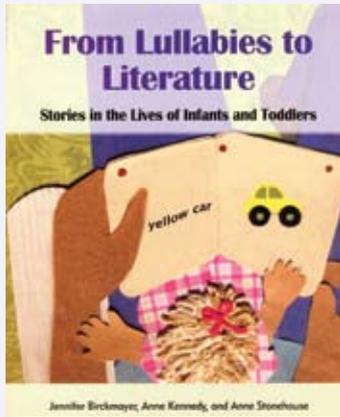


Resource reviews

by Lauren Boyle, Angela Owens and Phillip Rowell

From lullabies to literature: Stories in the lives of infants and toddlers



Stories enrich and expand children's lives; they strengthen the relationships around children; and they support emerging literacy skills. These three core beliefs are the central themes of this book and reinforce the importance of recognising the

language needs of infants and toddlers.

The authors believe that stories are essential to children's ability to acquire, comprehend and express language. Language is not only seen and heard through the printed and spoken word, but can also be encouraged through songs, rhymes, movement, gestures, games, role modelling and role plays.

By focussing on infants and toddlers, the book reminds us that young children 'deserve to be understood for who they currently are'. This means, acknowledging that children, at any age, have a need to communicate and be communicated with. This is expanded on in chapters which discuss how child care professionals can actively observe, plan for and promote a range of language experiences.

By referring to many practical examples and strategies to assist services implement and document their language experiences, *From lullabies to literature* promotes the use of books in programs, the art of effectively telling, reading and sharing stories and the benefit of collaborating with families and communities.

A worthwhile addition to a service's resource library, this book can help services approach language development from a holistic perspective and highlight the need for infants and toddlers to tell their own stories ■

Birckmayer, J., Kennedy, A., & Stonehouse, A. (2008). *From lullabies to literature: Stories in the lives of infants and toddlers*. Castle Hill, NSW: Pademelon Press.

Are you listening? Fostering conversations that help young children learn

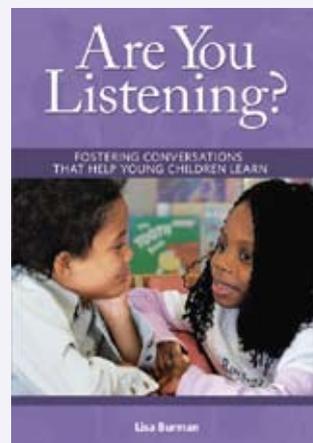
In her book *Are You Listening?* Lisa Burman explores the inherent value of talking with children to engage them as active participants in their own learning.

The book consists of eight chapters that examine issues including:

- how conversations help children to learn
- the features of effective conversations with children
- how learning environments and programs can be set up to foster positive conversations in child care settings
- practical strategies for capturing, interpreting and using conversations with children to promote their learning.

Chapter seven specifically looks at ways in which child care professionals can 'listen' to children who don't engage in verbal conversations, either because they don't want to or because they have a language delay. This section of the book examines strategies for gaining insights into these children's thinking through their non-verbal activities, such as their play, drawing and construction.

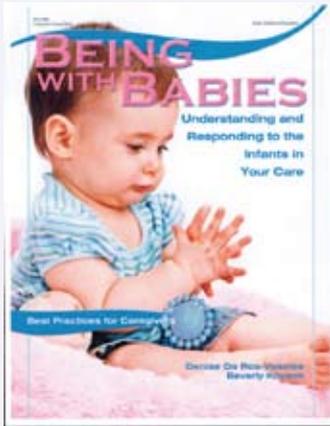
Are You Listening? includes many real examples of conversations between child care professionals and children which help to clearly illustrate the concepts presented in the book. It provides many



practical suggestions which will assist professionals to reflect upon the conversations that already occur in their service, as well as ideas to help them to facilitate more effective conversations to encourage children's genuine engagement in their own learning ■

Burman, L. (2009). *Are you listening? Fostering conversations that help young children learn*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Being with Babies. Understanding and responding to the infants in your care



Being with Babies is a practical resource designed for both new and experienced child care professionals. It uses everyday scenarios to model how to care for babies and support experiences by referring to developmental stages as a guide

to expected behaviours. In the book babies are defined as children from six weeks to 15 months old.

Reflecting on Magda Gerber's Resources for Infant Educators' philosophy, the authors demonstrate that from birth, infants are unique individuals with the capacity to participate in relationships and interact with people and objects in their environment. The resource recognises the special role child care professionals perform when caring for babies and encourages readers to question how they can make a difference to babies' lives through responding, relating and recognising the individual needs of infants.

The step-by-step outline of each chapter aims to support and guide child care professionals to understand babies and how their relationships can be filled with rich and meaningful experiences in child care. Topics covered include developing relationships with babies, using observation to understand babies, communicating with babies, selecting appropriate toys and setting up safe and effective learning environments.

Divided into issue, rationale, goal and scenario sections, each chapter examines common beliefs child care professionals may have when working with infants. By addressing these, the book illustrates the experiences infants will benefit from and outlines the goals for implementing the developmental examples provided ■

Kovach, B., & Da Ros-Voseles, D. (2008). *Being with babies. Understanding and responding to the infants in your care*. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House Inc.

Owl Babies

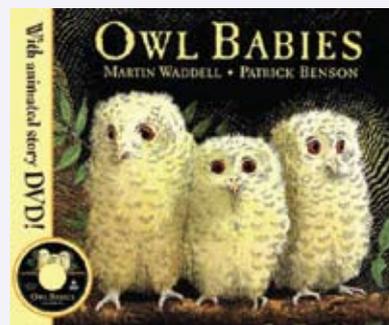
Owl Babies tells the story of three baby owls, Sarah, Percy and Bill who wake up one evening to discover that their mother is missing. Sarah, Percy and Bill begin to think about what might have happened to her, coming up with many possibilities.

While older sister Sarah takes a very practical approach, guessing that their mother has gone hunting for the family's food, Percy tries to be brave, but clearly has some doubts about whether their mother will return. Bill, as the youngest sibling, just wants his mum to come home. Fortunately, the story ends happily when their mother returns, and reassures her children that she will always come back.

This story book includes themes and language that many young children will understand and it explores the anxieties and fears that children can experience when they are separated from a parent.

The text is simple, with some repetitive elements that will help even very young children to easily predict and participate in the reading of the book. The book's beautiful illustrations will also help emerging readers to understand the story.

Suitable for children aged two years and up, child care professionals may find this picture book useful to assist children who are settling into child care. It may be particularly beneficial for children who are experiencing separation anxiety and need reassurance that their parents will return to collect them from child care. For older children



the book's themes may also open up opportunities for discussions about issues such as feelings, families and caring for each other ■

Waddell, M., & Benson, P. (1992). *Owl Babies*. London: Walker Books.