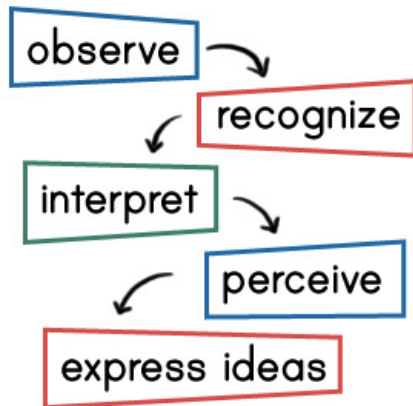


How to Read a Book to a Child Using **Visual Learning Strategies**



We all know that children who are read to become better readers. But did you know that adding **visual learning strategies** to the mix can help them become **better learners, too?**



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It is easy—and *fun*—to read books to young children using visual learning strategies that help them better understand the material while developing their visual learning skills.

1. Read a story you have read before with your child or class, but this time ask critical questions about the illustrations. For example:

- How do you think the dog feels?
- How do you know?
- Where are the children playing?
- How do you know they are at the beach?
- What can you tell about Clara from her bedroom?
- What are your favorite things in Clara's bedroom? Why?
- Where is David going?
- How can you tell?

These questions promote the **observation skills** of children, encouraging them to look carefully at details and think about what they mean.

2. When we see something for a second time in an illustration, ask your child or class if they remember what it is and what it means. For example:

- Whose house is that?
- How do you know?

- What does that sign mean?
- What does it tell you to do?

- What is Charlie *still* doing?

- We saw that truck before. What is inside it?

Based on careful observation, children can recall the meaning of visual images and displays. Developing **recognition skills** helps children take advantage of prior knowledge and experiences.

3. Illustrations often provide key information about a story. Icons, inset drawings, and other visual learning strategies are sometimes used to add extra meaning and to clarify intent.

- Why do you think Sarah looks scared?

- Look at the scene out the window. What does it tell you about the day?

- There's Mike's family. Who is younger than Mike? Who is older? How do you know?

- What would you do in this situation? Why?

The ability of children to understand situations is enhanced by **interpretation skills**. Children can see a situation, analyze it and form conclusions.

4. Visual images can provide clues about sequence—what happened before and after—prompting children to think about what might happen next and bringing deeper meaning to a story. For example:

- What are all those things doing in the car?
- Where do you think they are going?

- Let's look at the little inset picture. What do they tell us about what is going on?

- Look at the bear. What do you think is going to happen now?

- There's Bob's bicycle. What do you think he is going to do?

Asking questions about illustrations and visual models can cause children to project their ideas beyond the story. It builds **perception skills**, which helps them make sense of a story, make predictions and consider new possibilities.

5. Children find meaning in the images they create, and can express their thinking to others through their image-making. For example:

- Draw a picture showing how Sammie felt at the end of the story.

- Can you make a picture of that scene?

- Act out what the cow was doing.

- Make a sketch of yourself in that situation.

Helping children develop **visual self-expression skills** provides them with the opportunity to share ideas and demonstrate their creativity.



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