

Introduction



Reading without realising

Reading without realising is one of a series of books containing 'outside the box' ideas for practitioners working with children in the early years. Children's interests and joy for life form the basis for the activities in this series. The activities build on children's natural instinct to be doing, investigating, making, creating and solving problems. They are designed to excite and stimulate children as they learn through using their senses, being active and thinking for themselves.

But why reading without realising?

The cross-curricular activities in this book are designed to inspire and excite children so that they cannot wait to participate, unaware that they will be learning to read along the way. The activities take the pressure off learning to read by making reading a natural progression in learning which is integral to speaking, listening and writing, rather than a separate hurdle to overcome. Learning to read is a complex

process that some children sail through, others find a struggle and some find difficult and dispiriting, leaving them with a feeling of failure at a very early age. To make reading a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all children, carefully planned reading opportunities are embedded into each cross-curricular play activity. This ensures that, without the children realising it, reading is a part of the activity and will entice them into the world of print and books. Children will be learning to read through 'doing', in fun activities set indoors and out. Throughout the book, care is taken to devise lively activities that will appeal to boys and reluctant readers.

Wanting to read

If we can inspire children to want to read, they are well on the way to success. The activities and reading environments in this book are designed to capture the imagination of children, to draw them in and fascinate them so that reading becomes irresistible.

How to use this book

The book is organised into three sections:

- Chapter 1: 'Discovering reading' includes a wide variety of exciting activities that introduce children to the world of print. They learn to recognise letters, link sounds to letters, read words and simple sentences. The activities range from taking on the role of a postal worker in a sorting office to reading words written on shells at the bottom of the sea or taking part in a game show. Children find that print carries meaning and want to find out more.
- Chapter 2: 'Reading environments' provides inspiration and practical advice for making reading areas that children cannot wait to explore. Children participate in making areas where they take part in role play, discovering the world of print, books and rhyme. These areas captivate children and provide new experiences, such as working in a jungle cafe where the customers are animals, repairing toys in a workshop or 'going inside a book' in Giant's world and Bears in the forest. The children step inside a television where they explore different 'zones' and read non-fiction materials. The children's involvement in creating these areas and making them their own, is in itself a valuable learning opportunity. The environments provide a wonderful stimulation for reading and cross-curricular learning over the period of a term. To keep them alive and exciting, change the focus from time to time, introducing a new idea, an unexpected visitor or event.
- Chapter 3: 'Reading around' introduces offbeat starting points for reading to challenge and intrigue children. They 'read the rhythm' as they move to music, learn to read expressions and the messages that their bodies are sending them.

The activities

Planning and learning objectives. Links to the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals for Communication, language and

literacy (CLL) in the QCA document

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage are shown for each activity to aid planning. The activities are all cross-curricular and the main link to one of the other five Areas of Learning is also shown.

Support and extension

Each activity has suggestions for practitioners to adapt or extend the activities according to children's needs and stage of development.

Assessment

Practitioners can assess children against the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals shown for each activity. Most of the activities are designed for small groups, enabling practitioners to observe individual children's progress and aid assessment to inform future planning.

Further activities

These provide more suggestions for developing lively activities linked to the main activity.

Play links

Ideas for play linked to the main activity are given to continue the theme into other Areas of Learning, such as opportunities for investigations or role play.

Home links

In order to promote and foster a partnership with parents or carers, a suggestion is given in each activity to link the learning in the setting to that in the home.

Health and safety

When working outside, always check that the area is clean and safe.

Abbreviations

References to Areas of Learning in the QCA document *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*:

- Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)
- Communication, language and literacy (CLL)
- Mathematical development (MD)
- Knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW)
- Physical development (PD)
- Creative development (CD)