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.”
The Little Old Lady Who Was No Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams

Vocabulary possibilities: cottage, collect, afraid, behind, farther, scarecrow

Pg. 1-2
What are you afraid of?
What do you think the woman is doing? Why do you think that?

Pg. 3
What do you think this is (point to stone path)? Why do you think that?
How do you think she will carry the nuts and seeds and herbs she finds?

Pg. 4
Look at both pages and compare them. How did the illustrator show that it was starting to get dark?

Pg. 5-6
Look at the woman’s face and her body position. How do you think she feels? Can you make that face?

Pg. 7-8
What makes the “clomp, clomp” sound? Try it with your feet.
Compare the lady’s shoes with the shoes following her. How are they the same? How are they different?

Pg. 9-10
What do you see here (pants)? What is happening?
How do you think she feels this time? (Compare to earlier page.)

Pg. 11-12
Completion prompt of “Two shoes go ______ ______”
What do you think will happen next?

Pg. 15-16
Why do you think she’s walking faster? (“quite a fast pace”)
Have you ever been “startled”? Tell about it.

Pg. 19-22
Why did she lock the door?
Why did the woman need to “catch her breath”? Did that ever happen to you? Tell about it.

Pg. 23-24
How do you think the woman is feeling now?
Why do you think the clothing and pumpkin are following her?

Pg. 25-26
What is happening here?
Why did the old lady whisper to the pumpkin?

Pg. 27-28
What is happening here?
What can you see when you look out a window at your home?

Pg. 30
Why might birds be scared of a scarecrow?
What might you do to scare birds away from you?