SLPs as Authors:

The Art and Science of Writing Children's Books for Therapy and Beyond

Shari Robertson
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SPALS, 2024

KEY POINT #1 : Authors must be cognizant of emergent literacy goals when developing children's literature for intervention (and beyond).

Literature-based intervention has been recommended as a best practice to support language and literacy goals for children with language delays for over 25 years (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002; Kaderavek & Justice 2002; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Towson & Gallagher, 2016).   In pre-readers, emergent literacy goals include oral language (e.g., vocabulary and story comprehension/ expression), phonological awareness (e.g., rhyme, alliteration), print awareness (e.g., differentiating between text and picture, letter awareness) and alphabet knowledge (i.e.,phoneme-grapheme relationships) (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Being cognizant of foundational emergent literacy goals, as established by this robust research base, it key to the development of children's literature to support positive outcomes related to language and pre-literacy.

KEY POINT #2: Authors must consider the impact of specific elements, characteristics, and genres of children's books on early language and literacy development in general and in relation to specific skills and targeted outcomes.

Researchers have begun focusing on how to choose and use books more systematically to support specific language (Schwarz et al., 2015) and literacy (Treiman, Rosales, & Kessler, 2016) goals. Other researchers are focusing on the benefits of using different genres to promote specific skills (Breit-Smith, Olszewski, Swoboda, Guo, & Prendeville, 2017; Knudsen-Lindauer, 1988). Lennox (2013) concludes that different book genres teach children about different book structures and specific elements within a story structure can impact on specific skill development. Findings from body of research can inform SLP authors regarding characteristics, and qualities of children's stories that have the most potential to lead to positive outcomes in early language learning and pre-literacy skill development.

KEY POINT #3: : To increase opportunities to use language in the natural context of joint reading, authors must consider how to build opportunities for active participation into reading interactions.

Joint reading has been described by many researchers as an ideal, natural context for facilitating early language and preliteracy skills.   (e.g., Crowe, Norris, and Hoffman, 2000; Justice et al., 2010, Yader, 1989). The transactional model of language development (Yoder & Warren, 1993) suggests that the learning process involves ongoing reciprocal interactions between child behaviors and adult behaviors. Robertson (2016) and Lennox (2013) found that children who are engaged as active participants in the reading interaction are more likely to demonstrate an increase in their oral language and literacy skills than children who are passive partners in dyad read aloud episodes. Even preschoolers, who are not yet developmentally ready to read, can become actively involved in reading when books are structured to include opportunities to move from a passive participant in the reading interaction (listening only) to an active role (chiming in, speculating, predicting, repeating, role playing, story building, etc.)

Robertson, S. SPALs 2024

I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

USE THIS SPACE TO JOT DOWN YOUR IDEAS AS YOU LISTEN TODAY

What skills will it target? How will it encourage children to be active in the reading interaction? What extension materials could be created to support the learning?

BOOK LIST

TITLE	AUTHOR
Capering Cows, Shivering Sheep, My Cow can Bow, Grandpa's Woods	Shari Robertson
Rudy and the Butterflies, Rudy's New Job	Perry Flynn
Run, Turkey, Run (and others)	Peggy Agee
A Peanut Sat on a Railroad Track, Go By Goat and other Word Menders books	Liz Kristen
I Can Say That; Now, Your're Peaceful and You Know It (and other Word Sprouts Books)	Suzy Lederer
Spotless Spot, Cat Queen, Firefly Fox (wordless)	Alexandra Bowser
Bernice is Hungry	Rachel Adomshick

Book Assessment Worksheet

Skill	Notes
Interactive Reading	
Echo Reading	
Paired Reading	
Friendly Questions	
Prediction	
Wordless	
Reader's Theatre	
Critical Qualities	
Extension Activities (or potential for same)	
Research Supported features	
Illustrations Enhance Comprehension/Engagement	
Character Diversity	
Social/Emotional/Mindfulness	
Reading Level	
Speech and Phonology Targets	
Articulation/Speech Sounds	
Phonological Processes	
Other	

Skill	Notes
Therapy/Core Standards Targets	
Print Awareness	
Phonological Awareness	
Phonemic Awareness	
Vocabulary/Synonyms/ Antonyms/Multiple Meaning	
Semantic Categories	
Synatactic Structures/Complexity	
Morphology	
Pragmatics	
Reading Fluency	
Reading Comprehension	
Non-Literal Language	
Narrative/Sequencing	
Other Core Standards Addressed	
Other IEP Targets	

Slide 1

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Slide 2

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Where Imagnologists... Imagine More!

BUILDING BETTER
TALKERS,
LISTENERS,
READERS, AND WRITERS

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Slide 3

1. Summarize key findings of the empirical literature base related to the elements of children's literature that support positive therapeutic outcomes.

2. Analyze children's books by SLP authors to identify research-supported characteristics that facilitate language and pre-literacy development.

3. Apply concepts to create/self-author children's books for preschoolers

Outcomes

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Slide 4

Key Research Base

Literature-based intervention has been recommended as a best practice to support language and literacy goals for children with language delays for over 25 years.

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Slide 5

We love using books in therapy because they are:

- Low cost or no cost
- Readily available
- Portable
- FUN!!!

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Slide 6

Books naturally help develop both oral and written language and (when used correctly) facilitate a love of reading.

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Slide 7

Language/Literacy Hierarchy

CONTENT AREAS

WRITING
(Expressive WRITTEN language)

READING
(Receptive WRITTEN Language)

TALKING
(Expressive ORAL Language)

LISTENING
(Receptive ORAL Language)

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Slide 8

Given our comprehensive knowledge of language and literacy development…

who better than speech/language pathologists to author awesome children's books?

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Slide 9

Not all books are created equal

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Particularly with children with (or at risk of) delayed, constrained, or disordered language.

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Literature-based Intervention for children with communication disorders can be greatly enhanced when SLP authors have a solid understanding of the process, research bases, and characteristics of children's books that best support language and literacy development.
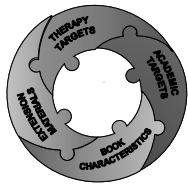
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ART BASED IN SCIENCE

Key considerations for creating high-quality children's literature to facilitate speech, language, literacy, and academic success.
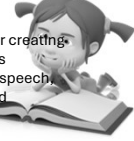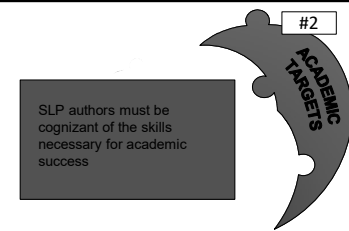
12

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SLP AUTHORS

THERAPY TARGETS — ACADEMIC TARGETS — EXTENSION ACTIVITIES — BOOK CHARACTERISTICS

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#1
THERAPY TARGETS

SLP authors must be cognizant of oral and written language goals/therapy targets when developing children's literature for intervention (and beyond).

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#2
ACADEMIC TARGETS

SLP authors must be cognizant of the skills necessary for academic success

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National Reading Panel

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Reading Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Text Comprehension

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Common Core State Standards & Communication Goals

- **Reading: Foundational Skills**
  - Phonological Awareness (FORM)
- **Speaking & Listening**
  - Comprehension & Collaboration (USE)
  - Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas
- **Language**
  - Conventions of Standard English
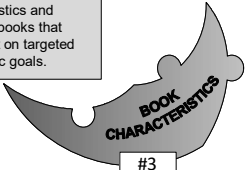 - Knowledge of Language (meta Skills) (CONTENT)
  - Vocabulary Acquisition & Use

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National Reading Panel

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Reading Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Text Comprehension

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SLP authors must consider the impact of the research-based elements, characteristics and genres of children's books that maximize the impact on targeted clinical and academic goals.

BOOK CHARACTERISTICS

#3

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Interactive Reading Strategies

- Interactive reading strategies encourage children to be active participants in the reading interaction, paralleling how children learn language in the dyad.
- Can be implemented long before children can decode. (And after!)
- Are built on a robust literature base.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOP IN THE DYAD!

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SLP authors must consider the potential for developing extension materials for use in therapy based on the story content and targets.

EXTENSION MATERIALS

#4

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NEW! BECAUSE WE KNOW HOW BUSY YOU ARE! **NEW!**

The DR Online Learning Library

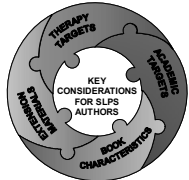**FREE** Extension Activities for our Children's Books
- ✓ Unlimited access to research-supported therapy materials
- ✓ Targets multiple communication and core standards
- ✓ Based on each book's story and contents
- ✓ New materials added continuously

DOWNLOAD AS MANY AS YOU LIKE
AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE
NO SUBSCRIPTION NEEDED

www.dynamic-resources.org/learning library

DYNAMIC RESOURCES

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THERAPY TARGETS

ACADEMIC TARGETS

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SLPS AUTHORS

EXTENSION MATERIALS

BOOK CHARACTERISTICS

Entirely Awesome, Research-Supported, Fantastically Functional, Children's Book!

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GETTING your STORY INTO PRINT

SUCCESS!
Determination
Hard Work
Motivation

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Working with a Publisher

- NO COSTS to author.
- Publisher works with the author to develop product.
- Publisher assumes all costs of developing, printing, marketing, selling, warehousing, etc.
- Contracts with illustrators, graphic artists, printers etc to bring project to fruition
- Book published under company imprint.
- Publisher owns copyright
- Pays the author an agreed upon portion of the profits from each book ("Royalty)

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Self Publishing

- Author pays for all costs of publishing, printing, marketing, etc.
- Author contracts with illustrators, etc.
- Typically printed "on-demand."

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Examples of Self Publishers

- Amazonproinc.com
- Kdpamazonbookmarketing.com (Kindle ebooks only)
- Outskirtspress.com
- Bookwritercoerner.com
- Lulu.com
- Penquinghostwriting.com

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Publisher = Printer

✓ Publishers work with authors to develop products

✓ Printers print the finished product.

PENGUIN HOUSE

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What do Publishers Want

• Unique Idea
• A book they can market (it does no one any good if the book just sits in a warehouse because it doesn't fit the profile of the publishers)

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What do publishers want/need from potential authors?

SAMPLE   Product Proposal

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

MY FABULOUS BOOK
By CCC-S

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It's not just about a "fun" story.

Know the skills you want to target

(and the related research/theoretical base)

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Include opportunities for active participation in the reading interaction.
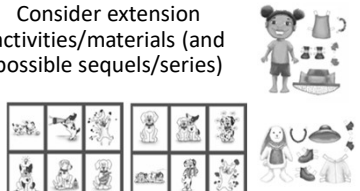
✓ Echo Reading
✓ Paired Reading
✓ Questioning Strategies
✓ Predicting
✓ Wordless Books
✓ Reader's Theatre

Social Learning Theory
Robust literature base

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Consider extension activities/materials (and possible sequels/series)

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Create Your Action Plan

SLP AS AUTHORS: ACTION PLAN

Engage Imagination!

SHARE !!!

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IMAGINOLOGISTS
imagine more.

So, what are you waiting for?

Shari.Robertson@outlook.com
FIND ME IN THE EXPO HALL!
BOOTH 801)

WRITE!

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RWM Book Characteristics

Here's What to Look for When Selecting Books to Use with Read With Me Strategies

STRATEGY	LOOK FOR:
Echo Reading	• only a few words on a page • vocabulary that is reinforced by the illustrations • bright, engaging pictures
Paired Reading	• predictable text • engaging storylines • strong rhythm and rhyme AND/OR • a phrase that repeats throughout the story
Friendly Questions	• details that invite friendly questions • storylines that encourage critical thinking
Predicting	• stories that provide opportunities to predict what might happen next • visual details that give clues to what might be on the next page
Wordless Books	• books in which the story is told through the pictures rather than through the words (some wordless books have a few words in them)
Reader's Theatre	• stories that encourage movement and action • stories that can be acted out or work well with props (such as puppets, simple costumes, or manipulatives)

What do publishers want/need from potential authors?

Product Proposal   DYNAMIC RESOURCES LLC BRIDGING THE GAP FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

A. **Proposed Title** (Working Title is fine).

B. **Author(s)** – is at least one author or collaborator an SLP or Audiologist?

C. **Brief Overview** - Summarize your idea. Think: how would I describe this resource on the back cover of the product that would make someone want to buy it?)

D. **Speech/Language/Literacy (or CCSS) targets**: What specific areas of speech, language, literacy, or child development does this book target?

E. **What research base or theory provides the foundation for this book?**

F. **What Read with Me (Interactive) Strategies can be used with this story?** (Echo Reading, Paired Reading, Friendly Questions, Predicting, Wordless, Reader's Theatre or other)

G. **Need** -   Why is this resource needed? Are there other similar resources currently available? If so, what makes this resource different?

H. **Estimated Length**: Note: Children's books should be no longer than 24-28 pages

I. **What extension activities/lesson ideas/therapy resources could be developed for this book?**

J. **Illustrations** – Do you have a vision for illustrations/cover. This is not a required section, but does help us determine if we can deliver your vision.

K. **Special requirements in terms of format, size, accompanying materials, packaging, etc.**

L.   **Anything else you would like to add that isn't covered above**

SLP AS AUTHORS: ACTION PLAN

Engage Imagination!

What skill/s do I want to target? (Why does this book need to be written)	
How do these targets/skills related to language/ literacy development?	
How will I incorporate opportunies for children to participate actively in reading?	
What kinds of extension activities could be developed?	
WRITE! (hint: Create a writing schedule)	
Self Publish? Seek out Illustrator, graphic artist, publishing options, marketing strategy	
Publish? Inquire, complete/provide product proposal	

SHARE !!!

Shari Robertson
SPALS, 2024

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
MAPPED TO READ WITH ME™ STRATEGIES

BOOK TITLE	Echo Reading	Paired Reading	Friendly Questions	Predict-ing	Word-less	Reader's Theatre
Adventures of Sadie and Sam			X	X		X
Bernice is Hungry	X	X	X	X		X
Capering Cows	X	X	X			
Cat Queen	X		X		X	
Firefly Fox			X	X	X	X
Go By Goat		X	X			
Grandpa's Woods		X	X	X		X
Hey, Hey, Let's All Say! (sign)	X		X			X
I Can Do That! (Sign)	X		X			X
I Can Play That! The Tea Party	X	X	X			X
I Can Say That! (sign)	X		X			X
No You're Peaceful and you Know It You Can Breathe	X	X	X			X
Invisbile to Invincible			X	X		
A Peanut Sat. on a Railroad Track		X	X	X		X
Miles of Smiles		X	X			
My Cow Can Bow		X	X	X		
Nonnie's Trunk		X	X	X		X
Pants on Ants		X	X			
Rudy and the Butterflies, Rudys New Job		X	X	X		X
Run, Turkey, Run!		X		X		X
Shivering Sheep	X	X	X	X		
Sail By Tail		X	X			
Sparky and Spike	X					X
Spotless Spot			X	X	X	
Thunderstorm!			X	X	X	

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
MAIN Therapy Targets
(Not All-Inclusive!)

BOOK TITLE	SERIES	TARGETS
Bernice is Hungry	AAC CORE VOCAB	"Look", Colors, Shades of Meaning
The Bark Pakr	PHONOLOGY	Voicing
Go by Goat	PHONOLOGY	Final Consonant Deletion
Pants on Ants	PHONOLOGY	Initial Consonant Deletion
Miles of Smiles	PHONOLOGY	/kl/ BLENDS/CLUSTER REDUCTION
My Cow Can Bow	PHONOLOGY	Fronting (& Backing)
Sail by Tail	PHONOLOGY	Stopping
SPARKY AN SPIKE	ARTIC	/sp/ Blends
Hey! Hey! Let's All Say!	EI (word sprouts)	First Vocabulary & Sign
I Can Do That!	EI(word sprouts)	First Verbs and Sign
I Can Play That!	EI (word sprouts)	Pretend Play, Sequencing
I Can Say That!	EI(word sprouts)	Animals sounds/Names/Sign
Now You're Peaceful and You Know It You Can Breathe	EI, LANG & LIT	Emotions Regulation, Mindfulness, Similes
A Peanut Sat on a Railroad Track	LANG & LIT	predicting, following directions (recipes included)
Capering Cows	LANG & LIT	/k/ vocabulary
Cat Queen	LANG & LIT	Morphology
Shivering Sheep	LANG & LIT	"sh" sounds
Nonnie's Trunk	LANG & LIT	Pronouns
Grandpa's Woods	LANG & LIT	Seasons
Rudy and the Butterflies Rudy's New Job	LANG & LIT	CCSS//Vocab/Fig Lang/ too many to list
Run! Turkey Run!	LANG & LIT	Sounds/ Prepositions
Sadie and Sam	LANG & LIT	Predicting/verb tenses
Firefly Fox	WORDLESS	/f/ Sequencing/Comprehension
Spotless Spot	WORDLESS	Vocab, Emotions, Sequences, More
Thunderstorm	WORDLESS	Wordless Books Rock!
Invisible to Invicible	FASD	Neurodiversity

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