

The
Early Years Count
Literacy
Connection



**The Little Engine
That Could**

Written by Watty Piper
Illustrated by Ruth Sanderson

Infant/Toddler edition

Overview of Book

The little children on the other side of the mountain will not get treats unless a train can rescue the stranded toys and goodies. Big trains come, but none will help. What will they do? All is not lost. A small, happy train offers to help. She tries and tries. Positive thinking and determination win and the little girls and boys get their treats.

Genre: Fiction

Vocabulary

Books offer a perfect opportunity to introduce new words. Here are some possibilities from *The Little Engine That Could*:

- train clown blue
- animal names:
(monkey, giraffe, elephant)
- train sounds:
(chug-chug; ding-dong)
- foods to eat:
(apples, oranges, milk, candy)

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
HighScope
Curriculum**

COR Advantage 1.5
Social and Emotional
Development
Item D
(*Emotions*)

Language, Literacy
and Communication
Item Q
(*Book enjoyment
and knowledge*)

Language, Literacy,
and Communication
Item L
(*Speaking*)

Reading Tips

This book has too many words to be read through with infants and toddlers, but the colorful illustrations will catch their attention. Use your voice to engage the child, using various sounds of the trains and the characters. Repeat the phrases important to the point of the story: "I think I can..."

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

Referring to the book throughout the daily routine brings many opportunities to use the new vocabulary words. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Make train sounds as you move throughout the day.

Talk about the "little engine that could" as you observe the infants and toddlers work to solve problems.

Talk about all of the animals on the train and make the sounds.

Around the Room

This is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement for the book in a variety of locations.

Talk with the infants and toddlers about the plush animals or dolls you have in the room and how they are like/different from the animals and dolls in the story.

Set up pillows or cushions like "tracks" and have fun with the children as they explore the "mountains." Can they move like the different trains? Can they make it up the mountain?

Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These "wondering aloud" questions support children's developing focus and attention as they encourage young children's capacity to make connections and see possibilities.

Here are some questions you might ask for *The Little Engine That Could*:

- What do you see?
- Is that your train sound?
- Where is the train going?
- Who will help the dolls and toys?

*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 this book with their child.

Highlight the new words that the children are hearing from the story. Let parents know how much children, from birth, love to hear the sound of voices and to feel the rhythm of a story. *The Little Engine That Could* is a tried and true story about what happens when persistence and determination and helpfulness win the day. Suggest that families notice and celebrate the persistence their infants and toddlers exhibit.