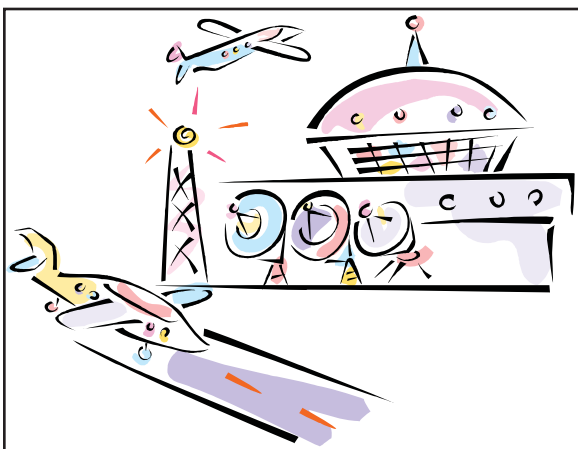




Airport

Going to the airport can be an exciting adventure for young children. Here are some ideas to turn it into a learning adventure!

- On the way to the airport, look for license plates and billboards that contain the first letter of your child's name.
- Read out loud the names of nearby hotels.
- As you take a parking voucher, tell your child what it is and show it to them.
- Have your child be the one who remembers on what level the car is parked.
- As you walk to the front of the parking lot, count the parking spaces between your car and the first car in the row.
- Before entering the airport, stop for a moment and listen to all the sounds. Talk about what you both hear.
- Show your child the arrival and departure screens and watch them change. Explain what is happening.
- Let your child be the one to find the gate number if you are going to the gate.
- Point out the different logos of the different airlines as you watch planes.
- When you return to your car, count the cars in the parking lot again.
- When you pay your voucher, let your child watch and tell them what you are doing.



Books about going to the airport

- Airport by Byron Barton
- This Plane by Paul Collicut
- Five Trucks by Brian Floca
- Up and Away: Taking a Flight by Marilyn Davis
- Signs at the Airport by Mary Hill
- Richard Scarry's A Day at the Airport by Richard Scarry

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Banks and Money

A necessary trip to the bank can be turned into an exciting learning adventure!

- If your child is old enough, put out various coins on a table and talk about them. Coin values will be a bit above preschool thought, but playing with coins can be a lot of fun and a nice introduction to money.
- Place a sheet of paper over the coins and rub crayons over the top to create coin rubbings.
- Design your own dollar bills. Perhaps use this currency to pay for cleaning up rooms or other easy chores.
- Set aside a jar or box to save found pennies.
- Make pretend money available for free play times.
- Practice counting in the car on the way to the bank.
- While standing in line, talk to your child about what bank tellers do.
- Count the number of people in line.
- Count the number of workers in the bank.
- Encourage your child to ask the teller questions.
- Make a list of items that can be purchased with money.



Books about Banks and Money

- Counting Money by Julie Dalton
- Deena's Lucky Penny by Barbara De Rubertis
- Dimes by Mary Hill
- 26 Letters and 99 Cents by Tana Hoban
- Just a Piggy Bank by Mercer Mayer
- The Penny Pot by Stuart J. Murphy
- Counting Money by Tanya Thayer
- Bunny Money by Rosemary Wells

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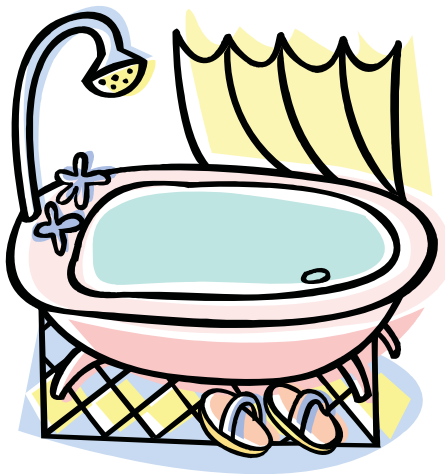
Bathtime

Even taking a bath can be a literacy adventure!

- Put different size plastic or metal measuring cups in the tub for your child to use for pouring and measuring.
- Take inexpensive sponges and cut them into shapes (for toddlers) or letters (for preschoolers).
- Give your child enough time in the tub for play. When children play, they practice vocabulary, storytelling and role playing.
- Sing songs together. The bathroom is the perfect place for singing!
- Make different textured items available for your child to play with in the tub. What happens to scraps of different fabric when they get wet? What happens to a kitchen spoon, pipe cleaners, ice, blocks? Talk about each one together.
- Take turns finding rhyming words for objects in the room – soap, sponge, sink, door, rug, tub. Include nonsense words as well. The important part of this activity is the rhyme.
- Once out of the tub, spend some time looking in the mirror together. What do you see? Name the parts of your faces. Make faces. Laugh together.

Books about bathtime

- Elwood's Bath by Larry Dane Brimner
- Maisie's Bathtime by Lucy Cousins
- Bathtime Piggy Wiggy by Christyan and Diane Fox
- Is It Time? by Marilyn Janovitz
- Big Red Tub by Julia Jarman
- The Fish is Me: Bathtime Rhymes selected by Neil Philip
- Bathtime Peekaboo by Dawn Sirett
- Big Smelly Bear by Britta Teckentrup
- King Bidgood's in the Bathtub by Audrey Wood



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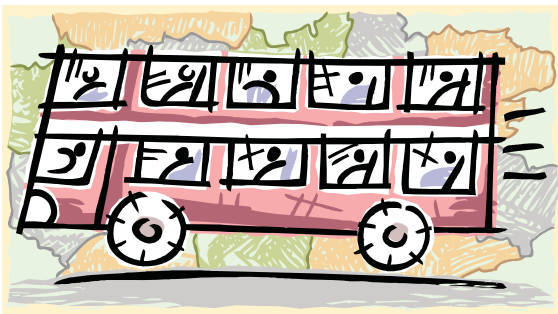
Bus Rides

A trip on a bus can be a learning adventure!

- While waiting at the bus stop, talk about how the bus schedule works, let your child be the lookout for the correct bus.
- Talk about bus fare, let your child put the money in if possible.
- Count the seats on the bus.
- While riding – look for familiar stores, letters or words.
- Read the street signs – are they numbered? Are they getting smaller or larger?
- Work on the sound of the letter, “B”. Find other words that begin with that sound
- Play “I Spy” on the bus: “I spy with my little eye, a thing with wheels that honks and rhymes with tar”.
- Compare the route map with the actual streets – talk about maps.
- Sing “The Wheels on the Bus”.
- Encourage your child’s imagination by asking questions that begin with “Suppose that...” or “I wonder...”

Books about buses

- Going by Bus by Susan Ashley
- Bus Driver by Jacqueline Laks Gorman
- The Seals on the Bus by Lenny Hort
- Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems
- Buses by Jeffrey Zuehlke
- The Wheels on the Bus by Maryann Kovalski or Raffi or Paul O. Zelinsky



Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Dining Out

A dinner out can end up being a fun learning experience!

- Read some books about restaurants before you go out so your child has a better understanding of what to expect.
- On the way to the restaurant, discuss what sorts of foods may be on the menu. Add silly foods if you are in the mood. How silly a menu can you create?
- When you receive the menu – look over it with your child and look for foods that you predicted.
- Run your finger along menu items as you read so your child understands you are reading the items
- Encourage your child to order their own food from the server.
- Bring crayons and coloring sheets or some sort of simple craft with you as a waiting activity.
- Bring books along to read while you are waiting for your food.
- Play “I Spy” with colors in the restaurant.
- Count how many people are wearing blue or white or red, etc.



Books about Restaurants and Dining Out

- Chopsticks by Jon Berkeley
- Dinner at the Panda Palace by Stephanie Calmenson
- Friday Night at Hodges Café by Tim Egan
- What’s On the Menu? Food Poems selected by Bobbye S. Goldstein
- On Top of Spaghetti by Paul Brett Johnson
- In the Diner by Christine Loomis
- Frog Goes to Dinner by Mercer Mayer
- Mel’s Diner by Marissa Moss
- Going to a Restaurant by Melinda Radabaugh
- Sheep Out to Eat by Nancy Shaw

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Ferry Rides

A trip on a ferry can be a learning adventure!

- On a map, show your child where you will be going on the ferry ride.
- While waiting in line, count the cars in the line – or the people in front of you.
- While riding – what sights do you see from the ferry? Let your child describe what they see.
- What wildlife can you see from the ferry?
- Read the signs on the ferry and talk about why they are there.
- Stand quietly on the deck and feel the movement of the boat.
- Talk about what you both feel.
- Discuss what people are doing on the ferry.
- Take a length of rope and practice tying simple knots.
- If possible, buy a disposable camera for your child and help them take pictures of sights on the ferry ride. Once they are developed talk about the pictures.
- Ask your toddler a series of “No” questions – “Are seagulls purple?” “Do people walk on their heads?” etc.
- If it’s a long ride, take along some paper and markers. Draw a pattern and have your child try and copy it.



Books about boats and ferries

- Boats by Byron Barton
- Riding the Ferry with Captain Cruz by Alice Flanagan
- Lightship by Brian Floca
- Get Around in the City by Lee Sullivan Hill
- Go-Go Baby by Roxane Orgill
- Ferry Rides by Pam Walker
- Bunnies on the Go: Getting From Place to Place by Rick Walton

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Gardens and Nurseries

On lovely Montana days, a trip to a local garden or nursery can be a fun, healthy way to spend a day. Add these learning ideas:

- Make a color chart with the colors labeled or use paint sample papers. At the garden or nursery, have your child match the color of the flowers to the colors on the chart.
- If there is a map of the garden or nursery, look over it together and decide where you want to explore.
- Select a few plants that you want to find. Describe them and have your child help you locate them at the nursery or garden.
- Have your child describe the different plants – colors, size, height, foliage, texture, etc. Ask questions to encourage more description.
- Read the plant labels aloud.
- Spend some time looking at the seed packets. What colors do you see? What shapes? What are the plant names? Do you see any familiar plants?
- Talk to your child about what plants need in order to flourish and grow.
- Look for insects and talk about why they might be there.
- Don't forget to stop and smell the roses!



Books about gardens and nurseries

- Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney
- Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
- The Surprise Garden by Zoe Hall
- I'm a Seed by Jean Marzollo
- A Place to Grow by Soyung
- Mrs. Spitzer's Garden by Edith Pattou
- The Gardener by Sarah Stewart

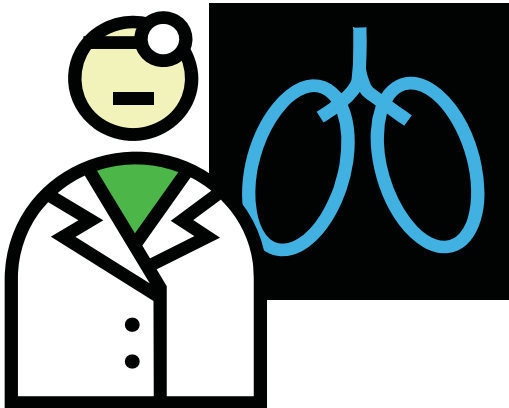
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Going to the Doctor

Turn visits to the doctors' office into a fun adventure (or at least try!).

- Have your child make a self portrait for the doctor and label it with your child's name and a short message.
- Talk about a stethoscope. Practice saying the word together and explain how it listens to a heart beat.
- Ask "What If?" questions. What if everybody looked just the same? What if the sun never went down? What if dogs could talk?
- Count how many different colors you see in the waiting room.
- Describe objects in the waiting room by their color and size and see if your child can identify what they are.
- Take along some colorful crayons or markers and some paper. Have your child draw their feelings – ask how they feel and let them put whatever they like on the paper.
- Take along some pipe cleaners and have your child create some creatures. Name them and talk about what they eat and where they might live.
- Check out a book on tape or CD and let your child listen to it on a portable device with earphones while you are waiting.
- Read books together while you wait.



Books about Doctors and Dentists

- Does a Hippo Say AHH? By Dr. Fred Ehrlich
- My Little Friend Goes to the Dentist by Evelyn Finnegan
- Too Big! By Claire Masurel
- Corduroy Goes to the Doctor by Lisa McCue
- Calling Dr. Amelia Bedelia by Herman Parish
- Going to the Doctor by Fred Rogers
- My Mother is a Doctor by Charnan Simon
- How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon? By Jane Yolen

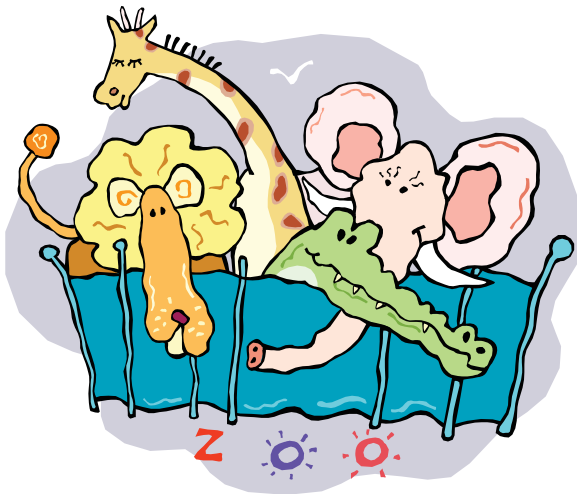
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Going to the Zoo

A trip to the zoo can be a great literacy adventure!

- Check out some animal books from the library before your zoo visit and talk with your child about the animals and what they will see.
- Imitate the sounds that the animals make. Connect the individual sounds with a picture of the animal.
- When you are entering the zoo, point out and talk to your child about entrance prices and the sign publicizing them.
- If your child is a little older, let them pay the entrance fee and accept the change.
- Whenever possible, draw your child's attention to the signs that name and describe the animals.
- Run your finger along the words as you read about the animals.
- Have your child describe what each animal looks like.
- Encourage your child to tell you what the different animals are doing. Expand on what they tell you as much as possible.
- Ask your child what animal they would most like to be and why.



Books about the zoo

- Playtime for Zoo Animals by Catherine Arnold (She has many
- Zoo Animal Books)
- Polar Bear, Polar Bear by Bill Martin Jr.
- Going to the Zoo by Tom Paxton
- Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathman
- Sam, Who Never Forgets by Eve Rice
- Look Who's Talking at the Zoo by Danny Tepper
- Zoo Sizes by Patricia Whitehouse

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Grocery Store

Turn your frequent shopping errands into literacy adventures.

- Let your child participate in making the shopping list.
- Take a pen or pencil along and direct your child to check items off the list as they go into the shopping cart.
- Point out the signs that tell you what is on each aisle.
- Point out the numbers above each aisle.
- Encourage your child to name the colors of the fruits and vegetables on display.

With older children, ask them to find five fruits and vegetables that start with the “buh” (letter b) sound. Pick different letters. See if they can find various letters on packaging.

- Treat it like a scavenger hunt. Read each item from your list aloud and let your child try and find the items on the shelf.
- If your child is sitting in the shopping cart, play “This Little Piggy” as you walk down the aisles.
- Once you get in line, have your child count the number of items in your cart.
- Read some of the magazine titles aloud while you wait.
- When you return home, take a brown grocery bag and cut it open flat. With a large marker, draw an outline of the first initial of your child’s name. Let them paint, color or glue decorative items on it. Hang it up for display.



Books about food and groceries

- Supermarket by Charlotte Doyle
- Bebé Goes Shopping by Susan Middleton Elya
- A Busy Day at Mr. Kang’s Grocery Store by Alice Flanagan
- Grocers Sell Us Food by Carol Greene
- A Visit to the Supermarket by B. A. Hoena
- Don’t Forget the Bacon by Pat Hutchins
- To Market, To Market by Ann Miranda

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Hiking

Add literacy to your hikes!

- Show your child a map of where you will be hiking.
- Show photographs of trees and plants you will see on your hike. Talk about the names and characteristics.
- Together, make a list of what you will need on your hike.
- Let your child check off the items as you prepare them.
- Let your child help you pack a light backpack for them to carry.
- Together make a list of things you expect to see on your hike.
- Once on the hike, remind your child about the different trees and encourage them to point them out.
- Pack a magnifying glass for your child to examine objects close up. Talk about what they see and why it's interesting.
- Take time to listen to the sounds outside – birds, wind, etc.
- If your child grows tired of hiking, set out a blanket and read a book.
- Stop at some point and draw pictures of what you see.
- Sing silly songs as you hike.



Books about hiking

- The Berenstain Bears Blaze a Trail by Stan Berenstain
- Do Princesses Really Kiss Frogs? By Carmela LaVigna Coyle
- Corduroy's Hike by Alison Inches
- Henry Hikes to Fitchburg by D. B. Johnson
- Boo and Baa in the Woods by Olof and Lena Landström
- Willie Takes a Hike by Gloria Rand
- Sheep Take a Hike by Nancy Shaw
- Trekking on a Trail: Hiking Adventures for Kids by Linda White

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Neighborhood Walks

There are lots of literacy opportunities when taking a walk in your own neighborhood.

- Before going on your walk, talk about eyes and how we use them to observe.
- Let your child practice looking through a paper towel or toilet paper roll. Talk about what they see.
- Point out your address numbers; compare other addresses with your own.
- Point out signs that name your street.
- Look for other signs in your neighborhood. Allow your child to try and “read” them first.
- Pick one house and have your child count the number of its windows.
- Name the different kinds of dwellings – apartments, houses, duplexes, etc.
- Name the different colors of cars in your neighborhood or the different colors of people’s clothing.
- Sing a song while walking – “Skip to my Lou” or just a silly song that you make up.
- Draw messages on the sidewalk or driveway with colored chalk.



Books about neighborhoods and walks

- Duckie’s Rainbow by Frances Barry
- Take a Walk, Johnny by Margaret Hillary
- Tom and Pippo Go for a Walk by Helen Oxenbury
- Didi and Daddy on the Promenade by Marilyn Singer
- I Can Take a Walk by Shigeo Watanabe
- I Went Walking by Sue Williams

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Pet Shop

Even a trip to pick up some dog food can be a literacy adventure!

- Before going, draw the letter "P" on a large piece of paper. Let your child decorate it. Talk about the sound of "P" and look for it at the Pet Store.
- Before going, make a list of what animals your child thinks may be in the store.
- If possible, put the list on a clipboard. Give your child the clipboard and a marker or crayon.
- Encourage your child to check animals off the list once you get inside.
- Talk about why some animals on your list were not at the pet shop.
- Match the animals with the food that they eat.
- Have your child identify what sounds each animal makes.
- Point out the labels and prices on the animal's enclosures.
- Compare and contrast some animals. Who is bigger; who is sleepier?
- Once you get home, have your child draw a picture of their favorite animal in the store and label it.
- Decorate a pet rock together. Give it a name and label too.



Books about pets and pet stores

- Counting: Follow that Fish by John Burstein
- That Pesky Rat by Lauren Child
- Edward Gets a Pet by Michaela Morgan
- Pick a Pet by Diane Namm
- The Best Pet Yet by Louise Tidd
- The Great Pet Sale by Mick Inkpen

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Picnics

There are many opportunities for learning in the planning and enjoying of a picnic.

- Make a list of items to pack for the picnic and let your child participate in creating it and packing it.
- Ask for your child's input on what you might need for your picnic in order to be comfortable. Use questions like: "What should we use to sit on?" "What do we want to do after we eat?"
- Look for signs naming the place where you are having your picnic. If it's a park, what is its name?
- Before you pull each item out of the picnic basket, describe it and have your child try and guess what it is.
- Write names on paper plates, color them and cut them into unusual shapes to make name puzzles.
- Hunt for shapes in the environment – fences, rocks, play equipment, restrooms, cars, tires etc.
- Bring along a ball to roll or toss back and forth. Keep a conversation going as you play.
- Listen for birds and try and imitate them.
- Pack up some books to read while lounging on your blanket. Bring a pillow along for added comfort!



Books about picnics

- We're Going on a Picnic! by Pat Hutchins
- The Teddy Bear's Picnic by Jimmy Kennedy
- Picnic by Emily Arnold McCully
- The Picnic by David K. Williams
- McDuff Saves the Day by Rosemary Wells
- We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past by Jacqueline Woodson



Post Office

The Post Office offers all sorts of learning possibilities because it is attached to writing, reading, and mailing letters.

- Play the association game. The first person starts with an idea like "I write letters" the second person might say "Letters go to the post office." Then "The post office has a long line." etc.
- Let your child write themselves a letter or draw a picture. Put this in an envelope, address it together, stamp it, and let them drop it in the mailbox. Talk about what you are doing as you do it.
- Create a box at your house to act as a "Mailbox". Decorate it and use it to send notes and pictures to each other. Use stickers for stamps.
- While reading some of the books about mail and Post Offices, write down any unusual words and discuss them.
- On your trip to the Post Office, try using some of the unusual words that you found in the books.
- Make a list of items you might see at the Post Office. Let your child check them off as you see them.
- While standing in line, look for different shapes in the Post Office.
- If you are mailing letters or bills, use a map and show the children where the letters are headed.



Books about Letters and Mail

- The Jolly Postman by Janet Ahlberg
- I Can Write a Letter by Susan Ashley
- The Post Office Book: Mail and How It Moves by Gail Gibbons
- Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James
- Dear Juno by Soyung Pak
- The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman by Darcy Pattison
- The Gardener by Sarah Stewart
- Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School by Mark Teague
- Bunny Mail by Rosemary Wells

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Rainy Day Activities

When you're stuck inside, here are some fun ideas!

- Pull out a simple board game or play a matching game with playing cards.
- Work on simple jigsaw puzzles together.
- Play classical music, close your eyes and talk about what you see in the music: jumping bunnies? Racing horses? The dark outside? People laughing?
- Cuddle under a blanket and listen to the rain. Listening is a kindergarten readiness skill.
- Get a large cardboard box from an appliance store and turn it into a playhouse, a car, a rocket ship. Use labels whenever possible.
- Create a fort under a table using blankets. Fill it with pillows. Climb inside and read books. Or tape paper to the underside of the table and draw lying down.
- Put several household objects on the table and trace around them onto paper. Color the paper and label the objects together.
- Together make a list of everything that your child does well. Hang the list up for all to see. Perhaps decorate it first.
- Cook or bake something together – go over the recipe with your child.
- Take a walk in the rain and talk about what you see and hear.



Books about rainy days and playing inside

- Rain Dance by Kathi Appelt
- Gaspard and Lisa's Rainy Day by Anne Gutman
- Rainy-day Music by Judith Jensen Hyde
- Rainy Day by Patricia Lakin
- Rainy Morning by Daniel Pinkwater
- Not a Box by Antoinette Portix
- Rainy, Rainy Saturday by Jack Prelutsky
- Red Rubber Boot Day by Mary Lyn Ray

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Seashore

Developing literacy can be done on a trip to the Beach!

- Make a list of items to take to the beach and let your child participate in creating it and packing it.
- Pack different size containers for measuring and pouring sand.
- On a map, locate the beach where you are going and show your child the route you will take to get there.
- On the way to the beach, point out signs for places that you saw on the map.
- As you walk on the beach, talk about the different shapes of shells and rocks.
- Bring along an egg carton for your child to collect shells and rocks, sorting them into different compartments. Draw them on a piece of paper and label them. Return the items to the beach.
- Tell your child the story of listening to a shell and hearing the ocean. Ask your child to describe what they hear.
- Write your names in the sand.
- Build sand castles using the different sized containers – count the number of buildings in your castle.
- Take time to listen to the sounds of the beach. Talk about what you both hear.



Books about beaches and the sea

- Yellow Ball by Molly Bang
- One Lonely Seahorse by Saxton Freyman
- Seashore Animals by Francine Galko
- I Live Near the Ocean: Vivo cerca del mar by Gini Holland
- Swimmy by Leo Lionni
- I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean by Kevin Sherry
- Somewhere in the Ocean by Jennifer Ward

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Train Rides

There are many learning opportunities on train rides.

- Look at the map at the train station. How many stops are there? Where is your stop?
- Pick a “magic word” like “caboose” or “aboard.” Have your child listen for that word. Celebrate (clap or cheer) when you both hear it. (You might practice this a few times to make it more fun).
- Have your child describe what he/she sees when looking out the window.
- Look for labels on the train. Read them aloud.
- Talk about the different terrains that the train moves through.
- If there is a map on the train, follow along with the stops or the landmarks.
- How many people are riding in your car?
- What kinds of things are there to read on the train?
- Play with the “T” sound. Find things on the train that begin with the “T” sound.
- Bring along some paper and a pen and have your child dictate the story to you of your ride on the train. Let them illustrate it and sign their name if they are able.



Books about trains

- It’s Funny Where Ben’s Train Takes Him by Robert Burleigh
- This Train by Paul Collicut
- Freight Train by Donald Crews
- All Aboard ABC by Doug Magee
- Train Leaves the Station by Eve Merriam
- Trains published by Little Simon
- Seymour Simon’s Book of Trains by Seymour Simon
- Ferry Rides by Pam Walker
- Can you Choo Choo? by David Wojtowycz

Original concept by the Pierce County Library System.



Windy Day Activities

A windy day can be a literacy adventure!

- Read a book about the wind and then talk about what the wind “looks” like.
- Practice whispering.
- Watch the wind through the window. What do you see?
- Take a walk outside and talk about what the wind feels like.
- Give your child a clipboard with paper and pen. Help them write down all the sounds they hear outside on a windy day. If they aren’t able to write yet, write it down for them.
- Fold paper airplanes and fly them inside and outside and compare the difference.
- Using a line outside, hang different items on it and compare what the wind does to them.
- Take an umbrella outside and let your child hold onto it. Talk about what that feels like.
- Bring bubble solution outside and let the wind blow bubbles. Talk about what is happening.
- On a large piece of paper (butcher paper is cheap and easy!) draw a big “W” outline. Encourage your child to decorate it with things that blow in the wind.



Books about windy days

- Like a Windy Day by Frank Asch
- Windy Days by Jennifer S. Burke
- Gilberto and the Wind by Marie Hall Ets
- The Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins
- The Windy Day by G. Brian Karas
- A Windy Day by Robin Nelson
- January Rides the Wind: A Book of Months
- By Charlotte F. Otten
- It’s Too Windy by Hans Wilhelm

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