

HELPING CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO “READ” IMAGES

Young children engage with countless images every day. They can be a terrific resource for sharing thoughtful conversations.

CREATE OR PREDICT THE TITLE



When reading a new story to a child, hide the title and invite them to suggest their own title based on clues from the image on the cover of the book. As you read the book, pause and check to see if they would like to change their title or if they feel it still works. Alternatively, suggest 3-4 possible titles and ask the child which is the best considering clues on the cover. Allow them to change their answer as you read the book together.

STEP INTO A PICTURE

Choose a picture from a book, a magazine, or even a painting you might have hanging on a wall in your home. Invite your child to imagine if the picture came to life. Ask them to tell you a story about what might happen next. When creating their story, encourage them to think about the next actions that might happen and what people in the image might say to each other. Be sure to remind children to use clues in the picture when bringing it to life.



BRING AN IMAGE TO LIFE



Choose an image from a favourite book, a website, or even a family photograph. Invite your child to bring the image to life using sounds but no words. Encourage them to use clues to determine what sounds would fit with the image. They should consider sounds people may have made (e.g. laughter, screams) or environmental sounds (e.g. birds chirping) or industrial sounds (e.g. horns, cars driving, lawn mower). Have fun making the sounds of the image with your child.

DETERMINE THE SEASON AND IMAGINE ANOTHER

Choose an image from a calendar, a favourite book, or any other source (the image on the right is from the front of a child's lunch box). Ask children if they can use clues in the picture to tell you what season is shown and what the weather is like in the picture. Remind students to look for clues in the foreground and the background. Also discuss if the clues they use are examples of living or non-living things in our world. Encourage children to draw or describe the same setting if it were a different season.



DESIGN A PERSONAL PLACEMAT



Have children use images to create their own placemat to use on the table. Encourage your child to use pictures, shapes, and/or symbols that tell important things about them (their likes, dislikes, fears, things that make them unique, your family). Ask children to use the images to create a pattern as the border for their placemat. In the centre, they can create an image (by drawing, creating a collage, etc.) that shows a favourite activity.