

Reading Pictures

Well before they can read text, children are looking closely and making meaning of pictures. Inviting children to describe events and talk about what they see happening in pictures helps them to:

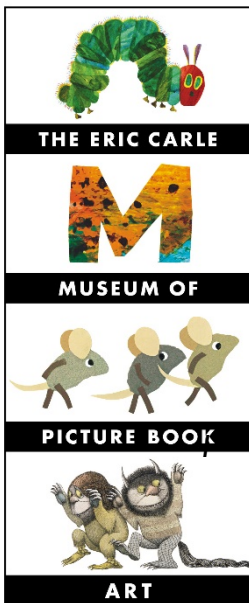
- Understand what they hear and see and, later, what they read
- Develop language skills and practice speaking in sentences
- Develop visual literacy – an understanding of how images work
- Practice critical thinking skills like making predictions, connecting ideas, and providing evidence for their ideas
- Develop narrative skills (also called describing or retelling skills) like sequencing of events and cause-and-effect
- Develop social emotional skills like taking turns and cooperating

Pictures offer multiple interpretations – there's often more than one correct way to see them. For this reason, picture books with rich illustrations and minimal text can allow children to engage more confidently and creatively with complex stories. The enjoyment and confidence they feel when looking at picture books will motivate them to learn to read text for themselves as well!

What you can do:

- Join literacy educator David Feinstein [for this interactive storytime featuring Eric Carle's *The Very Lonely Firefly*](#). Encourage your child to talk and play as you watch!
- Take your time when reading, allowing your child's eyes to look closely before turning the pages.
- When reading, ask open-ended questions that encourage your child to look closely and talk about the illustrations. For example: *What's happening in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What else can we find?*
- Show your child you're listening by paraphrasing their responses (saying their words back to them) and pointing to the parts of the pictures they notice.
- Read wordless picture books or books with minimal text (see the booklist below). Narrate the story together, describing what you see and asking your child what they see happening in the pictures.
- When reading books with more text, look at parts of the book without text and ask open-ended questions about what your child sees or thinks will happen.
- Read books with repeated words or phrases. Encourage your child to say the repeated word or phrase with you each time it appears.
- Re-read books so your child can become familiar with the story, making it easier to retell the story.

- Visit The Carle's [At Home Art Studio](#) and find ideas for art activities using materials around the house. As you create, invite your child to talk about they're making! *What's going on? What else is happening?*
- When playing, encourage storytelling by expanding on your child's descriptions. You: *What have you got there?* Child: *A ball.* You: *Oh, it's a big, red, bouncy ball!* *What should we do with it?*



Reading Pictures – Booklist

Have fun reading the pictures of these wordless and nearly wordless picture books, available through your local library.

Wordless Picture Books:

Window by Jeannie Baker
Gray Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher by Molly Bang
Journey by Aaron Becker
Inside Outside by Lizi Boyd
Imagine! by Raúl Colón
The Farmer and the Clown by Marla Frazee
Flora and the Flamingo by Molly Idle
Wave by Suzy Lee
The Red Book by Barbara Lehman
Float by Daniel Miyares
A Ball for Daisy by Chris Raschka
Another by Christian Robinson
Time Flies by Eric Rohman
Where's Walrus? by Steven Savage
Spencer's New Pet by Jessie Sima
Ship Ahoy! by Peter Sís
Chalk by Bill Thomson
Sector 7 by David Wiesner
Tuesday by David Wiesner

Nearly Wordless Books:

Hug by Jez Alborough
Wolf in the Snow by Matthew Cordell
Pancakes for Breakfast by Tomie de Paolo
Shh! We Have a Plan by Chris Haughton
Du Iz Tak? by Carson Ellis
Egg by Chris Henkes
Red Sled / Red Hat by Lita Judge
Ah Ha! by Jeff Mack
Look! by Jeff Mack
The Little Red Cat who Ran Away and Learned His ABC's by Patrick McDonnell
Higher! Higher! by Lisa Patricelli
The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney
Not A Box by Antoinette Portis
Yo! Yes? By Chris Raschka
Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathman
Bays Says by John Steptoe
Ball by Mary Sullivan
The Typewriter by Bill Thomson