

Bonding While Learning Reviews

"Finally, anyone looking for educational activities to do with their kids has to look no further than this book!"

- Stacy DeBroff
CEO, Mom Central, Inc.

"This book is beneficial to every child who is lucky enough to have a parent, a grandparent, or an older sibling to take the time to use it.... I know of no other outside-the-classroom literacy resource for young children and their families that's so thorough and yet so easy to understand and use immediately."

- Dorothy Aronoff
Preschool & elementary teacher of more than 30 years

"As a former kindergarten teacher, preschool teacher, and NAEYC-accredited preschool program director, but most importantly as the parent of a preschooler, I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone who wants to work one-on-one with a child to help develop early literacy skills. Many parents turn to flash cards and workbooks, but young children learn much more readily and easily through developmentally appropriate games and fun activities. Finally, here is a resource that explains this to parents in clear, easy-to-understand language, using concrete examples and materials with which you can simply cut out of the book and play. If you are truly interested in preparing a child for reading success, I also recommend THE READ-ALoud HANDBOOK by Jim Trelease, which educates the reader on how to make the most of the read-aloud experience. These two books complement each other well and could be great blessings to any preschooler or kindergartener whose parents/grandparents would take the time to read and use them."

- Posted by a reader on Amazon.com in Nov. 2007

"I believe that your book's philosophy is inspiring and great for schools as well as for individual families. Thank you for making such an outstanding book for our teachers and families."

- Carol Bovil
Director, Mann Family Early Childhood Center; Los Angeles, CA

"Wow this book is really great! I loved the fact that in the beginning it gave important information about the book and the authors. It is also great that it explains how to praise your child for their accomplishments. The activities and the materials provided were easy to understand and work with and provided time for me to sit down individually with my child and work on them. He was very excited to work on the different projects and we often did more than one at a time at his request."

- iParenting Media Awards Reviewer

"This book has been a welcome addition to our household. I had been worried that my youngest of three sons (age 4) was not getting enough individual attention in our homeschooling.... *Bonding While Learning* provided the perfect opportunity to spend quality time cuddling with him on the couch while feeling confident that I was "officially" educating him...."

"It is exciting to see an educational resource that values the time parents spend with children, promoting "bonding" as an important component in academic progress. I also appreciate the fact that *Bonding While Learning* is not stuck on an age-appropriate timeline. Realizing that children do not learn in a cookie-cutter style, the authors encourage parents to use the activities in any order that works for them and their unique child...."

- Deborah Burt
The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, LLC (June 2007)

"I have given two books to friends becoming grandmothers and they loved the book. We all think it's a fabulous tool to interact with your children and or grandchildren. I will be purchasing more in the future."

- Leslie Loudon
Henderson, NV

Get your copy at www.americalearns.net/families.htm or by calling 310-689.0542.

Preview Bonding While Learning

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

What *Bonding While Learning* is About

We created this book to help you spend meaningful, quality time with your child that not only builds your relationship but also supports your child's early literacy growth. While you'll always be able to purchase books of worksheets and electronic games for your child to practice specific skills, there won't always be time to develop those skills while forming closer bonds with one another. When you can create those bonds with smiles and hugs while preparing your child for reading success, what can be better?

Using the Book

Bonding While Learning is full of fun, engaging activities that you can use over several years. Many of the activities will provide you with answers to specific questions, while you can use others whenever you read or even take a walk with your child.

Since every child is unique and is ready to grasp new skills and knowledge at different stages, there's no need for you to go through the activities in the order they're listed. Use the activities to answer a specific question you have or when your child is ready for them. The top of each activity tells you when it's appropriate to use it.

So if your child is just beginning to recognize the letters of the alphabet, check out the activities in the section called "Recognizing the Letters of the Alphabet." If you're wondering how to help your child learn to write his or her name, check out the activity called Learning to Write and Recognize Your Name. If your child isn't ready to begin learning his or her letters, your child is never too young to be read to, so check out the sections called "Reading With Your Child" and "Understanding What You're Reading Together." Discover new parts of the book as your child continues to grow and learn with you.

The Materials You Need Are Already Here.

We want you and your child to spend as much time as possible doing these activities (rather than preparing for them), so we've included a wealth of the materials you'll need. Check out the materials section beginning on page 93.

Special Out-And-About Extension Activities™

Today's parents are often on the run with their children, taking them to the grocery store, to the doctor, to dinner with family and friends. Just because you're on the run doesn't mean you don't have time to grow closer with your child while supporting his or her learning. That's why many *Bonding While Learning* activities come with Out-And-About Extension Activities™ that you can use in the car, in line at the store, at a restaurant, and even in the pediatrician's waiting room.

Special At-Home Extension Activities

You can use *Bonding While Learning* activities almost anywhere, but some activities are especially good for home. Keep your eyes peeled for those activities with special At-Home Extension Activities for more ideas on spending quality bonding and learning time together.

Preview Bonding While Learning

The One Activity That's Just for You: Knowing When & How to Celebrate Your Child's Effort & Accomplishments

Why this page matters:

Children and adults need to practice what they're learning in order to master it. So if your child doesn't immediately grasp certain material in this book, know that that's okay and perfectly normal. The ideas on this page will help you celebrate your child's path towards mastering his or her new skills and knowledge.

The basics:

When celebrating your child's efforts or accomplishments, explicitly state what he or she did that led you to celebrate.

Example #1: Rather than saying, "Good Job," you can make specific statements such as:

"Nice job sounding out letter A!"

"I see you looking at the pictures to help you think about what will happen next. That's a great way to help you read! It shows me you're understanding what's going on with [character names]."

"You're asking such great questions about the story. Good for you!"

"You used to get so frustrated when you made a mistake that you stopped playing. Now, you don't let a little mistake upset or distract you. Instead, you stick with the activity and keep going! You should be proud of yourself; I am."

Example #2: Share how your child's efforts make you feel and ask your child how he or she feels.

"I love it when you _____."

"I'm proud that you worked so hard at _____."

"When you _____, I feel _____. How does it make you feel?"

Stay away from "take back praise."

For example, telling your child, "Nice job summarizing that story. **Why can't you do that every time?**" seems like praise, but comes across as a complaint about your child's regular practices. Children who hear praise like this may feel criticized, hurt or shamed.

Stay away from misleading praise.

If your child is having real problems with reading, it's misleading to say, "You're doing an excellent job" when both of you know that he or she isn't yet doing a wonderful job. You can still encourage your child by saying, "Here is one way I see you learning the letters of the alphabet: you know almost all of the letters and their sounds. You're doing a great job taking steps towards knowing all of the letters!"



What to do While Reading Together, page 3

Reading With Your Child

What to do While Reading Together

WHEN TO USE THIS ACTIVITY:

Read these pages to give you solid ideas of what to do while reading with your child. Start out doing one or two of these steps, gradually incorporating most or all of them as they become more natural to you. The most important thing is that your child enjoys reading with you, so if these activities do not work for you and your child, that's fine.

MATERIALS

- Any appropriate book for your child

STEP 1:

Preview the book's illustrations with your child before reading.

Look at the cover and illustrations with your child before reading in order to get an idea of the book's contents and to get her thinking about what she already knows.

Here are some questions to ask: "Let's look at the cover. What do you see here? Based on the cover illustration, what do you think this book is going to be about? Now let's look through the pictures of the book. What do you think is happening in this picture? What do the pictures tell us about what may happen?"

STEP 2:

Before reading the book, ask your child to open it and find a common, simple word he already knows (such as a, at, is, to, me). You can write the word on a piece of paper.

Ask: "Are there any words you see that look familiar to you? Do you see the word **is** on this page?"

Ask your child to locate an unknown word (not previously read in other texts), after you introduce, point, and pronounce the new word:

Say: "I'm going to show you a new word that's in this book. It's **the**. [Write the word **the**.] It's spelled t-h-e. [Point to each letter as you say the letter's name.] Can you find the word **the** on this page?"

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Preview Bonding While Learning

STEP 3:

Model reading print from left to right and top to bottom. Also model how to point to each word accurately as it is read.

Say: "When we read, I want you to practice pointing to each word as we read it. Try to place your finger under the word, not on top of the word. If we put our fingers on top of the word, the word is hard to see."

STEP 4:

Prompt your child to make predictions while reading.

Before turning a page that may unfold an important part of the story, you may want to ask: "What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?"

STEP 5:

Model and prompt self-monitoring (checking to see if you understand what's going on) and self-correcting (correcting your own reading errors).

Ask throughout your reading, particularly when your child scrunches up her face or looks bored or inattentive: "Is this making sense? What's happening to [name of character] here?"

STEP 6:

Help your child make relevant, personal connections to the book during and after reading.

Ask: "Does that picture (or sentence) remind you of something? What does it remind you of?"

Say: "Can you tell me what happened in the story? Show me your favorite part of the book. What do you like about it?"

If you've adopted a child whose primary language is not English and is just learning English: Keep in mind that your child's home language may be written in very different ways than the English language. For example, some languages are read from right to left, or from top to bottom where symbolic characters are read vertically. As you introduce the directionality of English print to your child, point out these differences, but avoid statements that place a right/wrong value on those differences. For example, you can say, "In English, we read from left to right," but do not say, "We read from left to right; reading from right to left is the WRONG way to read." Statements such as this can leave your child feeling that you are placing a negative value on his home language.



The Talking Bag, page 13

Understanding What You're Reading Together

The Talking Bag

WHEN TO USE THIS ACTIVITY:

Use this activity to help your child demonstrate his or her understanding of a story in a fun, interactive way. During the activity, you'll give your child an opportunity to retell a story using the "Talking Bag" -- a bag that contains five or six items representing events, characters, settings or other aspects of one particular story you've read together.

MATERIALS

- Pillowcase or paper bag (your "Talking Bag")
- A book that you have read with your child
- Five to six small items that have something to do with the book (photocopies of the story's location and characters work well too)

STEP 1:

Select a book you recently read with your child.

STEP 2:

Create or find items for your Talking Bag.

You don't have to be fancy here. You can even trace illustrations from the book, cut them out and place those in the bag. You can also use plastic figurines or cut outs from old magazines or newspapers.

STEP 3:

Use the Talking Bag with your child.

Here are a number of ways you can use the Talking Bag. Take advantage of opportunities to pull out objects from the Talking Bag and interact with your child during these activities.

Ask your child to use it to retell a story.

Encourage your child to take out certain items from the Talking Bag as she retells the story. For example, if the story is "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" (for a copy of this story, see page 7), your child might pull out a doll from the Talking Bag when Goldilocks talks. You may pull out the Bear and talk with "Goldilocks."

Ask your child to use it to retell her favorite scene in a story.

Encourage your child to browse through the book and to identify her favorite scene. Have your child retell that scene while using objects from the bag. She can do so in third person (playing a narrator's role) or by playing all of the characters.

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Ask your child to use the Talking Bag to retell the story or a scene from the story, but to add a different ending.

Ask your child if she liked how the story (or a scene from the story) ended. Encourage her to come up with alternative endings to the story or scene and tell them using Talking Bag items.

Ask your child to tell an entirely new story.

Using the same items in the Talking Bag, encourage your child to tell an entirely different story. Have fun!

If you've adopted a child whose primary language is not English and is just learning English: If your child is unable to retell any part of the story, encourage her to use the Talking Bag items to reenact the story by manipulating the objects without or with limited talking.



Things I Like, page 22

How Print Works

(Concepts of Print)

Things I Like

Learning that Words are Symbols for Real Things

WHEN TO USE THIS ACTIVITY:

It's important for children to learn early on that speech can be written down. This knowledge will support your child's understanding of what a "word" is (what the beginning and ending of words look like and the visual order of letters within a word), and will help your child understand what letters are (letters have distinct shapes, have names, and form words). Use this activity to help foster your child's understanding of this important concept.

MATERIALS

- Appropriate magazines
- Paper (not ruled)
- Scissors
- Glue or paste

STEP 1:

Prepare a supply of pictures cut from magazines or other sources.

STEP 2:

Print the words "Things I Like" at the top of the piece of paper. Ask your child to select three pictures of things she likes. These pictures may follow a theme, such as "Toys I Like" or "Animals I Like." Help her paste the pictures on her paper.

STEP 3:

Encourage your child to name aloud the item in the pictures she chose. Write the name of each item below its picture, saying aloud the letters as you write. These words should be written in all lowercase letters, except when it is a proper noun.

Use this opportunity to help develop your child's vocabulary. If your child offers a correct word other than the word you expect, you might ask, "This thing has more than one name, can you think of it?" If your child doesn't know what you're thinking of, say the word. Definitely do not overwhelm your child by providing too many alternative words.

If your child is not seeing the connection between the words you write and the pictures, point out that symbols stand for things. For example, touch the table both of you are at and say, "This is a real table that you're touching right now." Then show the picture of the table your child selected and say, "Here's a picture of a table." Now write the word table and say, "This is the word that stands for table, and we can read it and write it. This is the word table."

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Playing With Puppets to Develop Listening and Speaking Skills , page 63

Developing Your Child's Listening and Speaking Skills

Playing With Puppets to Develop Listening and Speaking Skills

WHEN TO USE THIS ACTIVITY:

The more practice your child has to develop her listening and speaking skills, the better prepared she'll be to read and write. This activity presents you with a number of ways you can develop your child's listening and speaking skills by using finger puppets or stuffed animals.

MATERIALS

- One or more stuffed animals
- Optional: Puppet making materials (old gloves you can cut up, yarn, buttons, felt or similar materials, glue, scissors)

IDEA 1:

You and your child use the puppets or stuffed animals to talk with one another.

Here are some possible discussion topics:

- How was your day today?
- What did you eat for lunch today?
- What should we make for dinner tonight?
- Let's go on an imaginary trip today. Where do you want to go?
- Tell me about your favorite book.
- What's your favorite thing to do at the park?

You can also practice social interactions with your child. Here are some ideas:

- Imagine your puppets are friends and that they're walking down the street one day and run into each other. What should they say to each other when they meet?
- Imagine one stuffed animal is the new child in school or in a play group. How should the other puppets and stuffed animals interact with the new child?
- Imagine that the stuffed animals are friends, and that one of the stuffed animals is sad today. What can the other stuffed animal say to the sad one?

IDEA 2:

You and your child use the puppets or stuffed animals to tell stories or reenact scenes from your favorite books.

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