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How to Raise a Reader:

- Read together every day.
- Set up a comfortable place to snuggle and read. The act of being close together adds another positive feeling to reading.
- Include sound effects when you are reading. Trains make all sorts of fun sounds like “Choo Choo” and “Clickety Clack.”
- Ask open-ended questions while you read. For example, ask “Where is the train going?” and “What do you think is inside this train car?”
- Reading the same book multiple times may seem boring, however, children enjoy feeling smart because they know what is coming next.
- Talk, Write, Read, Play, and Sing together. These five practices are key elements of early literacy.
- Make sure kids see adults reading for pleasure.
- Read all day long. Read signs that you see in stores. Read labels on food.

Before Reading the Book

Look at the cover together. What information can you get from the cover?

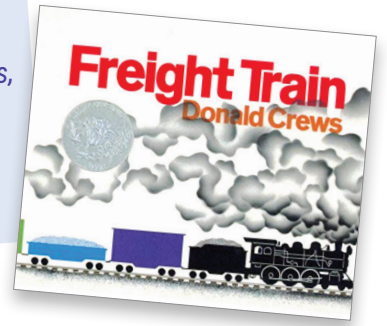
- What is the title of the book?
- Look at the illustration on the cover. What do you think this book will be about?
- What sound does a train make?

After Reading the Book

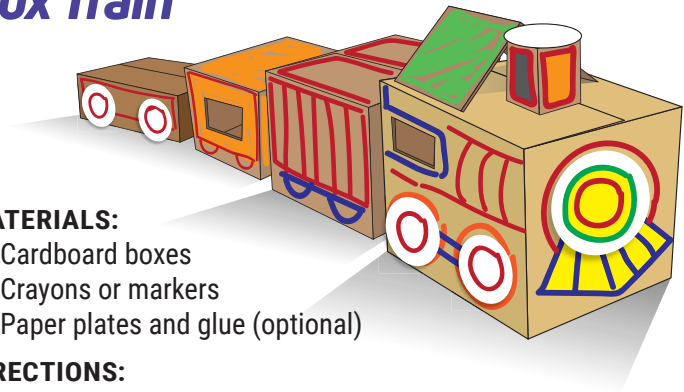
You can help a child build reading comprehension by going back through the book together. Look at the illustrations on each page and ask the child to tell you what is happening. You can also ask questions to relate the book to your child’s life:

- Have you ever seen a train?
- Where is your toy train? Should we read the book to your toy train?

A colorful freight train picks up speed as it travels through tunnels, past cities, and across trestles. This Caldecott Honor book is a true classic.



Box Train



MATERIALS:

- Cardboard boxes
- Crayons or markers
- Paper plates and glue (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- Line the boxes up in a row like a train.
- Decorate the train cars using crayons or markers.
- Optional: Glue paper plates to the side of the box like train wheels.

Sing these rhymes and songs together or make up your own.

The Wheels on the Train

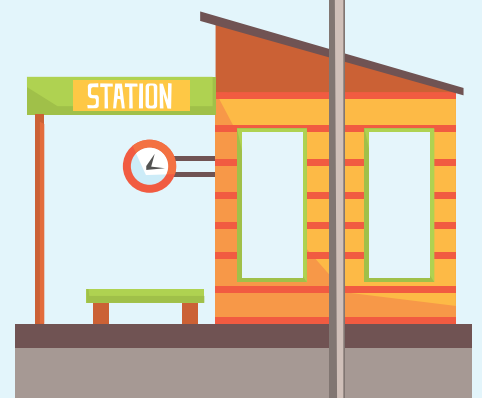
Tune: *The Wheels on the Bus*

The wheels on the train go
 Round and round
 Round and round
 Round and round
 The wheels on the train go
 Round and round
 All along the tracks
 The whistle on the train goes choo-choo-choo ...
 The kids on the train wave hi ...



Down by the Station

Down by the station
 Early in the morning
 See the little pufferbellies
 All in a row
 See the station master
 Pull the little handle
 Puff puff toot toot
 Off we go!



Train Tunnel Travel

The freight train travels through a tunnel in the book. Part of science is exploration. Explore what it is like to travel through a tunnel. Navigating a tunnel also helps children learn how to crawl and develop other motor skills.



MATERIALS:

- Toy tunnel. An example can be found here: <https://www.lakeshorelearning.com/products/active-play/balance-coordination/lakeshore-heavy-duty-play-tunnels/p/LA245>
- If you do not have a toy tunnel, you can create a play tunnel by draping a blanket or sheet over a table. Many playgrounds have tunnels; check out the playground near you.

DIRECTIONS:

- Encourage the toddler to climb/crawl through the tunnel.
- If a child is hesitant to crawl through the tunnel, you can try putting a toy in the middle of the tunnel. You can also try going to the other end of the tunnel so the child sees you on the other end.

Name the Colors

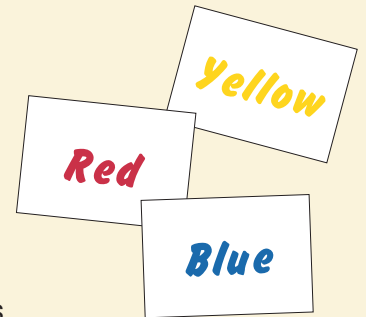
Labeling things in your home can help children learn how to read. Help children learn the colors and how to read by labeling the colors around you.

MATERIALS:

- Index cards
- A marker or sharpie
- Tape

DIRECTIONS:

- Write the word "Red" on an index card. Tape the card to something that is red in your home. Do the same with other colors. You can label as many or as few items as you wish.



QUESTIONS:

- What letters do you see in these words?
- Can you find something else that is red? (or whatever color you are focusing on)

Magic Number 8

There are eight cars in the freight train. How many others sets of eight can you find? Repetition with numbers is a key way that kids learn.

MATERIALS:

- A copy of *Freight Train*
- Objects in sets of eight: spoons, cups, crayons, toy cars, socks, really anything

DIRECTIONS:

- Count the eight cars in *Freight Train* together.
- Count other sets of eight together.

