

The  
Early Years Count  
**Literacy**  
Connection



**The Spiffiest Giant  
in Town**

Written by Julia Donaldson  
Illustrated by Axel Scheffler

*Preschool edition*

**Overview of Book**

George the giant has an opportunity to get a new spiffy wardrobe. On his way home, however, he is compelled to help out several friends in need, thanks to all his new clothes. By the time he gets back home, all his friends are gathered to greet him and he is able to realize what truly is most important to him.

Genre: Fiction/picture book

**Vocabulary**

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* to introduce in your classroom:

spiffiest	scruffiest
strode	magnificent
scrambled	bog

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 B (*Problem solving  
with materials*)  
Item C (*Reflection*)

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D  
(*Emotions*)

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

**Reading Tips**

Linger on the first page, asking, "What is *scruffy* about George's clothes?" After he gets his new clothes, each piece is described as *spiffy*. Ask, "What do you think *spiffy* means?" As George shares his new items with others, ask the children how they feel about this. "Is there another way George could help and still keep his new clothes?" At the end ask, "What do you think is most important to George?"

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."

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.

Take giant steps and practice hopping on one foot during **transitions**.

Give each child an adult shoe to practice lacing and unlacing for **Small Group Time**.

For **Large Group Time**, read the story as everyone acts out being cold, being in a boat in a storm, navigating a squishy bog, rolling in a sleeping bag and running around to escape a fire.

### **Around the Room**

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

Supply the **House Area** with oversized clothes for "Giant Dress-up." Provide both "scruffy" and "spiffy" choices.

Add other titles to the **Book Area** with giants as characters. Examples include *Wilfred* by Ryan Higgins and *Giant Dance Party* by Betsy Bird.

Add items to the **Art Area** that encourage boat and house building as well as other related story elements.

### **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 *The Spiffiest Giant in Town*:

In the beginning, why do you think George was sad about being the scruffiest giant?

What feelings did you have while you listened to the story?

Which part of the story was your favorite? Why is that?

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 *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* with their child. Here's a sample message you can send:

While you and your child read about George in *The Spiffiest Giant in Town*, stop ask questions like, "Look at his face here. How is George feeling?" Have conversations about empathy with your child as the story moves along. George's feelings towards each encounter compel him to help as best he can. Talk about how you and your family help one another. Ask open-ended questions like, "I wonder where George lives? What do you think? What could it look like?" Have fun with the words "scruffy" and "spiffy." Use them in place of "dirty" and "clean" whenever you have the chance.