



## Early Literacy Stations Inspired by Dolly Parton Imagination Library Books

[Every Child Ready to Read®](#) encourages parents to interact with their children using the five practices of early literacy: **singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing.**

This is a set of 12 outlines for early literacy stations that can be set up in the library or at outreach events. Each station uses a [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#) (DPIL) book and simple materials to support one or more of the early literacy practices.

Format the printed instructions with your library information if desired, then print and laminate a copy to put in the station along with the book and other materials as noted.

At Ohio libraries, these stations can be used to encourage enrollment in the [Ohio Governor's Imagination Library](#), a statewide initiative that makes DPIL available to every Ohio child from 0-5 years old.

These early literacy stations were created by Early Literacy Consultant [Pamela Martin-Diaz](#). They are available for use and adaptation by any library worker.

## TALK!

### Let's Explore: Our Senses

DPIL Title: *I Hear A Pickle*

#### Materials needed:

Bags of spices or essential oils in bottles

Paper bag with differently shaped items like a comb, toy car, utensil, crayon, etc.

Paper and pen to write down replies to smell activity.

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

We are going to explore two of our five senses -- smell and touch.

Smell: Close your eyes. Smell this.

What does it smell like?

What does it remind you of or what memories do you have of this smell?

Touch: Put your hand inside of this bag.

Feel an object.

What do you think it is?

Why?

How can you describe it?

Expand your child's responses by adding interesting words describing scents (*take a whiff, odor, fragrance, sour, sweet*) and tactile, or touch, experiences (*smooth, rough, round, edges*).

Hey, Grown-up! Children who have large vocabularies are better readers than children who know fewer words.

## TALK!

### Let's Explore: Making Sets

DPIL Title: *My Dog Laughs*

#### Materials needed:

Pictures of dogs  
Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

Lay the pictures of dogs out on the table.

Talk about how they are alike and how they are different from one another.

Decide how you are going to sort, or separate them, using their characteristics, or attributes.

- by type of tail or ears?

- color?

- size?

- personal preference?

As you sort them, talk about the characteristics they share.

If you feel that your child has mastered this skill, sort that set, using another attribute.

Hey, Grown-up! The ability to sort items is a skill that is important in math and science. It also helps us make sense of the world. Imagine, if you will, a grocery store where items are not sorted!

## READ!

### Let's Explore: Growing Vocabularies

DPIL Title: *Squeak*

#### Materials needed:

Photos of the animals mentioned

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

Place a selection of the photos on the table, using fewer images for younger children.

Read hints and ask your child to select the image of the appropriate animal.

Many of these animals are in *Squeak*, our featured DPIL book.

Mouse: this animal is tiny and makes a “squeak” sound. When there is more than one they are called *mice*!

Wolf: this animal lives in a group called *packs*. They *howl* to communicate, or “talk” with each other. Their *offspring* or babies are called *pups*.

Eagle: this is a bird with a huge *wingspan* (extend your arms to explain). It is a *predator* (hunts other animals for food). It is known as the national bird and *symbol* of the United States.

Chipmunks: This animal is very quick, and lives in cities and woods. It is much smaller than a squirrel.

Trout: some people like to fish for this *creature*. It lives in *streams* and rivers.

Elk: this animal is related to deer and has very large *antlers*. It is also called wapiti, which means white *rump*!

Bear: many *species*, or kinds of this animal *hibernate*, or sleep through the winter. Their homes are called *dens* and their babies are *cubs*.

Big-horned Sheep: this animal looks different from sheep on a farm due to the large horns on its head.

Bison: it is sometimes called a *buffalo*, and is the largest land animal in North America. They *graze* and travel in *herds*.

Jack Rabbit: is also known as a *hare*.

Raven: Not just large but massive, with a thick neck, shaggy throat feathers, and a Bowie knife of a beak. In flight, ravens have long, wedge-shaped tails. They're more slender than crows, with longer, narrower wings, and longer, thinner “fingers” at the wingtips. (From [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Common\\_Raven/id](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Common_Raven/id))

Loon: this is an *aquatic*, or water bird and is about the same size as a duck.

Hey, Grown-up! Children who know a lot of words are better readers than those who know fewer. No need to “dummy down” words when talking with children. When you know a word, go ahead and use it; there is no need to “talk down” to children.

Remember, you can ask your librarian for help finding more information about these animals.

## **READ! TALK!**

### **Let's Explore: Relative Size**

DPIL Title: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*

#### Materials needed:

Thick adult books labeled with a red dot and thin children's books labeled with a yellow dot.  
Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read or tell the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Talk about the different items she tried out and how their characteristics varied -- size of the bowls, etc.

There are many ways to compare objects' different attributes or characteristics -- height, length, weight, duration of time. Here are some ways to explore this:

Use the stacks of books to answer these questions:

#### **Height**

Which stack is taller -- the children's books (have a yellow dot) or adults' (have a red dot)?

Which stack is shorter?

Count the books.

How did the number of books affect the height of the stack?

Which stack is the heaviest?

What happens if you mix the red dot and yellow dot books?

Hey, Grown-up! Did you know that early math skills are predictive of later school achievement?

## **READ! TALK!**

### **Let's Explore: Counting**

DPIL Title: *Good-night, Numbers*

#### Materials needed:

Objects to count

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Pick a page in the book. Talk about the number. Ask your child to find objects in the book representing the number.

Ask your child to count out the number of objects that are represented on the page.

Divide the objects into two groups and count them again.

Emphasize that the total number of objects has not changed.

Repeat using larger numbers.

Hey, Grownup! You just showed your child how algebra's commutative law of addition works! That's right -- the order numbers are counted in does not affect the total. Young children are natural mathematicians.

## READ! TALK! PLAY!

### Let's Explore: I Spy and Rhyming

DPIL Title: *Red House, Tree House, Itty Bitty Brown Mouse*

#### Materials needed:

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

The itty bitty mouse is on every page. Encourage your child to find it and other items you name, using this format:

I spy with my little eye

Something that rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples: mouse/house tree/green boy/toy shoe/blue

If this is difficult for your child you can narrow down their choices by pointing out and naming items on the page that **don't** rhyme.

For example, "Which share a sound? mouse/green or mouse/house?"

Hey, Grownup! Rhyme helps sharpen children's ears to hear the smaller sounds in words. This will help them decode, or figure out what they are reading.

## **READ! TALK! WRITE!**

### **Let's Explore: Who Lives here? Habitats**

DPIL Title: *Home Builders*

#### Materials needed:

A copy of *The Home Builders* and books about various habitats and animals.

Magazines or printed pictures of animals in habitats that can be used to make a collage

Paper

Glue

Scissors

Pen/pencil

#### Printed Instructions:

Read the book together. Point out and talk about the different kinds of homes. Explain that animals live in different habitats, which are places that provide them with everything they need to survive -- food, shelter, water, space.

And/Or

Look at the books about different habitats. Ask your child to pick one they are interested in.

Look at it together and talk about the animals and plants that live there.

Make a collage of animals in their habitats with the materials provided. You can label the images if you'd like. Make sure your child signs their name!

#### Hey, Grownup!

Learning about nature is part of background knowledge which helps children understand their world now and later, when they are reading about it.



## **READ! TALK! WRITE!**

### **Let's Explore: Show'em The Poem**

DPIL Title: *Daniel Finds a Poem*

#### Materials needed:

Paper

Pencils/crayons

Children's poetry books

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book. You might have noticed that Daniel's poem doesn't rhyme (it is called free verse.)

Next read a few poems from a poetry book. Point out to your child where they rhyme, or share the same sounds.

What poems, songs and fingerplays do you know that rhyme?

Make an acrostic poem, using the letters in your child's name.

Write your child's name vertically on the piece of paper.

Help your child come up with adjectives or phrases that describe them.

For example, for Sophia:

**Silly**

**O**nly likes grapes

**P**lays with puppies

**H**appy

**I**s kind

**A**sks questions

Hey, Grownup! Children learn print has meaning when they have the opportunity to write.

## **READ! TALK!**

### **Let's Explore: Measuring**

DPIL Title: *Baking Day at Grandma's*

#### Materials needed:

Various items to use to measure, including a non-standard tool like a link of paper clips.  
(The instructions will vary according to the materials you provide. Below is for using a ruler. You could also use measuring cups and spoons or a scale.)

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

In *Baking Day at Grandma's* they measured the ingredients for the cake, following the recipe. When we cook, we measure, because if we put in too much of one thing and not enough of another it won't turn out the way we want it to. We also measure to find out how big or long something is, or how much something weighs.

On the ruler:

Let's count the numbers.

See how they are all the same distance apart? This is called an inch.

(Explain the fractions if there's interest.)

That is so we can measure accurately . If you use something to measure that is different from what I am using we won't have the same information.

Let's measure \_\_\_ using the ruler.

Ok, now let's measure it again using the paper clips.

(If this seems too abstract, measure the distance between two spaces using your feet and your child's'.)

Why are they different?

(The larger the item, the fewer needed to measure.)

Hey, Grownup! Using tools like those here are part of science and math. The idea of standard measurement, using the same tool to measure items to make a fair comparison, is an important concept to understand.

## **READ! TALK! PLAY!**

### **Let's Explore: Money and Choice**

DPIL Title: *Spend It!*

#### Materials needed:

Pictures of toys, food, and other items that children like. Write on them how much each one would cost, using the name of your "money," like in the book.

Something to represent money -- it could be crayons, play money, or whatever you have on hand.

Copy of the book

#### Printed instructions:

Read the book together.

In *Spend It*, Sonny had to choose how to spend his allowance, the money he earned. How would you decide what to buy?

How much money do you have?

Which of these things would you like?

How much do they cost?

How will you decide which items to buy?

Hey, Grownup! It's not too early to start talking about the value of things and making choices. These can be difficult ideas for children (and adults!) to understand.

**READ! TALK! PLAY! SING!**

**Let's Explore: Patterns**

DPIL book: *There's a Hole in The Log on the Bottom of the Lake*

Materials needed:

Items that can be made into a pattern

Copy of the book

Printed Instructions:

Read the book together.

A pattern is a set of items whose order is repeated at least once.

After reading and/or singing the book, talk about the patterns in it. Make a pattern with the items. Repeat it enough times so that your child can repeat it.

Now ask your child to continue the pattern.

Encourage your child to create their own pattern, while you figure out what comes next.

Hey, Grownup! There are patterns in stories, music, math, and science! Look for patterns in nature, in your clothes, in stories. Increasing children's background knowledge helps them understand what they are reading when they are readers.

## **READ! TALK! SING!**

### **Let's Explore: Emotions**

DPIL book: *I Am A Rainbow* and/or *The Rabbit Listened*

#### Materials needed:

Child safe mirror

Copy of the book

#### Printed Instructions:

Read the book together.

How are you feeling now?

Let's look at our faces in the mirror to see.

How do you look when you are (choose an emotion and look in the mirror)?

What can you do when you are \_\_\_\_ to feel better?

With your child, sing "If You're Happy and You Know It" Change the words and actions to match different feelings. For example, "If you're grumpy and you know i growl and frown..."

Hey, Grownup! We can help children deal with their feelings by helping them learn the words to describe them. They can't "use their words" if they don't know them!