

Community strategies for promoting literacy



Save the Children

WITH World Vision





AZERBAIJAN/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Community Strategies for Promoting Literacy

Save the Children (funded by World Vision)

By Amy Jo Dowd, Nell O'Donnell, Ces Ochoa, and Ivelina Borisova
Save the Children US

About Save the Children

Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. For more information, visit SavetheChildren.org.

Save the Children USA is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 29 independent Save the Children organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 120 countries.

About World Vision

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian charity organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

World Vision serves close to 100 million people in nearly 100 countries around the world. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. For more information, visit WorldVision.org.

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Why did we develop the community strategies flip book?

In our community-based work, we'd like to strengthen support for children's reading outside of schools. We know that there are many ways that parents, community members and children themselves can support children in learning how to read. Often, it is assumed that only people who are literate can assist others in gaining key reading skills. We think that this view of community resources for children's literacy is too limited. The skills underlying successful reading include speaking, listening, understanding speech and knowing a variety of words.

Parents and community members who do not read have a great deal to offer children using these everyday tools of speech in engaging and often fun ways. NGO staff and community leaders using this book should highlight this fact. This flip book serves to detail the importance of oral language development and the many ways that all of us can promote it in our daily lives. It also gathers strategies for use by those who can read to work with children to read more often, more fluently and with greater discussion and comprehension in their daily lives.

For whom did we write the community strategies flip book?

We wrote this flip book to assist program managers, community outreach workers and community leaders to think quite concretely together about the content of workshops or training sessions conducted with parents, community members and children.

How do we use the community strategies flip book?

The activities are manageable, fun, and empowering for parents and children. They should create a fun atmosphere around literacy promotion. Use the flip book as a calendar and work through the topics with each target group month by month. Each page offers actions that parents and children can do to support the development of reading skills in others. Use each as a central discussion point, show how it is done, and ask participants to try it for a month! To support the feasibility of doing it, think through: materials needed; when it fits in their daily schedules; and benefits of doing it. Ask them to try it as many times as they can before the next meeting and warn them to come prepared to share their experience! **IMPORTANT:** begin the next monthly meeting by asking everyone to share how it went, and gather their experiences.

To back this up, you can post copies of the month's activity around the community and/or ask teachers to send a note home with children about

it or discuss it with parents. Of course, such a curriculum will require adaptation based on the area in which you work and the literacy levels of the community members.

The flip book is organized by target group into two categories: parents and children. Within these groups there are topics for all and for those who can read. Think about how many sessions will you have, and with whom will you have them. The flip book contains:

- 10 ideas for all parents and
- 6 more ideas for parents who can read
- 8 ideas for all children and
- 6 more ideas for children who can read.

The parents' topics can extend and enrich the reading awareness topics in Save the Children's Literacy Boost Community Action Component, and the children's topics can be introduced by facilitators in Literacy Boost Reading Camps or used in separate child-to-child sessions.

There are many ways to take advantage of this resource and we hope that you will be in touch to share your thoughts, ideas, innovative uses as well as feedback for its improvement so that this resource can continue to grow with your experience and expertise.

Contact Amy Jo Dowd at adowd@savechildren.org or Cecile Ochoa at cochoa@savechildren.org with questions, comments and feedback.



Ideas for All Parents

Promoting literacy can begin from the earliest stages of children's development. Activities that build children's language skills, that boost their understanding of the immediate world around them, and that add to their store of knowledge all contribute in a big way to laying the foundation for children's ability to read. Such activities enable children to connect language to concrete objects or events, express their own ideas, and make sense of the written word. The ideas in the following pages are but a few activities that all parents—no matter their literacy or educational levels—can easily do with children to get them to learn and read better.

Talk with your child



MALAWI/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Talk with your child

This month, talk to and with your children.

Talking to your child is very important to develop communication and early language skills. Very young children feel comforted and emotionally connected to their parents when they hear their voices. Your voice will calm and quiet your baby. Soon your infant will begin imitating sounds and syllables she hears from you. Encourage her by taking turns repeating words and syllables. As children grow, start each day by telling your child what tasks you will do, then end the day by recounting the things you did. With older children, ask him or her how his or her day was. Ask: what happened that was good; what happened that was challenging?

Get your children talking!

Benefits:

- Builds confidence; instills calm, attachment, and sense of security
- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Encourages curiosity and dialogue

Tell stories to share knowledge and culture



NEPAL/Photo by Brent Stirton



VIETNAM/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Tell stories to share knowledge and culture

Tell or read a story to a child this month. Then discuss the people, places, and events in it. Do it more than once if you can.

For young children, try telling a story a few times a week. Make it a habit—ask your child to sit in your lap or by your side for the story and listen to your voice. Try telling stories with animal characters in them and making the animal sound as you tell the story. This helps the child associate animal sounds with the words for each animal. For example “The farmer came home to feed the cows, moo-moo.”

With children of all ages, tell the same story twice and then ask your child to help you re-tell it a third time. Begin with simple stories that are easy to remember. Each time you tell the story point out something important from the beginning, middle and end of the story to make it easier for your child to remember and retell the story later.

Benefits:

- Builds confidence; instills calm, attachment, and sense of security
- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- Shares cultural knowledge

Feed your child's mind



BOLIVIA/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Feed your child's mind

Promote reading readiness while feeding your family. Ask your child to name the ingredients, count them, sort them by size, by first sounds, by color, and more!

Walk your child through the process of cooking a meal. Tell him/her what you are doing. For example: "Now I am washing the vegetables and then I will put them in the pot to cook." Tell your child about each ingredient, for example: "We grow the peppers in the garden and we buy the rice at the market." Then count them and measure them together!

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- Teaches about local food and its sources
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity



NEPAL/Photo by Brent Stirton

Sing for literacy

Sing for literacy

Singing songs can help improve literacy skills. Songs have rhymes, meter, and great words that are important for children to learn. This month, sing songs in your community.

From birth, children love hearing their caregivers sing to them and they often respond with great joy to songs and rhymes. Children often try to sing along as early as two years of age! As you repeat songs, act them out by pointing to real life objects in the song or by imitating actions in it.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Shares cultural knowledge
- It's fun!
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words



Shop for knowledge

NEPAL/Photo by Brent Stirton

Shop for knowledge

Promote reading readiness while doing the shopping for your family.

If you shop with young children, talk them through the process. Tell them you are going to the store, what you need to buy, and what you need to bring in order to buy things: to go out to the market you need the basket, money, etc. Next time you are heading to the market, ask your child what you need to bring to do the shopping. If your child does not speak yet, ask him to bring you the basket. This will help him learn to match words to objects.

As your child gets older ask him to remember a few ingredients you need to buy and when you get to the market ask him to remind you what you need to get. Once at the market, ask older children to point to all of the items in the market that start with a particular sound. Or ask them to name and count the types of an item, like fruit!

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- Teaches about local food and its sources
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity

Promote reading skills while working together



MALAWI/Photo by Michael Bisceglie



TAJIKISTAN/Photo by Chris Martin

Promote reading skills while working together

While doing your daily work, teach your child valuable skills. Tell your child about the tasks or steps in your work, point them out so he/she sees the process, then ask your child to repeat them back to you.

For example, “first we get water for the washing, then we soap the clothes and next we rinse them.” Very young children learn new words best by interacting with the objects we are trying to teach the words for. If you are doing laundry, let child play with the water (splash or imitate your washing the clothes) and keep repeating the word for him/her “this is water.” Eventually the child will begin saying the word back to you. For children who can walk, ask him/her to bring you things needed to complete the chore—for example “Please bring me the soap” or “Please take this empty dish to the kitchen,” etc. Try engaging older children in two or three steps to remember and do: “Please go inside the house, and get me the soap for the laundry, and bring it to me.” Older children can learn all the tasks in a day and repeat them back to you.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity

Grab a corner of education

EL SALVADOR / Photo by Michael Bisceglie



Grab a corner of education

One of the ways children learn is through play. This month, make a reading corner in your house and give your child extra time and simple, inexpensive reading-related materials to play with.

Young children usually recognize the letters in their name first. Cut these out and stick them on a wall in the house. Point out the letters and repeat their names. For children who already recognize the letters in their name, include their sibling's name, the name of the place you live, etc. Play letter recognition games, asking: "Where is the letter A?" and letter identification games asking: "What letter is this?"

With older children collect bottle caps or paper scraps and write the letters on them. When you have a complete alphabet, play games to put them in order and spell familiar words. Make more cards with letter blends you use often. Or make cards with words and begin building sentences. Add the numbers to help children count too!

For readers, gather or make books with friends and family to place in this special part of your home.

Benefits:

- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school
- Builds letter knowledge
- Creates more literacy materials



Join a group that reads

INDONESIA/Photo by Richard Lord

Join a group that reads

Enroll your child in a reading camp today. Your older children can be camp leaders and your younger children can benefit from a fun place to learn and play games using key reading skills.

Benefits:

- It's fun!
- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Builds older children's responsibility and confidence as fluent readers
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school
- Builds letter knowledge

Share reading with your neighbor



MALAWI/ Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Share reading with your neighbor

Talk to a neighbor or friend about the importance of reading to a child. Share and exchange reading and print materials with neighbors.

Where items to read are scarce, sharing resources between homes and among community members not only extends the resources available for everyone, but offers an opportunity to talk about the stories you are reading in common. Share a book, then set a time to discuss it, or read it again out loud.

Benefits:

- Builds confidence; instills calm, attachment, and sense of security
- It's fun!
- Shares fun and benefits of promoting literacy with the greater community

Celebrate Literacy



MALAWI/ Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Celebrate literacy

When you are celebrating, celebrate reading as well. Does your holiday have any special songs, poems, or traditions that you can share? Teach younger children to repeat simple poems and songs. Ask older children who can write to record some of these songs and traditions and share with others.

Benefits:

- Shares cultural knowledge
- It's fun!
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity



Ideas for Parents Who Read

Anyone who can read can help a child develop this fundamental skill—given the motivation and the tools to do so. Parents who read to and with their children not only help children practice this skill and serve as a model of skilled reading; they also reinforce the message that reading matters, and that it can be a fun and pleasurable activity to do. Here are a few ideas that literate parents can take on to promote both the skill and the love of reading with their children at home.

Make reading materials

AFGHANISTAN / Photo by Jeff Holt



Make reading materials

This month, spend some time making reading materials for your child.

Keep in mind that young children enjoy simple books with large print and pictures. So to begin, try to make a book that is only 5–6 pages long, with a picture on each page and a few words of text. Older children can help you write such books! Or, they can become the authors of their own tales.

Benefits:

- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Creates more literacy materials

Right before bed is a perfect time to read to your child



EL SALVADOR/Photo by Michael Bisceglie



AFGHANISTAN/Photo by Linda Cullen

Right before bed is a perfect time to read to your child

Make an effort to read to your child every night for the entire month! You and your child will enjoy this time together.

From birth, children enjoy hearing their mother's or father's voice and reading stories to them before bedtime will have a calming and positive effect. Even if younger children may not understand the content of the story you are reading they will begin learning what stories sound like. As children get older, help them learn to turn the pages of the book, teach them which is the front and which is the back of a book, and which is the right direction to read a story. Older children can follow your finger across the page as you read or take turns reading to you!

Benefits:

- Builds confidence; instills calm, attachment, and sense of security secure
- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression vocab, models fluent reading
- It's fun!
- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school

The alphabet: Building blocks of reading



MALAWI/Photo by Michael Bisceglie



ETHIOPIA/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

The alphabet: Building blocks of reading

This month, celebrate the letters of the alphabet. Each day, focus on a different letter. In a central place, draw the letter of the day on a piece of paper, or on the wall in chalk.

Collect letters and decorate a room so they can be seen daily. Include the numbers too to extend learning. Help children practice writing letters too—in the sand, on the sidewalk or on paper. From as early as eighteen months to two years of age, children begin learning and recognizing letters one by one.

Benefits:

- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Builds letter knowledge and spelling skills
- Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words
- Creates more literacy materials



Literacy at home

VIETNAM/Photo by Chau Doan/Onasia

Literacy at home

Many packaged foods have labels on them. This month, pay attention to what they say and count. Read them out loud.

Before young children learn to read or write, or even recognize letters, they learn the difference between pictures and print/text. You can help your young child start recognizing print by cutting out labels with print and pictures, then teaching your child to categorize them in two groups—print and pictures.

With your older children, read the labels together and discuss what sorts of things the labels tell you. Ask children to point out words that begin with a certain letter, or ask them to rhyme words in the text. What are numbers on the labels counting?

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Teaches about local food and its sources
- Demonstrates use of reading in daily life
- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words

All signs point to literacy



JORDAN/Photo by Simon Photography

All signs point to literacy

The next time you see a sign, describe it! Is it full of letters or shapes? What colors is it? Can you read what it says? Read it to someone you are with.

Can you find more signs or written notices together as you walk around the community with your child? Each day this month, explore your community and the print that you see in it every day.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Demonstrates use of reading in daily life
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity

Be a mentor

VIETNAM/Photo by Michael Bisceglie



Be a mentor

Read to a younger person. Read to an older person.

Share your reading skill with another so that you improve your reading, and help the listener by allowing them to hear a great reader. Take a book and share it through reading and discussing it. See if that expands your friendship. Try it and see!

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, and fluency
- It's fun!
- Models for younger children the fun and importance of reading
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school



Ideas for **All Children**

Children learn from each other all the time. Through play and games, through simple conversations and sharing stories, or through music and dance—the activities children do among themselves are a rich treasure trove for developing language and learning. Ideas for using these everyday activities children do to build their skills for reading and learning are provided in the following pages. Staff and community volunteers working with children can use these activities to promote literacy in fun and creative ways.

Tell stories to share knowledge and culture



BANGLADESH/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Tell stories to share knowledge and culture

Tell or read a story to another child or younger sibling this month. Then talk to them about the characters and events in it. Act it out if you'd like! Do it more than once if you can.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, and fluency
- It's fun!
- Builds older children's responsibility and confidence as fluent readers
- Models for younger children the fun and importance of reading
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school



Sing for literacy

SUDAN/Photo by Caroline Irby

Sing for literacy

Singing songs can help improve literacy skills. Songs have rhymes, meter, and great words that are important for children to learn. This month, sing songs in your community.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Shares cultural knowledge
- It's fun!
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words

What's in a name?



MOZAMBIQUE/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

What's in a name?

Get your friends to think about words that have the same ending-sound as your names. Take turns thinking of rhyming names—you can even make a game of it! You can also have a laugh by inventing funny-sounding names that rhyme with yours.

Benefits:

- It's fun!
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words



Concentrate on word groups

Concentrate on word groups

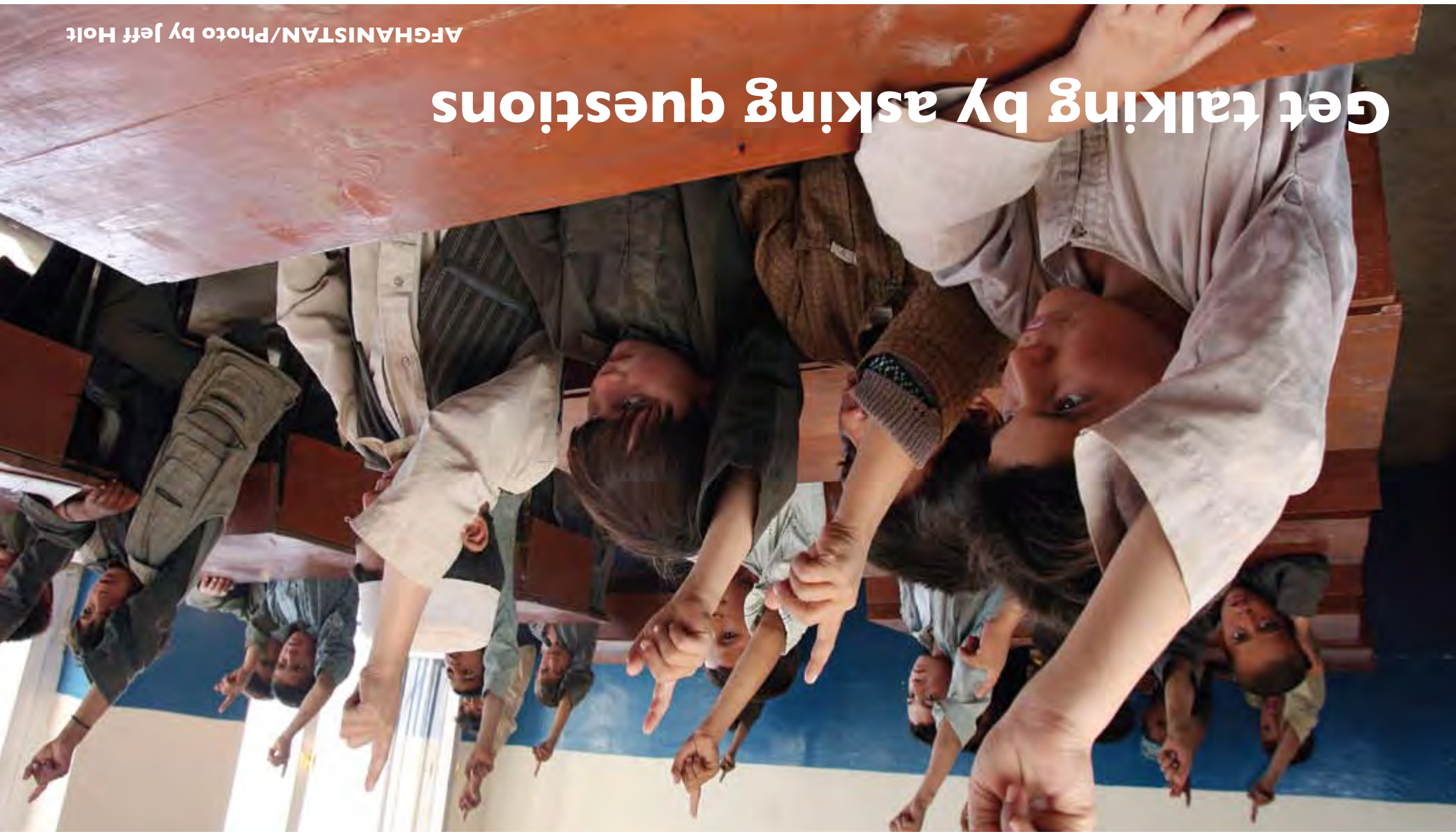
Playing word games with friends can help you practice quick thinking and build the store of words that you know and understand.

Try playing Concentration! Begin by slapping both hands on your legs, then clap, then snap each finger. To this rhythm, take turns naming words that fit in a category—for example, fruits or vegetables or animals. Have fun with words!

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- It's fun!

Get talking by asking questions



Get talking by asking questions

This month, start each day with a question. Ask your mom, dad, or teacher something you always wanted to know. Count how many times you can ask why, how, who, where, or what this month!

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Encourages curiosity and dialogue

Families of learners



GUATEMALA/Photo by Ntongi McFadyen



MALAWI/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Families of learners

Ask your family about your family tree. Find out who you are related to, who your parents' parents were, who your second cousins are. How many relatives live in your community? How many live elsewhere?

Benefits:

- Builds confidence; instills calm, attachment, and sense of security
- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Encourages curiosity and dialogue

Where are you going?



NICARAGUA/Photo by Brent Stirton

Where are you going?

Where have you been? How did you get there? This month, ask your friends and family about the places they have been and how they got there. How many trips have they taken this year? Which was of greatest distance?

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Encourages curiosity and dialogue



What is your name?

What is your name?

Ask your friends and neighbors what their names mean. Who gave them their names? What letter does it start with? What other letters make up the name? Who has the longest name? The shortest?

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity
- Encourages curiosity and dialogue



Ideas for Children Who Read

Children who read need lots of opportunities to practice that skill. What better way to get them to practice reading than with each other? Be it older children reading to younger children, or peers reading to and with peers, children who read can use these ideas to boost their skills in reading.

Be a hero to a younger child by being a reading buddy



HONDURAS/Photo by Michael Bisceglie

Be a hero to a younger child by being a reading buddy

Older readers can share their skills with a younger child by becoming a reading buddy. Set aside a time each week to read a book together.

Help a younger child learn to hold a book and turn the pages of a book. If he/she does not have the patience or attention to listen to a whole story, point to pictures in the book and tell them what the pictures are. For example, say, “This is a cow who is eating grass.” Help them interact with the book and learn to point at pictures and learn new words. For children learning to read, follow the words you read across the page with your finger or take turns reading and help the younger child if they need support.

Benefits:

- It's fun!
- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Builds older children's responsibility and confidence as fluent readers
- Models for younger children the fun and importance of reading
- Gets children in the habit of reading often outside of school

What other words are in your name?



What other words are in your name?

See what new words you can make out of the letters in your name! For example, the letters in the name Samantha can be mixed around to spell new words like man, ant, than, mat, sat and so on. Try it with your friends and see whose name has the most words hidden in it.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- It's fun!
- Builds letter knowledge and spelling skills



Literacy at home

VIETNAM/Photo by Chau Doan/Onasia

Literacy at home

Many packaged foods have labels on them. This month, pay attention to what they say. Read them out loud. Read them to a friend. Read them to other children. What sorts of things do labels tell you?

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Teaches about local food and its sources
- Demonstrates use of reading in daily life
- Helps children practice their reading skills
- Turns a familiar idea or activity into a learning opportunity

If you've got a book, share it



BANGLADESH/Photo by Michael Bisceglie



AFGHANISTAN/Photo by Jeff Holt

If you've got a book, share it

This month, borrow a book from a friend, the library, or a Book Bank and read it to a friend, neighbor, sibling, parent, or child. How many people can you read it to? How many characters are in the story? Which do you like best?

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- It's fun!
- Shares fun and benefits of promoting literacy with the greater community
- Helps children practice their reading skills

All signs point to literacy



JORDAN/Photo by Simon Photography

All signs point to literacy

The next time you see a sign, describe it! Is it full of letters, numbers, or shapes? What colors is it? Can you read what it says? Read it to someone you are with.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Teaches shapes, sizes, numbers, measurement
- Demonstrates use of reading in daily life
- Helps children practice their reading skills

Memorize a poem



TAJIKISTAN/Photo by Chris Martin



JORDAN/Photo by Carl Triplehorn

Memorize a poem

Ask your teacher to give you a poem to memorize. Spend the first week of the month learning it, and the next three weeks sharing it with your friends, family, and neighbors.

Benefits:

- Builds vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in expression
- Strengthens memory and categorization skills
- Shares fun and benefits of promoting literacy with the greater community

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Builds letter knowledge

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Encourages curiosity and dialogue

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Builds children's awareness of sounds and letters, and the ability to blend and combine them into words

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Creates more literacy materials

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Let's boost literacy together!

By taking the simple steps outlined in this book, we can all help children learn to read and read to learn.

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