Reading aloud, singing, doing fingerplays and engaging young children in conversation are all ways that parents and caregivers lay the foundation for young children to become successful readers and writers. The following activities were created to promote literacy with young children through hands-on, real-life experiences that will stimulate learning.

Have fun and “Grow a Reader!”

TEDDY BEAR PICNIC

After reading or singing The Teddy Bears’ Picnic, brainstorm with the children all the different things they could take on a picnic. On a large sheet of paper write the words

\[ \textbf{A little picnic we will make,} \\
\textit{In the basket we will take ...} \]

- After those words, write down the children’s ideas.
- Pack a picnic basket with the children. Use as many of their ideas as possible.
- Spread a blanket or tablecloth on the ground.
- Gather around for a picnic.
TEDDY BEAR TEA PARTY

INVITATIONS:
Help children create invitations for a Teddy Bear Tea Party.

REFRESHMENTS:
Work with the children to choose and prepare healthy snacks. What might teddy bears like? Be creative. Pick a beverage to serve in a teapot. For example, serve vanilla milk tea, juice, or iced tea sweetened with a little honey.

DECORATIONS:
Ask the children how they would like to decorate for the Teddy Bear Tea Party. Provide art materials for them to make such things as name tags, placemats, centerpieces and party hats.

TEA PARTY ACTIVITIES

- Let every child introduce his or her teddy bear that they brought from home and tell something about the bear.
- Play games such as Duck, Duck, Goose, or Ring Around the Rosie, with children holding the teddy bears and helping them join in the game.
- You or the children hide the teddy bears. Go on a bear hunt.
- Have a photo session with the bears. Pictures can be used later for scrapbooks, writing bear stories with children, or simply remembering the Teddy Bear Day.
- Sing “I’m a Little Teapot.” (Words included on next page)
I'M A LITTLE TEAPOT

I'm a little teapot short and stout;
( stick your tummy out and pretend you are very short )

    Here is my handle
( place your hand on your hip, so your arm is a handle)

    And here is my spout.  
( Bend your other arm and hand like a spout)

    When I get all steamed up,
    Hear me shout:
    Just tip me over and pour me out!
( Bend over and pretend you are pouring out your tea!)

    Second verse:
    I'm a special teapot
    Yes, it's true
    Here, let me show you
    What I can do.

I can change my handle (Place your other hand on your other hip)

And my spout (Bend your other arm and hand like a spout)

Tip me over and pour me out! (Bend and pretend you are pouring from your other side)

VANILLA MILK TEA*

Ingredients:
1 cup milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
4 tsp. decaf black or green tea (or 4 tea bags)
1 quart boiling water

Directions:
1. Pour the milk into a saucepan, add the vanilla, and bring to a simmer, stirring often.
2. Remove the pan from the heat and let it stand until the milk is cool.
3. Place the tea leaves in the teapot and add the boiling water.
4. Cover with a towel and steep 5 minutes.
5. Pour about 1/4 cup of the cooled milk into each teacup.
6. Stir and strain the tea into the cups. Makes 4-5 servings.

* all cooking activities require adult supervision
THE THREE BEARS

After reading the story Goldilocks and the Three Bears:

Classify by size: Set out several sets of three objects in small, medium and large sizes, such as three bowls, three spoons, three cups and three plates. Have the children divide the objects into three piles, one for Papa Bear, one for Mama Bear, and one for Baby Bear. When the objects have been grouped according to size have the children regroup them into piles of like objects.

Enact the story: Read the story again while children act it out. Tip: It works just fine and prevents a lot of hurt feelings to simply allow children to play whichever part they choose. In other words, it is okay to have any number of children as Papa Bear or Goldilocks while no one takes the part of Mama Bear or Baby Bear. Children can easily act out a part and speak the lines as a group. And you can fill in the lines that no one else wants. Children who choose not to take any of the roles in the story can be happy participants as members of the audience. It is also fine for children to change roles – even in the middle!

Props: (optional)
Encourage children to come up with props. For example, for a house you could use a cardboard box or a blanket. Costumes might consist of a baby bonnet or a baby hat for Baby Bear, an apron or a woman’s hat for Mama Bear, a necktie or man’s hat for Papa Bear, and a dress or hair ribbons for Goldilocks. Adding three sizes of bowls and three sizes of spoons (a large wooden spoon, a tablespoon, and a baby spoon) would provide all the props you would need.

OLD-FASHIONED PORRIDGE

Try some porridge! Porridge in the United States is usually simply oatmeal. For a coarser, more chewy texture with enhanced flavor, try the recipe below.

INGREDIENTS:
- 4 cups water
- ¼ - ½ teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1 cup steel cut oats*

PREPARATION:  (Makes 4 servings)
1. Bring water and salt to a boil.
2. Add the oats, stirring constantly to prevent any lumps from forming.
3. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Serve porridge hot with milk or cream, and honey, brown or white sugar, syrup, or fruit.

*Steel cut oats can be purchased at natural food stores or at large supermarkets.

* all cooking activities require adult supervision
Bring books to life with these simple ideas that highlight early literacy skills.

**One Ted Falls Out of the Bed** by Julia Donaldson

**Presentation Notes:** When a teddy bear falls out of bed during the night, he has lots of fun with the other toys, but then he misses being in bed. Have children count objects and characters along with you. Emphasize rhyming words and try leaving a few out. Prompt the children to fill in the missing words by listening for the rhyme and looking at the pictures for clues.

**Skills Featured:** Phonological Awareness, Print Motivation, Narrative

**Goldilocks and the Three Bears** by Valeri Gorbachev

**Presentation Notes:** Charming illustrations add to the fun in this classic tale. When reading aloud, make sure to vary your voice for each of the characters. Invite children to join in on the refrain of “just right”. Use props for creative and dramatic retellings.

**Skills Featured:** Narrative, Print Motivation

**Teddy Bear’s Picnic** by Jimmy Kennedy

**Presentation Notes:** Sing the book or listen to a recording of the song after reading the story. Songs help children hear syllables. Try one of the picnic ideas described in this booklet.

**Skills Featured:** Phonological Awareness, Print Motivation

**It’s the Bear** by Jez Alborough

**Presentation Notes:** Eddie is worried about meeting a bear in this suspenseful drama about a picnic in the woods. Emphasize rhyming words as you read aloud and allow plenty of time to look at illustrations as they are key to understanding the story. Ask children to predict what the bear will do and how Eddie feels. Be sure to vary your voice so that the characters are clear.

**Skills Featured:** Print Motivation, Phonological Awareness, Narrative
**Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories**
by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

**Presentation Notes:** Three simple stories introduce the two characters: dog and bear. Their stories are told entirely in dialogue which creates a wonderful opportunity for discussion about the plot. Get a stuffed dog and bear and have children act out or retell their favorite parts. This is also an excellent chance to talk about chapters in a book. Make sure to stop and show the children where each chapter begins.

**Skills featured:** Print Awareness, Narrative

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**MORE GREAT BOOKS!**

- **Goldilocks and the Three Bears** by Jan Brett
- **The Adventures of Old Bo Bear** by Alice Schertle
- **What Does my Teddy Bear Do all Night?** By Bruno Hachler
- **Where’s My Teddy?** by Jez Alborough
- **Mooncake** by Frank Asch
- **Sleep Tight, Little Bear** by Martin Waddell

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