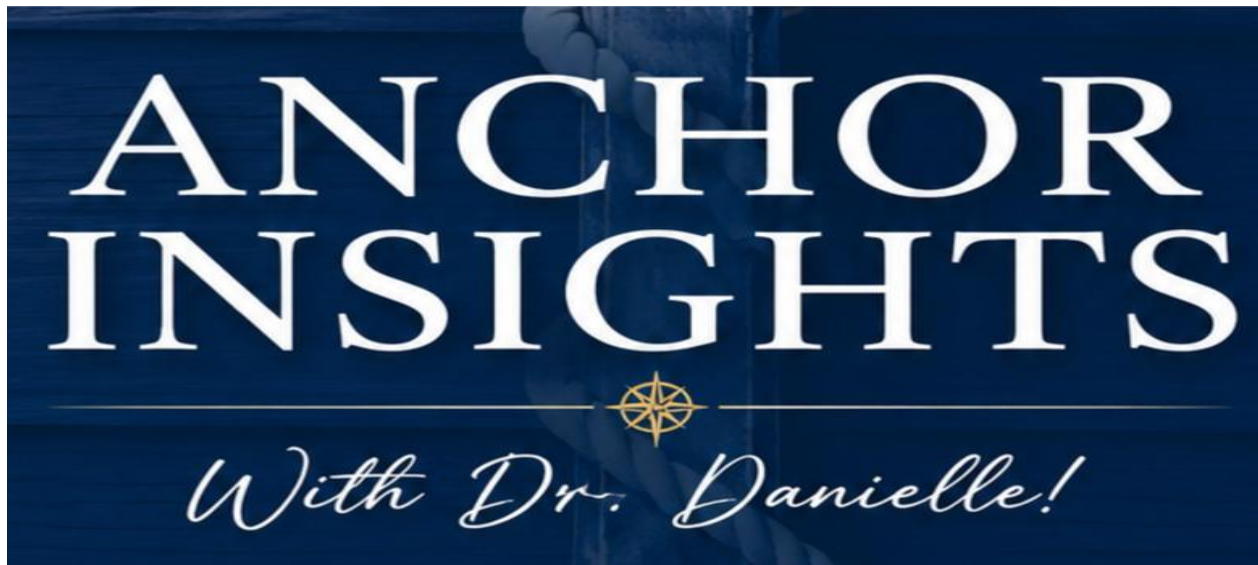




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Storytime Isn't Just Reading—It's Building a Brain

Discover how simple, intentional read-aloud moments can support your child's literacy, learning, and overall development from the very beginning.

Start Early—Earlier Than You Might Think

The foundation for literacy begins long before a child independently reads a book. Even before birth, babies begin becoming familiar with voices, sounds, and the rhythms of language. After birth, reading aloud provides another opportunity to surround children with language from the very beginning.

Parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers. Through everyday interactions—talking, singing, playing, and reading—they help establish important foundations for language, literacy, learning, and overall development.

You don't have to wait until your child understands every word.

Start early. Read often. Let your child grow up hearing the language of books.

Keep It Simple

Reading aloud doesn't require special training or an elaborate lesson. Sometimes, the simplest moments are the most meaningful.

Grab a book. Find a comfortable place. Sit together. And read.

Then use what you already know—your personality, your experiences, and even the people in your life—to make the story fun.

Maybe Grandma has a low, sweet voice. Perhaps Uncle speaks with a long Southern drawl. Maybe the tiny mouse needs the tiniest voice you can make.

Children don't need a professional performance. They need **you**.

Be Intentional—Bring the Story to Life

Reading aloud is more than simply saying the words printed on the page. The way you read can transform those words into an experience.

Become part of the story!

Change your voice for different characters. Use facial expressions and gestures. Pause when something exciting is about to happen. Whisper when the story becomes quiet. Show surprise when something unexpected happens.

And don't forget to involve your child.

Ask:

What do you think will happen next?

How do you think the character feels?

Have you ever experienced something like this?

Point to the pictures. Talk about unfamiliar words. Let children repeat funny phrases, make sounds, ask questions, and even act out parts of the story.

The goal isn't simply to finish the book.

The goal is to keep children **listening, thinking, talking, wondering, and wanting to know what happens next.**

Read-Aloud Support Literacy and Learning

While children are enjoying the story, something much bigger is happening.

They are learning.

Reading aloud exposes children to words and language they may not routinely encounter in everyday conversation. As adults' model fluent and expressive reading, children hear how

language works while simultaneously developing vocabulary, comprehension, listening skills, and background knowledge.

Research has also demonstrated the importance of these experiences. Dominic W. Massaro's work, for example, found that picture books can expose children to vocabulary that is richer and more extensive than typical child-directed conversation.

Interactive read-aloud take that learning even further.

When adults stop to discuss unfamiliar words, ask questions, make predictions, revisit important parts of the story, and talk about characters and events, children have opportunities to actively construct meaning from what they hear.

That is why something as simple as sharing a book can become such a powerful literacy experience.

See the Magic of a Read-Aloud

Sometimes the best way to understand an engaging read-aloud is to experience one.

Emmy Award winner Dannette Justus of Just Us and Books demonstrates how expression, character voices, pacing, enthusiasm, and personality can bring a story to life.

As you listen, pay attention to more than the words.

Listen to the voices.

Notice the expression.

Watch how the story comes alive.

Then borrow an idea or two and create your own read-aloud magic!

Now, Let's Put It into Practice!

Ready to turn a read-aloud into an interactive literacy experience?

Start with the beloved story ***Where the Wild Things Are***.

Have **Emmy Award winner Dannette Justus of Just Us and Books** read aloud *Where the Wild Things Are*. Children can enjoy the story and hear expressive, engaging reading modeled for them.

But don't let the learning stop when the story ends.

Continue the experience with the **Wild Creatures Literacy Read-Aloud Kit: ELA Read-Aloud, Craft & Literacy Activities for 1st–2nd Grade**.

The kit extends the read-aloud experience with hands-on, print-and-go literacy activities designed to help children strengthen important **vocabulary and comprehension skills**.

Listen to the story.

Talk about the words.

Think about what happened.

Create.

Practice.

Learn.

That's the power of connecting a great read-aloud with intentional literacy activities.

Your Read-Aloud Experience

Step 1: Listen to Emmy Award winner Dannette Justus of Just Us and Books read *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Step 2: Talk about the story, characters, interesting words, and what happened.

Step 3: Continue the learning with hands-on activities from the **Wild Creatures Literacy Read-Aloud Kit**.

Step 4: Strengthen vocabulary and comprehension while children create, respond, and have fun with the story.

Because story time doesn't have to end when you close the book.

And One More Thing...

World Read Aloud Day is celebrated each year on the **first Wednesday in February**, bringing attention to the importance and joy of sharing stories aloud.

But you don't need a special day to begin.

Pick up a book today.

Find a comfortable spot.

Use the voices.

Make faces.

Ask the questions.

Laugh together.

And READ ALOUD!

Because Storytime isn't *just* reading.

It's language. It's literacy. It's learning. It's connection. And yes—it's helping build a brain.