

The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



A Story For Small Bear

Written by Alice B. McGinty
Illustrated by Richard Jones

Preschool edition

Overview of Book

Small Bear has so many things to do before Mama calls him for the long winter slumber. She says "No dilly-dallying" or there won't be time for a story. Small Bear LOVES her stories. How can he have time for a story when there are so many other things to do?

Genre: Picture book/fiction

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *A Story For Small Bear* to introduce in your classroom:

slumber	lumber
sprigs	scurry/scamper
dilly dally	curve

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 C (*Reflection*)

Social and Emotional
Development
Item D (*Emotions*)

Physical Development
and Health
Item I (*Gross motor skills*),
Item K (*Personal care and
healthy behavior*)

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

Reading Tips

Read this with two voices: one for Mama and one for Small Bear. Relate Small Bear's reluctance to follow through with Mama's request to the classroom Clean Up routine. "Small Bear is making one last visit to his favorite hole...Small bear is climbing the tree one last time before the winter slumber. It is like when we clean up. We often do 'one last thing' before we put materials away." After reading Mama's story, say, "This reminds me of Recall Time!" Ask, "What was your favorite last thing Small Bear did before Mama's story?"

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."

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.

For the **Transition** warning that Work Time is ending in 5 minutes say, "Small Bears—we have 5 more minutes. It's time to do your favorite thing one last time!"

If you have **Rest/Nap Time**, refer to it as "Slumber Time."

Imitate the bears' movements from the story at **Large Group Time**. Practice *lumbering*, *climbing*, *scampering* and *scurrying*. End by being floating snowflakes.

Around the Room

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

Add *sprigs* of spruce, pines or other familiar trees or shrubs as well as acorns/pine cones to the **Art Area**.

Add other relevant books to the **Book Area** for comparison. For example, *Shhh! Bears Sleeping* by David Martin and *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen.

Add a scale or balance to the **Toy Area** along with counting bears. Compare the different sizes and weights of the baby and mama bears.

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 *A Story For Small Bear*:

If you were a friend of Small Bear, what would you like to do together?

When it is time for bed, what do you need to do one last time?

How do you like your stories—from books or by telling? Why?

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

website—
www.famconn.org

Facebook—
@famconnsjc

phone—
574-237-9740

@ 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 *A Story For Small Bear* with their child. Here's a sample message you can send:

For children, ending play (inside or outside) can be very difficult. *A Story for Small Bear* provides a similar dilemma: Mama Bear understands Small Bear has a hard time preparing for the winter slumber. As you read this book with your child, talk about the activities that are hard for you to stop doing. Invite your child to do the same. Sharing what we love doing and don't want to end helps us understand one another. For example, "It is hard to stop listening to my favorite show to make supper, but I know I must." Use this as a storytelling opportunity to help explain how we all must stop doing things we like in order to do other—maybe even more important—things.