

The  
Early Years Count  
**Literacy**  
Connection



## Hugo and the Impossible Thing

Written by Renee Felice Smith and Chris Gabriel

Illustrated by Sydney Hanson

*Preschool edition*

### Overview of Book

Hugo the dog simply must find out what is beyond the Impossible Thing. His friends say getting past it is impossible and no one has ever tried. Hugo is determined to try. Will his friends help?

Genre: Picture book

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Hugo and the Impossible Thing* to introduce in your classroom:

impossible    through    towering  
cliffs            mazes        boulders

Each time you read the book, choose 2 or 3 words to highlight.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

Use these new words throughout the day, reminding the children, "That's a word from our story!"

### Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

COR Advantage 1.5

Approaches To Learning  
Item A (*Initiative and planning*)

Item B (*Problem solving with materials*)

Social And Emotional Development  
Item F (*Building relationships with other children*)

Language, literacy and Communication  
Item M (*Listening and comprehension*)

### Reading Tips

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

Ask the children, "What do think the word "impossible" means?" After reading a few pages, make comments like, "I wonder how the animals know something is impossible if they have never tried?" and, "How could they help?" Predict if the animals will help Hugo, and how. After, ask, "Is there anything in our classroom that is impossible?"

At the end of each reading, display the book in the book area so children can read it on their own.

### Throughout the Routine

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

At **Large Group Time** have the children solve an “impossible” problem together. Ideas could include having everyone stand on a large blanket and then having to turn it over without anyone getting off the blanket.

Give children real nuts and bolts, brackets and other materials to create an “impossible” item at **Small Group Time**. Then, the children must describe their creation and explain what it does.

### Around the Room

Highlight the book’s content and build on the children’s excitement in a variety of locations.

Place more challenging puzzles to the **Toy Area**.

Place new and novel materials in the **Art Area**. Encourage children to make “impossible” creations there.

Add books to the **Book Area** that show people doing or making “impossible” things. Titles could include “Violet the Pilot” by Steve Breen, and “Milo’s Hat trick” by Jon Agee.

### Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one “right” answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Hugo and the Impossible Thing*:

What have you done that at first seemed impossible?

Have you ever needed friends or family to help you do something that felt impossible? What was that?

How would you have helped Hugo?

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact*  
**The Family Connection:**

website—  
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### @ Home

Since many of the children in our county will have this book at home, use it as a way to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *Hugo and the Impossible Thing* with their child. Here’s a sample message you can send:

While reading *Hugo and the Impossible Thing*, ask your child to make predictions about how Hugo’s friends might help and if Hugo can succeed. During the reading, ask your child what they think *impossible* means. Talk about what you as a family do together to help if someone feels as if a task or project is impossible. Talk together about challenges people may have and how it feels to be able to count on friends and family to help out. Offer age appropriate examples and ask, “Have you ever felt something was impossible? Tell me about that, and what you did about it.” Listening to and simply validating your child’s perspective is truly authentic encouragement.