Making the Most of Storytime

“It is the talk that surrounds the story book reading that gives it power.”
— National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) & International Reading Association

Reading aloud to young children is important, and HOW you share books can make a big difference. Research shows that following these read-aloud practices significantly improves the language skills of children who participate:

1. Have a conversation about a book
   - Frequent conversations—back and forth exchanges
   - Ask questions that require more than one word answers
   - Wait long enough for responses
   - Be responsive to what the child says

2. Model advanced language
   - Repeat what your child says and add more to it:
     1. Provide new information
     2. Recast what they say with more advanced vocabulary
     3. Repeat what they say with correct grammar/word use, or a longer sentence

3. Prompt critical thinking skills
   - Ask how and why questions
   - Ask children to explain their answers
   - Give clues to get them to the right answer if possible

4. Intentionally build vocabulary
   - Reread the same book often
   - Stop and explain the meaning of one or two words
   - Define words using words they already know
   - Ask children to repeat the words to improve their memory of the sounds in the word

5. Teach and provide practice of social and emotional skills
   - Everyone has something valuable to say and listen to (self-regulation)
   - Listen to peers with eyes and ears (self-awareness)
   - Building community (relationship skills) “So you and Jamari both take a bus to the grocery with their mommies.”
**Tracks in the Snow** by Wong Herbert Yee

**Vocabulary possibilities:** season, winter, frozen, icicle, tracks, paw prints, woodland animal names, hibernation

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**Pg. 1-2**
What does the child see out the window?
When you look outside your window, what do you see?

**Pg. 3-4**
Why does the child need to bundle up?
How are the bird tracks different from the ones the child is following?

**Pg. 5-6**
Why is the child following the tracks?
Who do you think might have made the tracks?

**Pg. 7-8**
Why does the author write: “No bears this time of year”?
Why do you think the fox might be hiding in the tall grass?

**Pg. 9-10**
What is the child carrying? What do you think she might do with it?
Do you know another story about a child using a stick in the snow?

**Pg. 11-12**
Did you ever see a frozen pond? Tell about it.
What might the child do on the frozen pond?

**Pg. 13-14**
Where might the feather that the child is carrying have come from?
Why do you think feathers fall out of birds?

**Pg. 15-16**
Some animals hibernate and some do not. Why do you think that might be?
How might the animals find food when snow covers everything?

**Pg. 17-18**
Did you ever go for a snowy walk in the woods? Where did you go? What did you see?

**Pg. 19-20**
What do you see the child doing here?
Can you think of another story where a child loses a mitten?

**Pg. 21-22**
Do animals wear mittens? Why or why not?
Who do you think the mitten belongs to?

**Pg. 23-24**
Tell about a time when you stayed out in the snow? What did you do? How did you feel? Did you make tracks?

**Pg. 25-26**
Did your feet ever get cold when you were wearing boots outside?
Why do you think feet get cold even when you’re wearing boots?

**Pg. 27-28**
Did you ever see a bird feeder before? What are the bird and squirrel doing there? Why do people put bird feeders out in the trees?

**Pg. 29-30**
Who made the tracks in the snow?
What would be the difference between tracks made by the mother and those made by the child?