

# The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



## Brother Eagle, Sister Sky

Message from Chief Seattle  
and illustrated by Susan  
Jeffers

Preschool edition  
September 2018

### Overview of Book

The text of the book is based on a letter or speech by Chief Seattle from the 1850's (whether it was a letter or a speech is now lost to history as no original copy exists). In the message, he tells of the relationship between the Earth and all it's creatures, including us. His message is one of urgency, as he wants all people to respect the amazing life and beauty in our world for now and the future.

Genre: Non-fiction

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some from *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* to introduce in your classroom:

memory	crests
ancestors	quench
sacred	precious
unite	blotted

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

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D (*Emotions*)

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

Science & Technology  
Item DD  
(*Natural and physical world*)

Social Studies  
Item HH (*History*)

### Reading Tips

The painting/illustrations in the book are exquisite—give the children time to look carefully at them. Ask, "What do you see in this picture?" On the page where all the trees are cut down, ask, "What happened? Where did all the trees go?"

Before you read each page, give the children an opportunity to share their ideas about the story based on the pictures.

The text and meaning of the book is serious. Use a tone that implies this to the group. As you come to a vocabulary word you have chosen to focus on, ask the children what they think it means (like *ancestors*, for example).

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.

During **Greeting** or **Small Group Time** play "Telephone." Tell the children how messages can get lost through translation or time. Talk about how Chief Seattle's message has been lost, found and lost many times.

Have children collect tree seeds during **Outside Time** (i.e., oak tree acorns, maple tree "helicopters") and plant them at **Small Group Time**. When they're ready, transplant them to a safe spot outside where they can grow strong and beautiful.

### **Around the Room**

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

Place scenic pictures of different landscapes throughout the classroom.

Add a map of The United States to the classroom if you have not already. With the help of the computer or information books, locate the places in the posted landscapes and mark them on the map. Consider national parks like The Grand Canyon, Yosemite and the Adirondacks.

Share a map of Indiana and have the children locate parks or other unspoiled areas in our state.

### **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 *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*:

How can we help keep our Earth beautiful for all the creatures and us?

How would Chief Seattle feel if he came back today?

What is your favorite thing to do outside?

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

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[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

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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 *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send:

Though the words in *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* were spoken by the American Indian Chief Seattle over a hundred years ago, they remain very relevant today. This book might be a good springboard to visit local parks like Potawatomi, St. Patrick's, Leeper, Howard, or the East Bank Trail with your child. Look for wildlife and plants that help make the park beautiful. Talk about how nice it is to have these parks to enjoy. Wonder out loud things like, "Where would the robins or the ducks live if there wasn't this lovely park?" or, "I wonder how many different trees are in this park?"