

## Media Matters

*From the AASD Media Specialists*

### *Using Wordless Picture Books to Develop Visual Literacy*

Adapted from the article by Daina Galante, eHow Contributor

Reading is more than just sounding out words or translating letters into words. Reading involves analyzing pictures and creating stories. Observing and making connections to everyday life are also components of learning to read. Visual literacy is a beneficial way for children to begin reading and a great parent/child activity. Wordless picture books allow students to "read" the pictures, associate them with objects that they know, and prepare their own stories. Wordless picture books take the children's existing knowledge and help them become authors through the use of their imaginations. Imagination sparks creativity and leads to greater problem solving skills. Reading wordless picture books with your child is easy. Follow these steps:

- *Open the picture book up to page one and ask the child to pick out any pictures they recognize and can name.*
- *Repeat the pictures' names that the child knows. For example, if the child sees and knows a pig, then ask them to repeat the word "pig." Then ask them questions regarding the pig, such as "What sound does the pig make?" "What color is the pig?" "Where have you seen a pig before?" Once they answer the questions correctly, ask the child to name the first letter the word "pig." Allow them to think about the alphabet or look at a copy of it.*
- *Break the page down by its pictures and have the child stretch (sound) out the words. Tell the child to tell a story about the picture she sees, and then have her help you write it down, creating the book's words.*
- *Follow these steps for every page of the wordless picture book.*
- *Give the child a blank sheet of paper after "reading" the book and ask him if he remembers any of the story that he created. If he does, ask him to draw the picture with the pencil and to retell the story, sounding out words and spellings. The key to teaching a child how to read is doing so in a repetitive nature, so that it becomes a part of the child's long-term memory.*
- *Be patient. Children may not want to write, but may want to retell the story to you or another family member.*

Iowa State University Extension says that there are five stages to teaching children to read:

- Exploration
- Repetition
- Using words and pictures as symbols
- Identifying words
- Focusing on meaning

When teaching with wordless picture books, make sure to keep these ideas in mind. Children should identify pictures, connecting them to the actual verbal word and use the word correctly through the questioning and story creating. Use picture books first with only one or two pictures per page. Gradually use picture books with more pictures so the children need to associate more images together.

Your school media specialist can help you find wordless books in the school library!

*Prepared by Judy Owen, Johnston Librarian*