Choosing & Using Predictable Books

Predictable books contain repetitive phrases or verses, cumulative patterns, a familiar story line, or language with rhythm and rhyme. Since these books, or parts of them, are easily memorized, young children gain a sense of control and confidence in beginning reading. By following along as adults point to the words, children learn about letters, words, sentences, punctuation marks, and that words are read from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom. Predictable books, such as the ones listed below, are often the first books young children learn to read. Included also are a variety of activities for using each book to enrich language and literacy.

Books With Repetitive Patterns:

The Big Fat Worm by Nancy Van Lann. Children will very quickly begin to read along with this delightful story as each animal, in turn, says: "I'm going to eat you up," "Oh, no you're not," "Oh, yes I am." Provide materials for children to make puppets–paper bags, cups, straws, construction paper, tape, crayons and markers–for use in retelling the story. Children can also make up gestures and movements to go with the story. For example, putting one hand on their hip, shaking their finger and nodding their heads when saying "Oh, no you're not."

We're Going On A Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury. In this version of a traditional tale, a young family goes on a bear hunt. Then chant "We're going on a bear hunt. We're going to catch a big one. What a beautiful day! We're not scared" is repeated throughout as the family travels through mud, a snowstorm, a river, and a cave. Ask children to suggest motions and sound effects to accompany each part of the book. For example, what can we do when we repeat "Oh, no, mud. Thick, oozy mud?" and how might the words "squelch, squirt" sound? Children will also enjoy going on their own bear hunt around the yard.

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss. After a little boy plants a carrot seed, each person in his family says "It won't come up." At first it seems as if they are right, but, finally, the boy grows the biggest carrot ever! Children can easily ready along with the repetitive parts "It won't come up" and "Nothing happened." This is a great book to use in a plant unit. Follow by planting carrot or other vegetable seeds.

Books With Cumulative Patterns:

The Cake That Mack Ate by Rose Robart has a delightful surprise ending that will amuse children and adults! As each new ingredient is added to the birthday cake, all of the previous ingredients are repeated. Locate or make

pictures of each character and object in the book for children's use in retelling the story.

The Jacket I'll Wear In The Snow and *The Dress I'll Wear To The Party* by Shirley Neitzel. In each of these books a child gets dressed. As each new item of clothing is introduced, the entire sequence of clothing is repeated. Children will enjoy acting out these stories as the words are repeated. Use real articles of clothing, if possible.

Books With Familiar Sequences:

Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear? by Nancy Carlstrom. There are several books about the little bear named Jesse. In this one, Jesse is asked: "What will you wear in the morning? "What will you wear at noon?" and "What will you wear in the evening?" Children can make paper dolls, using a computer desktop publishing program like Art Center by Creative Wonders, or by cutting out pictures of children and clothing from catalogs. They can repeat the story, using the name they have given their paper doll and the articles of clothing they have cut out or drawn.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle contains the familiar sequence of listing each day of the week: "On Monday, he ate…" Children can read along with these familiar parts using a hand puppet and cut–outs of each food used in the book. They can also make their own versions of the book, using their names and foods they like to eat.