**Shared book reading**

Shared reading involves adults reading aloud to students. Shared reading provides an opportunity to build communication and comprehension skills, which can lead to improved reading outcomes for students. The key element of shared reading is focusing on interactions with students, for example, adults might:

* **ask questions and explain what things mean** (e.g., vocabulary, actions of characters)
* **relate** what is happening in the book **to real life experiences**
* **expand** **on what children say** (e.g., reword what the child said to make the sentence a complete sentence, or a more complex sentence; or model more sophisticated vocabulary)
* **evaluate** (e.g., give specific feedback to students on what they say)
* **provide praise** (e.g., clearly explain what was positive about the student’s action/comment).

**Shared reading and students with autism**

Research studies investigating shared reading practices with students with autism are currently limited, however preliminary results indicate:



**age group**

Shared reading has positive effects for students with autism aged between 2 and 14 years of age.

Shared reading has positive effects when implemented by adults including parents and teachers. Findings indicate it can be a powerful intervention when delivered by a trusted adult.



**reading partner**

A small number of shared reading sessions (approximately five sessions) can make a positive difference!



**sessions**

The following additional prompts may help to engage students with autism in shared reading:

**Support joint attention**

**Support interactions**

**Support inference making**

Create opportunities for interaction and initiation by pausing before/after turning a page, and looking encouragingly at the student for several seconds. Encourage students to ask questions about the book (e.g. question mark visual).

Help students understand messages not explicitly stated in books by asking questions like “*What will happen next?”* and talking about emotions *“How do you think they feel?*

Establish and gain a student’s attention by labelling objects, using words (e.g., “Look!”) and/or visual prompts (e.g., pointing).

**References**

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