

Video 9



Video 10

Shared Reading and Writing

Handouts

more of the same; it stretched my creative energy and I longed for adult talk at the end of the day.

In the 70's, the trend shifted to experts who advised us to read to our babies every night before they went to sleep. And that was a good idea!

But a story at bedtime is not nearly enough!



Why is Shared Reading so important to literacy success?

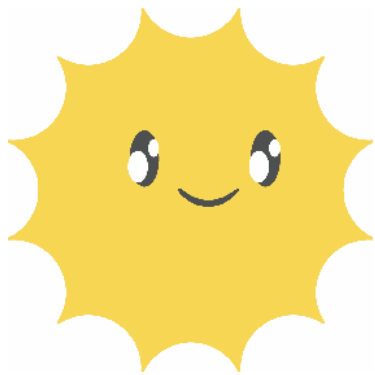
Initially (50 years ago) innovative childhood experts encouraged us and believed it was important to read to our children every night for a number of reasons. They believed:

- It gave children and parents a chance to cuddle, feel loved;
- It settled and calmed children before they went to sleep;

- It provided an opportunity for a child oriented daily debrief; and
- It introduced children to good books and the concept of literacy.

How has thinking about Shared Reading in schools evolved over time?

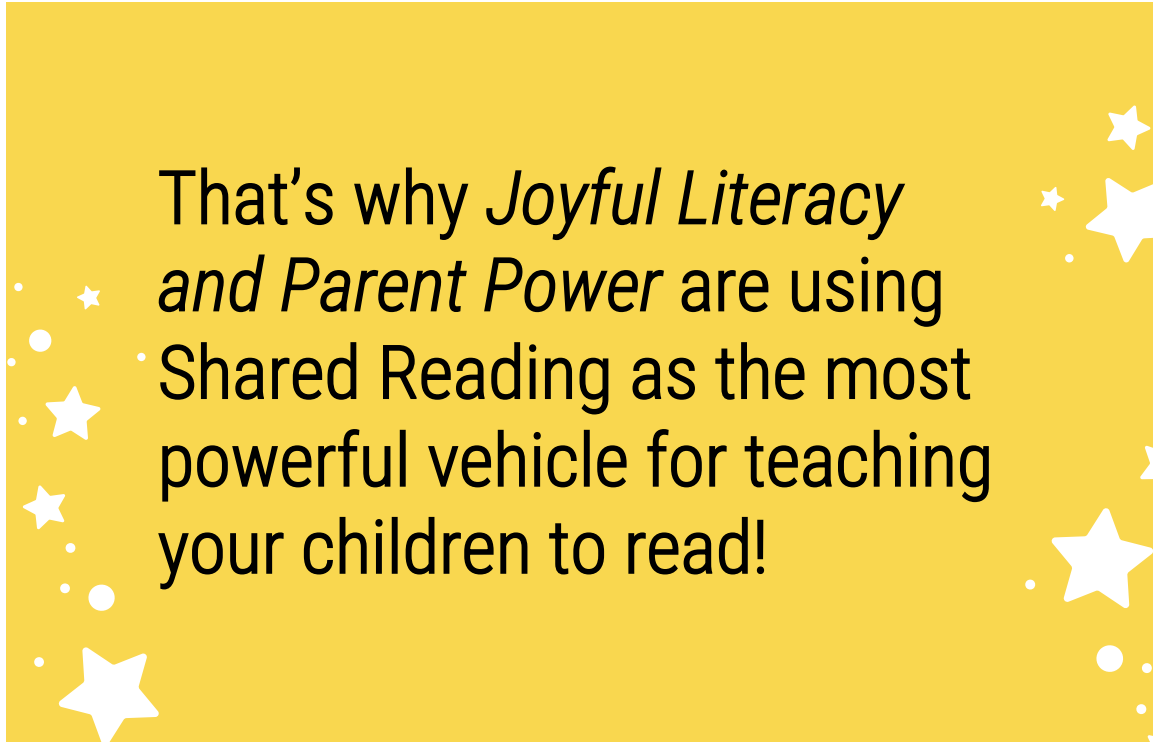
Fifty Years ago, most primary teachers read to their classes every morning to start the day, for many of the same reasons listed above often called Circle Time because children would sit in a circle on a carpet at the teachers' feet. Innovative teachers, especially those who enjoyed good books themselves, increased the frequency of the daily experience – sometimes as a way to introduce other subjects or topics under study, or themes that could be linked with upcoming art projects.



Eventually, researchers began to study the impact of Circle Time reading and discovered that when teachers used this special reading time to introduce and discuss foundational skills in the context of great books children's interest and achievement were enhanced. This practice (teaching skills while reading a great book) was renamed Shared Reading in formal research because the children were no longer passive recipients of the story, rather they became active participants in dialogue about the story as well as examples of skills contained therein. Dr. Lesley Mandel Morrow (2015), one of the most revered literacy researchers, recommended that teachers should conduct as many as five Shared Reading experiences each day in classrooms (difficult with all the other demands but highly desirable).

It was no surprise then that the latest international literacy research (in both Canada and the United States) identified **Shared Reading** as one

of the six factors that have the most impact on literacy achievement in early learners. (The other five are family involvement, alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, sight word recognition, and fluency. We can teach all of these critical skills using Shared Reading. The next three chapters cover all of them!)



Shared Writing (Emergent Writing)

Reading and Writing have a reciprocal relationship. They travel together hand in hand, ultimately relying on each other to create effective communication and a complete message.

Reading is the act of decoding and making meaning of 'jumbles' of letters and words: combining them until they make sense and tell a story.

Writing is the act of developing an idea, a feeling or a message in our heads and hearts: then, through images, letters and words, expressing that idea as a message that others can read and understand.

To be fully literate we have to be capable readers as well as effective writers. In practice, this means that reading (and speaking and listening) can be used as a springboard for writing projects, and writing can be used as a way to understand reading.

Our Focus in *Parent Power*

We have intentionally placed our greatest emphasis on the Reading aspect of literacy. Children will not be able to use letters and words to write and communicate effectively until they achieve the ability to manipulate letters, sounds and words. For this reason, in the next three chapters we emphasize the Foundational Skills of alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness and sight word mastery.

Writing always has an important, scheduled place in daily classroom plans, and we are committed to establishing writing development as an equal partner with reading for literacy success.

In light of that commitment, you will find writing strategies embedded in every chapter in this book, often with a focus on learning to print and spell individual letters and words. Whenever we teach an isolated skill, we expect children to practice the skill within the context of reading books and expressing ideas. There are many ways you can support children in their writing development as you teach reading.

What is emergent writing and what skills should I focus on?

Ruth Culham, our team expert on writing, identifies six skills that are important in the writing process. The first two skills are high priorities

for emergent (beginning) writers.

1

Ideas: Writing starts with an idea. Before children have learned any Foundational Skills, they are fully capable of expressing their ideas using multimedia such as play dough; plasticine; building materials like Lego and blocks; felt pens and paper, or by inserting words and phrases to help communicate the message. Any effort to illuminate their ideas, even random scribbles, are the child's effort to write and we want to honour these efforts as their first writing experiences.

2

Organization: This is the framework that holds a sequence of thoughts together. Encourage children to draw their stories in a series of pictures to illustrate that sequence. In the earliest writing stages, we emphasize a story's beginning and ending. Asking children to tell and retell their stories through pictures will help them with this skill. Offer to label, title or caption with words, the drawings or sculptures if they are yet unable.

Ruth also identifies four other skills that are next stages.

- **Voice:** the author's passion for the topic;
- **Word Choice:** selecting words that express our feelings best;
- **Sentence Fluency:** the grammar and the way sentences sound;
- **Conventions:** use of letters and words, spelling, punctuation – making writing correct and understandable.

Although these skills are more advanced, keep them in mind as part of your daily experience and discussions. If your child has progressed beyond the emergent or beginning stage and seems ready for more advanced writing skills, visit Ruth



Culham's website culhamwriting.com for a rich assortment of articles, strategies and ideas.

What is shared writing?

- Shared Writing is all about children and adults writing and talking together. The adult holds the pen and acts as the scribe for young children who may not yet be ready to write themselves. The adult leads the conversation using a process such as the following:
Select large pieces of paper so that both adult and child can see the process. (You can even use newspaper as long as you have a really dark felt pen.)
- Decide what you are going to write. (It could be a story, a list, an experience, a plan for a family party, a letter, a text message – anything that excites both of you.)
- Talk through the plan: what you want to say and in what order; what is most important; what should we say next; how should we end it; what colour pens we should use.
- If your child has started to print, share the pen and ask her to fill in known sight words or print the first letter of the word.
- Compose her work, word by word, reading and re-reading each part.
- Stop to talk about words, letters, ideas, and punctuation.
- Share your writing with another member of the family. Practice reading it together. Echo read it with your child. Celebrate your successes.