

The  
Early Years Count  
**Literacy**  
Connection



**Carpenter's  
Helper**

Written by Sybil Rosen  
Illustrated by Camille  
Garoche

*Preschool edition*

**Overview of Book**

Renata is her Papi's helper and together they are building a new bathroom with an old-fashioned tub and everything! When a family of wrens decides to build a nest and lay 4 eggs in a hole in the wall, well that changes everything. What will Renata and her Papi do now?

Genre: Picture book/fiction

**Vocabulary**

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Carpenter's Helper* to introduce in your classroom:

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| sawdust   | treasures |
| carpenter | skitter   |
| flit      | duet      |

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 D  
(*Emotions*)

Science and Technology  
Item BB (*Observing and  
classifying*), Item DD (*Natural  
and physical world*), Item EE  
(*Tools and technology*)

**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 group if anyone has ever helped out at home. Let them know that the girl in the story is going to help her dad make a bathroom. While reading, ask questions like "The birds are making the work stop. What do you think Renata and her Papi will do?" Take all predictions before moving on. The length of this story makes it perfect for reading in 2 same-day installments (Greeting and snack for example). Gather predictions after the first and remind the group of them before continuing. At the end ask, "What do you think of that?"

### 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.

Collect odds and ends similar to the “treasures” Renata collects in the story for children to examine and sort during **Small Group Time**.

Have Indiana bird guides and binoculars on hand to take along at **Outside Time**. Use any time of year from the classroom windows to observe different birds and bird behavior in all seasons.

*Flit, dart, hop, streak or glide* for **transitions**.

### Around the Room

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

Add planks, long unit blocks and tools to the **Block Area** to encourage exploring ramps with other materials.

Post photos of various eggs, baby birds in nests and the adult birds in the **House Area** for children to compare for similarities and differences.

Have string, straw, pipe cleaners, twisty-ties and other materials in the **Art Area** for children to attempt making a wren nest.

### 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 *Carpenter’s Helper*:

*What have you built or taken apart? How did you do it?*

*What do you think it would be like to be a bird?*

*Have you ever started something you really wanted to do and had to stop for some reason? What did you do? How did it make you feel?*

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

website—  
[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 *Carpenter’s Helper* with their child. Here’s a sample message you can send:

The child in the story is so excited to be included in helping her dad make a new bathroom. Small, seemingly insignificant tasks (to adults) mean everything to a child. While reading this book with your child, ask questions about the jobs Renata helps with and what she thinks is so interesting (the smells, seeing the inside of the wall and all the wires...) and ask your child about that. “What are you curious about?” Go to your bathroom, turn on the tap and ask, “What happens to the water?” Talking about plumbing or electrical outlets might feel silly but children are so curious about how things work. Take any opportunity to observe birds and what they might be doing and why.