourage families to talk about the words with their children.
- Positively acknowledge children's use of novel words in conversations with peers and adults.

Understanding and Remembering Key Information in a Book

- Talk about the book at mealtimes or in other small group contexts. Keep the book close at hand (yet still available to children) for quick reference to pictures related to conversations about the book. Emphasize the sequence of events in a book.
- Encourage children to think and talk about something they have experienced that is related to a character or event in the book. Children who find this type of discussion to be challenging may eagerly participate if they have a chance to first listen to peers and build on what they say. Plan ahead so you have specific story-related questions to ask. Example: After reading the book *The Mitten*, ask children whether they have lost and then found something. What happened?
- Provide a felt board and create pertinent felt board pieces for children to use in organizing the sequence of events in the book.

Interpreting Book Information

- Engage children in actively talking about reasons for the actions and/or feelings of book characters. When a book does not explicitly offer information on reasons for actions or feelings, help children think about and express their ideas about why an action or feeling occurred. Help children recognize there may be more than one reason for a character's actions or feelings.



- Add challenge to discussions of reasons for book characters' actions and/or feelings by slightly changing the plot. What might a book character have done or felt if something different occurred? Speculation questions can help strengthen children's critical thinking skills.
- If children demonstrate a solid grasp of the book's characters and sequence of events, spend more book discussion time talking about why events happened and/or why book characters felt the way they did.

Reintroduce

The following activities are designed to support the development of oral language among children who need additional support to understand and use new words, understand and remember key information in books, and/or draw inferences from book information.

A major advantage of repeated book readings is the opportunity to revisit information presented and discussed at a recent prior session with a book.

Understanding and Using New Words

- Use more than one of the following strategies for introducing and emphasizing each novel word: define the word again; repeat and/or build on child comments about the meaning of the word; reread the book's sentence with the novel word; point to and describe book illustrations related to the word; define a word without saying it and invite children to identify the word; encourage children to think about the novel word in a different context. See the repeated book plans for examples.
- Include in conversations throughout the day the words that seemed challenging for a child(ren) to understand.
- Create opportunities for children to respond to questions, requests, or suggestions that include a novel word. Examples: "Where is a *tiny* piece of paper on our table?" "Please put the stone *under* the tree." "Remember to be *gentle* when we touch the guinea pig."
- Introduce fewer novel words during the repeated reading of a book if introducing 7–11 novel words across three separate readings (an ELM suggestion) seems too challenging for most children in your room.
- Read one or more other books with a child(ren) that include the same new word introduced in a book selected for repeated reading. Draw attention to the novel word when you read it. Children benefit from hearing the word used in different books (in addition to conversations).

Understanding and Remembering Key Information in a Book

- Discuss what happened in a book at mealtimes, other small group contexts, and/or one-to-one exchanges. Show and discuss selected illustrations in a book to help children recall a key event or book character. It may be helpful to review one key event rather than the entire book.



- Emphasize connections between aspects of the book and children’s experiences. Brief or sustained one-to-one exchanges with a child about his/her experiences related to some part of the book may be especially helpful in supporting comprehension of book information.
- Provide a copy of the book for individual or small groups of children to look at. Encourage a child to recall the story or part of the story, using the illustrations as a guide.

Interpreting Book Information

- In the early period of pursuing repeated book readings in your room, offer possible reasons for the actions and/or feelings of book characters and why events happened. The intent is to provide examples of making inferences based on book information. Over time, support children in offering their own ideas about why things happened and what characters felt.
- One-to-one and/or small group interactions may be especially beneficial for helping children understand how to interpret what happens in a book.

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

Language skills are a major focus of children’s experiences in our room. Recently I observed Leo’s responses to new words introduced during book-reading sessions and his participation in discussions of books read aloud with children in our room. Leo showed interest in learning new words and responded correctly to staff questions about the meanings of several new words. He actively participated in a discussion of the sequence of events in a story and how a main character in the book felt about a situation described in the book. We will continue to provide experiences that support the development of Leo’s language skills.

Language skills are a major focus of children’s experiences in our room. Recently I observed Emma’s responses to new words introduced during book-reading sessions and her participation in discussions of books read aloud with children in our room. Emma showed interest in learning new words and listened to children’s responses to several staff questions about the meanings of new words. She contributed to a group discussion about a main character in the book and responded correctly when a staff member invited her to tell how the book ended. We will continue to provide experiences that support the development of Emma’s language skills.

Language skills are a major focus of children’s experiences in our room. Recently I observed CJ’s responses to new words introduced during book-reading sessions and his participation in discussions of books read aloud with children in our room. CJ seemed familiar with several of the new words emphasized in our group discussion of a book, but did not participate in discussions of the words. CJ is fully attentive during book-reading sessions and seems to enjoy hearing a book read aloud and listening to children talk about what happened in a story. He appears reluctant to respond to staff questions about the sequence of events in a book and why things happened in a story. We will provide individualized opportunities for CJ to talk with a staff member and several other children about aspects of a book that are of interest to him.