

Supported Book Reading Strategies for Promoting
Language and Emergent Literacy for Children with
Severe Disabilities

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I. Quick Overview – So What is Supported Reading and Why Do it?

- A. Why?
- B. Adaptations
- C. Repeated Readings
- D. How? When? Where?

II. Levels of Engagement and Teaching Strategies

A. Early Engagement level
Play based instruction
Developing Focus and attention

B. Reciprocal Engagement level
Finding a starting place
Moving forward

C. Initiating Engagement level
Becoming a Reader

Supported Book Reading and Adapted Stories

King-DeBaun (1990, 1999, 2000,2004) discusses the concept of supported readings as a means to scaffold participation and engagement with books for children with severe disabilities. All of the adapted stories and Storytime materials are intended for use using supported reading strategies.

Supported readings are used as a method to engage students, build early language and vocabulary skills, scaffold the reading participation process, build independent story retelling skills and provide success strategies that increase motivation to interact with books by children with severe disabilities. These strategies have worked with a range of children including children on the autism spectrum, children who have physical disabilities, children with severe speech and language delays, and children who have general developmental delays. Supported readings are suggested to support not replace the more traditional “shared readings” which exposes children to an array of literature.

Supported Book Readings includes:

- ❖ Simplistic based text (2-5words per page) eight to twelve pages in length or book language that is close to the child's expressive language capabilities.
- ❖ For some students it may include additional object, symbol or word support to increase participation. See The **Early Engagement Progress Monitoring Checklist** available from Creative Communicating.
- ❖ Support is provided with a competent reader; teacher, classroom assistant, speech language pathologists, peer tutors, or parents, in individual or mini groups (3 children or less).
- ❖ Opportunities for repeated readings occur daily for short time periods. (Typically less than five minutes) in a variety of activities; large group songs, electronic or in independent book explorations, reading support with competent peers, play reenactments, etc.

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SYMBOLS SUPPORTS IN BOOKS

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The use of symbols supports during book reading has been widely misunderstood. It is not about reading it is about building interaction/engagement skills of students so that students can move forward on the literacy continuum. Not all students need symbol supports, just because you are an AAC user does not mean symbol supports are necessary when beginning to read. Some students may need symbol supports for a life time- there are no rules and as educators we should always look for ways to move students forward to the next literacy level.

WHY USE THEM?

- Used successfully with kids who are novice communicators
- Promotes active engagement from students
- Promotes independent success with a device for novice communicators (practice)
- Provides instructor with models of what to expect from students
- Provides a vehicle for instructors to learn what students know and be able to move students on a literacy continuum and in some cases builds a case for AAC use
- Opportunities for retelling story for students who have had limited device use
- For some student increase their participation and attention
- For some older students who are cognitively young ,it may be necessary for them to have the opportunity to manipulate materials to maintain interest and motivation to participate
- . For other students the physical motion of manipulating materials can be a powerful learning tool.

THE DANGERS

Once children begin to engage and interact successfully with symbols you can fade the symbol support. So, cut off the symbols on the bottom and provide a device display for story retelling purposes. Do not rely on symbols as a method to teach reading the symbols supports are meant to increase the child's interaction with others and books. Reading via symbols will be too overwhelming for AAC users once the complexity and length of text increases. In addition, using symbols to read will compromise both prosody and fluency of reading.

Hurry! Hurry!



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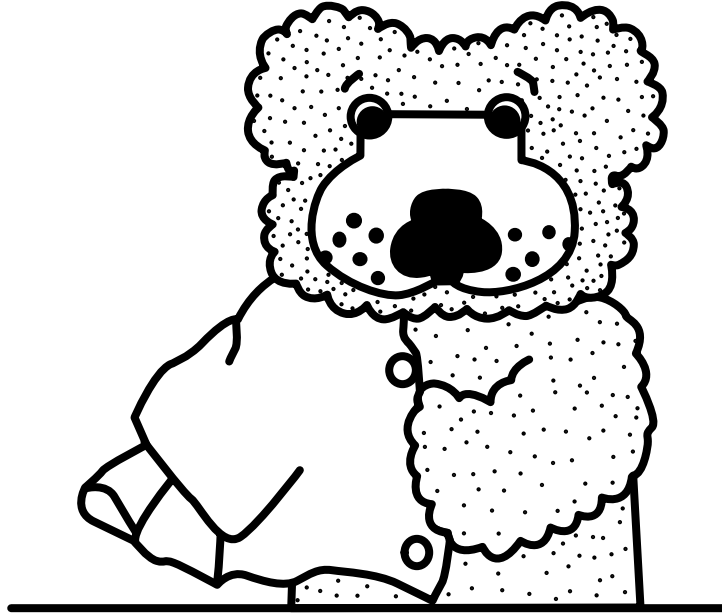
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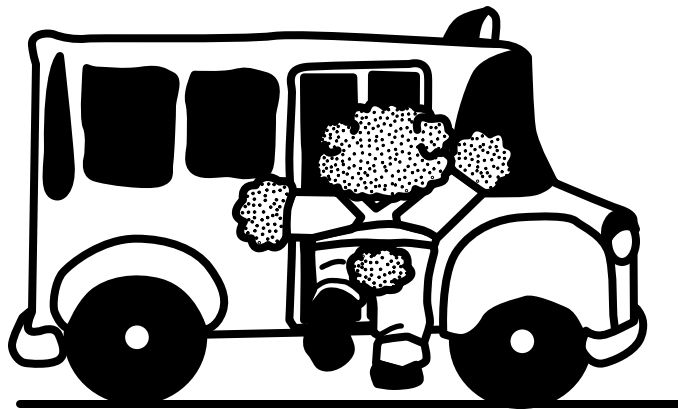
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