



Early Literacy and Heroes: Ideas for Summer Reading 2015

Introduction

As an abstract concept, “Hero” might seem too advanced an idea for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. But with a little creativity, we can make this summer’s slogan and activities relatable to young children. In that spirit, this document offers book and activity ideas centered on two themes:

- “Heroes Try New Things and Go on Adventures”
- “Heroes Are Brave”

The materials listed under each theme may be used to create a storytime, or some other type of display or special event. Also, this document will give you some ideas of how to use the CSLP Early Literacy (EL) Manual and other resources to provide learning activities for young children and their caregivers.

Have fun!

A Special Reading Log for Children Under 6

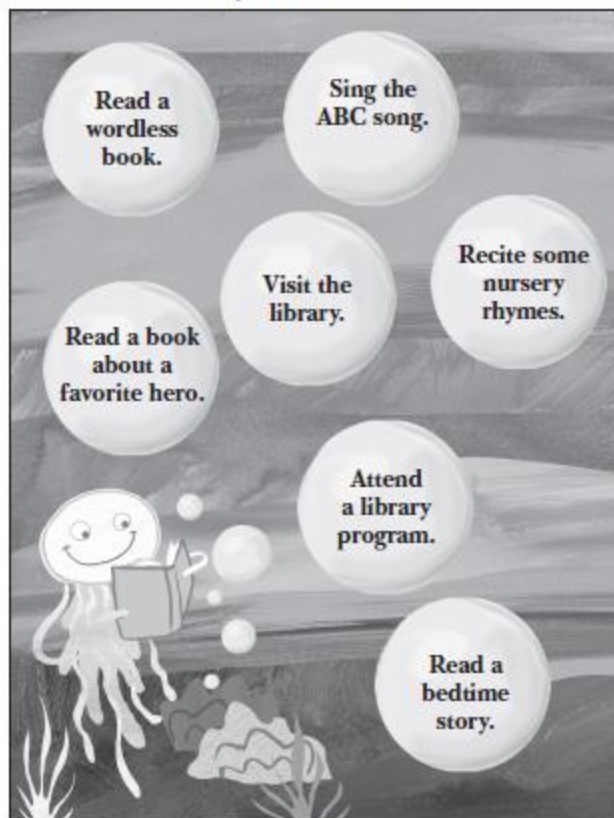
Consider using a special reading log for children under six. Instead of tracking the books or minutes they read, families are encouraged to do early literacy activities that they mark off their logs. Examples can be seen on the next page and in the CSLP Early Literacy Manual, p. 14-15.

Sample Bookmark Log

Name: _____		Name: _____	
Sing nursery rhymes.	Draw letters in the sand.	Sing nursery rhymes.	Draw letters in the sand.
Cuddle and read.	Read signs and words aloud.	Cuddle and read.	Read signs and words aloud.
Retell stories.	Point to the words on the page while reading.	Retell stories.	Point to the words on the page while reading.

Sample Activity Log

Complete the activities below.



If you have the electronic version of the manual, it is easy to customize your EL log. There are fillable PDFs in the PDF Forms Handouts folder. There are suggestions of activities on p. 11 of the manual.

Using ASL with Children Under 6

One of the suggestions the manual makes is to teach children some words and phrases in American Sign Language. These can be used to communicate with children who have not yet started talking, and can benefit older children as a way to participate in storytime. Imagine having children sign along with you as you read **Duck on a Bike**: “Hello, Cow!”, “Hello Dog!” and so on. This can be particularly effective in large groups, where the voices of many children might drown out the reading.

Caitlyn Myers, an ASL Interpreter, says that simple signs are fairly easy for adults to teach themselves using an online dictionary. She suggests using ASL Pro: <http://www.aslpro.com/>. (Note that this site is different than the one mentioned in the EL Manual.)

To avoid overwhelming yourself and children, start small—learn one to two signs a week and build on them. And choose ones you know you can use again and again. For babies, this might mean teaching them and their caregivers they can use every day, like “hungry”, “happy” and “more”. For older

children, you might start with concepts like colors and numbers. And, for example, if you use lots of farm books in storytime, consider learning and teaching the signs for common farm animals.

“Heroes Try New Things and Go on Adventures”

Additional subjects included in this theme:

- Letters
- Farm animals
- Construction
- Colors

Books

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin, Jr.

In this classic children’s tale, little letters go on an adventure up a coconut tree.

Manipulative: *Activity Tree for Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Lakeshore Learning, \$29.99; item # LA645)

For a less expensive version, use magnetic letters and decorate a magnetic surface (for example, a cookie sheet or the end of a metal bookshelf) with a simple cutout of the coconut tree. Tracing the illustrations in the book are close to the right scale if you use magnetic letters about 2 inches high.

Duck on a Bike by David Shannon

Duck decides to be adventurous and ride an abandoned bike, inspiring all the animals on the farm to do the same.

After reading, have children help you retell the story using farm animal puppets or pictures.

Huff & Puff by Claudia Rueda

There’s a surprise twist at the end of this version of *The Three Little Pigs*, which features circular cutouts for children to act as the Wolf, huffing and puffing to blow those houses down.

Encourage children to use blocks to build the houses of the three little pigs—they will delight in being the wolf!

Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes by James Dean and Eric Litwin

Pete's not about to let stepping in strawberries, mud and water (and other stuff) slow him down—he keeps walking along and singing his song.

The bold illustrations make this an excellent choice for a flannel board story.

Piglet and Mama by Margaret Wild

Piglet wants her mama, and she's willing to traverse the entire farm to find her.

After reading, retell the story using farm animal puppets or pictures. And if the beautiful watercolor illustrations inspire you to do an art activity, here are some good kid-safe paint recipes:

<http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2013/03/homemade-paint-recipes-safe-for-babies.html>

Music

CD: *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom and Other Coconutty Songs*

Video: Author Claudia Rueda reads **Huff & Puff** in a video available on Youtube. The audio is a little rough.

Activities

Subject: Letters

Talk to individual children about the letter that starts his or her name (or encourage adults to do so). Follow up by teaching children to sign the first letters of their names. This is one more way to help them attain letter knowledge.

Have plenty of shape and letter puzzles available for children to play with, including magnetic letters they can use on a cookie sheet or on bookshelves, if yours are metal.

Subject: Farm animals

Have farm animal puppets available for children to retell some of the stories in this theme. Encourage children to play freely with the puppets and talk to them about what sounds the animals make. Playing with animal noises is a fun way to explore the Take Time to Rhyme, Sing and Play Word Games skill. Making animal sounds (and other silly sounds) helps children hear the smaller sounds in words.

Subject: Construction

Two words: block play! This activity goes especially well with **Huff & Puff**, which encourages children's natural delight at knocking down the structures they've built. See the introduction of the CSLP Early Literacy Manual for more information about how block play enhances children's development.

Subject: Colors

There are plenty of low-cost activities that help children learn and practice colors:

- Puzzles
- Sorting cut out shapes by shape/size/color
- Stringing beads of different colors into patterns
- Drawing/coloring with crayons, colored pencils, markers, paints

"Heroes Are Brave"

A nice superhero storytime plan: <http://jbrary.com/preschool-storytime-superheroes/> (search for "jbrary superheroes").

Additional subjects included in this theme:

- Bravery
- Superheroes
- Colors/Shapes
- Color Mixing (Painting)

Books

Do Super Heroes Have Teddy Bears? by Carmela LaVigna Coyle

The simple, rhyming text in this book encourages all children to imagine themselves as superheroes in their everyday lives.

See the author's website for a book trailer, printable hero emblems, and instructions on how to make superhero capes: <http://carmelacoyle.com/>.

Ghost in the House by Ammi Joan Paquette

There's a ghost in the house, who runs across a mummy, making two in the house. Then the two meet a third creature and so on—until the sixth scares everyone else away.

The simple, clean outlines of the story's characters makes this one easy to convert to a flannelboard.

Go Away, Big Green Monster! by Ed Emberley

This clever book uses die cut pages to make a monster's face appear and then disappear, feature by feature. Children feel empowered to tell the monster to "Go away!" one feature at time.

Manipulative: *Go Away, Big Green Monster! Storytelling Puppet Kit* (Lakeshore Learning, \$16.99; item # RR534)

For a less expensive version, make a paper or flannel version of the story, or give children materials to draw the monster.

If You're a Monster and You Know It by Ed Emberley

Based on the song "If You're Happy and You Know It", this song encourages little monsters to snort, growl, smack, stomp, twitch, wiggle and roar their way to fun.

Scholastic has the song available to play online or download at:

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/book.jsp?id=1312582>. Try sponsoring a monster parade while playing the song.

Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems

Leonardo is terrible at being a monster—he can't scare anybody! But when he meets a little boy, he scares the tuna salad out of him and feels bad. So Leonardo decides that maybe instead of being a terrible monster, he could be a wonderful friend.

After reading ask children to imagine they are monsters and to describe or draw what they might scare out of somebody.

Monsters Love Colors by Mike Austin

"Monsters love to scribble, scribble, mix, dance, and wiggle!" They also love to customize colors, whether it's using red and blue to make purple or something more elaborate, like a "SUPER tropical MEGA monster RAINBOW swirl with raspberry on TOP!"

The fantastic illustrations prime children for art activities, particularly scribble art and splatter art. (See instructions below, in the Activities section.)

Music

CD: Itty Bitty Monsters by Dino O’Dell

Song: “Horns, Fangs, Knees and Claws” (tune: “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”)

Horns, fangs,
Knees and claws,
Knees and claws,

Horns, fangs,
Knees and claws,
Knees and claws,

Eyes and ears and tail and paws,
Horns, fangs,
Knees and claws,
Knees and claws.

Video: Feist sings about counting monsters, penguins, chickens on Sesame Street—available through Youtube. Search for: “Sesame Street Feist” or go to: <http://youtu.be/fZ9WiuJPnNA>

Activities

Subject: Bravery

Encourage children to engage in imaginative play about times when they would need to be brave. If you assemble a small tent, they can pretend they are camping after dark. Or a piece of cardboard could be a raft adrift on a river.

Subject: Superheroes

Make superhero capes by tucking pieces of fabric into the back collar of children’s shirts and encourage them to demonstrate their superpower. Make superhero wands by having kids decorate wrapping paper tubes. Or use curly ribbon tied to round shower rings—children can wave the ribbons to express their powers.

Subject: Colors/Shapes

There are lots of low-cost activities that help children learn and practice colors and shapes:

- Puzzles
- Sorting cut out shapes by shape/size/color

- Playing with magnetic letters
- Bead mazes
- Stringing beads of different shapes/colors into patterns

Subject: Color Mixing (Painting)

For no-mess color mixing, try putting two colors of fingerpaint in a zip-top bag, one on each side. Tape the bag down to a table and let children explore. Here’s how: No mess color mixing: <http://www.mamasmiles.com/no-mess-color-mixing-art/>

Talking about colors might inspire you to start painting! Splatter painting is a great outdoor activity—just be sure everyone knows to wear their not-so-best clothes. Or ask patrons for donations of old, adult-sized T-shirts that children can wear as aprons. Here are some great splatter painting ideas: <http://www.mias-craft-ideas.com/splatter-painting.html>

Additional Resources

Early literacy kits available through ILL

Check out some of these kits for additional resources and ideas. You may want to request one right away, to get ideas before they are all checked out for the summer. The State Library of Kansas sponsors the use of these kits with funds from a Children’s Cabinet grant. Two sizes of kits, large and medium, are available.

Early Literacy Activity Kits, marked with **(L)** below, contain 8-10 activities related to a great picture book—use all activities at once, or just a couple at a time.

To borrow *Early Literacy Activity Kits* through ILL, search the Kansas Library Catalog by typing the phrase: early literacy kit (Look for ones called 6 by 6 Ready to Read kit.)

Circle Storytime Kits, marked with **(M)** below, are theme based and contain:

- six or more picture books,
- texts of related songs, rhymes and fingerplays
- accompanying activities, like puppets you can use to retell a story
- parent handouts, craft ideas and additional book resources related to the theme

To borrow *Early Literacy Activity Kits* through ILL, search the Kansas Library Catalog by typing the phrase: **circle storytime kit** (storytime must be one word).

Kits for “Heroes Try New Things and Go on Adventures”

Book	Kit	Concept
<i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i>	Chicka Chicka Boom Boom (L)	--
<i>Duck on a Bike</i>	Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type (L) , On the Farm (M) and Transportation (M)	Farm Animals
<i>Huff & Puff</i>	Alphabet Under Construction (L) and Tip Tip Dig Dig (L)	Building/ Engineering
<i>Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes</i>	My New Shoes (M) and Groovy Buttons (M)	<i>Pete the Cat</i>
<i>Piglet and Mama</i>	Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type (L) and On the Farm (M)	Farm Animals

Kits for "Heroes Are Brave"

Book	Kit	Concept
all books/entire theme	Little Monsters: Don't Fear Monsters (M)	Monsters
<i>Do Super Heroes Have Teddy Bears?</i>	Home and Family (M)	Family
<i>Go Away, Big Green Monster!</i>	5 Senses (M)	Colors, Shapes
<i>Monsters Love Colors</i>	5 Senses (M)	Colors/ Color Mixing

Conclusion

Have a wonderful time as you plan and implement your summer reading program! Don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions about any of the resources I've suggested here. –Anna