

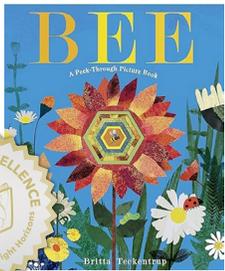
Growing Readers Review



Books of Excellence titles are selected annually by a panel of Bright Horizons early childhood experts and represent some of the best new writing in children's literature.

Books of Excellence

Bee:
A Peek-Through
Board Book



Infant/Toddler

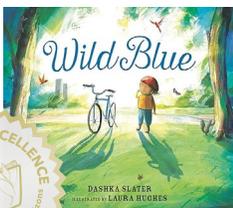
Written by Britta
Techentrup

Through a honeycomb lens, the reader follows a busy bee across vibrant illustrations of nature from pastures to ponds and streams. With sensory-rich text and pages, babies and toddlers will love poking their fingers through each honeycomb.

Activities

- ▶ **Guess what's next.** After a reading or two, older toddlers can remember what happens next before they turn the page. You can ask your child to make a prediction: "Where do you think the bee will fly to next? Do you think it will be in the pond or the honeycomb?"
- ▶ **Explore nature.** Look at the different flowers and (nature scenes) mentioned throughout the book. See if you observe any in your neighborhood, whether it's a cool stream or birds chirping in the treetops. Connect these real world nature scenes back to the book.
- ▶ **Study insects.** Busy bees in this book journey from flower to flower collecting pollen to make honey. What other insects do you see working in nature?

Wild Blue



Preschool

Written by Dashka
Slater; Illustrated by
Laura Hughes

Wild Blue is a gentle story celebrating the milestones of growing up and the challenges children face when trying something new. The illustrator seamlessly brings to life Kayla's reality and imagination, combining details of a modern neighborhood with the Old West.

Activities

- ▶ **Consider the beginning, middle, and end.** Talk with your older child about the sequence of the story. What happened first? What happens next? How does the story end? These conversations build children's literary understanding.
- ▶ **Make text-to-self connections.** Reading becomes more meaningful when children can relate what they read to their own lives. Discuss a time when your child was faced with a challenge or learned something new.
- ▶ **Point out the details.** Read slowly enough to notice the characters' facial expressions, the setting, and the small, hidden details. As Kayla rides her bike for the first time, notice how the city morphs into the Old West. What other details do you notice?

We believe that books have the power to build empathy in children, introducing them to new perspectives and ideas. Through stories, children come to understand others' hopes, dreams, joys, and sorrows. We're committed to offering diverse stories and voices to our readers.

Reading News

Reading Aloud Has Numerous Benefits for Young Children

For newborns and infants, reading aloud stimulates their vocabulary and allows them to pick up on reading sounds and tones. Did you know that our tone is more important than the phonetics when reading to babies? In a recent study by the University of Cambridge, researchers found that children begin phonetically encoding language sounds in rhythm patterns. Children's ability to acquire language is enhanced with sing songy speech, also referred to as parentese or infant-directed speech.

Young children are able to pick up the rhythmic cues of a language. For example, English is typically strong-weak, meaning speakers emphasize the first syllable of a word. This also helps children learn how to pronounce new words. Start slow – elongate the first syllable or letter of a word, for example when saying 'apple,' focus and lengthen the first sound "ahhh – pple." Using this strategy while reading aloud helps young children learn that letters make different sounds.

When pointing to words while reading and emphasizing, the sounds of each letter promotes children's understanding of the relationship between each letter and its corresponding sound. "Wild Blue. B sounds like /buh/ like bike or bee. Can you think of something else that makes a "buh" sound?"

If you found the information above interesting, join us for even more on topics like language, play, early math, etc. during **Spark Summit!** A free, virtual, on-demand education conference for families and educators from **May 1-31, 2024.** Register at this QR code!



Growing Readers Book Club

Become Teacher Nate's co-researchers as you and your child are introduced to high-quality children's books along with ideas to explore, create, and investigate further!

This month's Growing Readers Book Club Video features the book *Wild Blue* by Dashka Slater. Join Teacher Nate to reflect on your moment of bravery and share your experience in trying something new!

[Watch the video here!](#)

Storytelling/Reading Tips

Connect the Illustrations to the Story

As you read with your baby or toddler, make connections between the story words and the illustrations. Pointing and gesturing to words gives children the opportunity to learn new words and assign it to an object, person, or place. Did you know children are more likely to remember a new word if you put the word at the end of the sentence, or if the new word follows their name?" "Here is the bee. Look, Maggie, bee is flying."

As you read the book *Bee*, point out the roses, ponds, and colors. Try placing the word at the end of a sentence or question and see how your child responds.

For older children, connect the illustrations to print. Make connections to similar words and letters, see if there is an illustration that indicates what that word means. Look at the storefronts, ask your child to make inferences about the store names based on what they see in each window. Practice elongating each sound, "/F/, fffff ish. Way to go, that's the fish store."

Visit the Growing Readers website to see a list of other great books we recommend checking out!

