



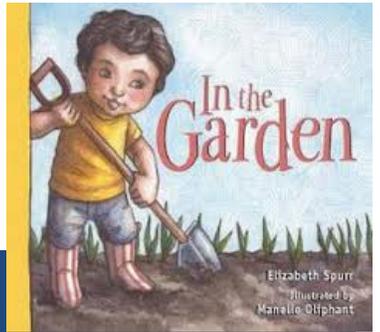
Rollins Center for Language & Literacy

A READ GUIDE For Families with Toddlers

Created by the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School

In the Garden

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R Repeat the Book

First Read (push in events): Look at the cover, read the title and say, “I wonder why this boy is digging? Let’s read and find out.” As you read, explain any words your child may not understand like *soil, plant, garden, patient, excited, sunshine, shovel, sprout, & seed*. Have fun acting out words like *dig, excited, grow, rain, & pull*. With young toddlers, you may want to gently take their hands and help them act out those words, too. Point out things in the illustrations to help support learning the vocabulary. During the first read, focus on what is happening in the story (the events). After finishing the first read, ask the question suggested in the A (Ask Questions) section of this guide.

Second Read (push in thoughts and emotions): Before reading, say, “Remember this boy, and when he found those sprouts growing? I wonder how he felt when he first saw those sprouts growing? Let’s read and find out.” Follow the same procedure as the first read with the vocabulary, but focus on thoughts and emotions, or feelings, of the characters during this read. Say things like, “He must be really excited to see those leaves sprouting from the dirt.” Speak from the character’s point of view now and then, saying, “I bet he’s thinking, “Those seeds are taking forever to grow! It’s hard to be patient!” With toddlers, you may want to help them point to pictures, turn pages, and copy gestures you make while reading (ex: patting hands together as if brushing off dirt to talk about the *dirt*, or reaching hands up high when you talk about *growing*). After finishing the read, ask the question for the second read given in the A (Ask Questions) section of this guide.

Third Read (read to pull language): Before reading, look at the cover, and say, “Do you remember the title of this story?” (help child tell you the title, *In the Garden*.) Then say, “Remember the boy, and how he had this watering can (on p. 10)? I wonder why he watered the seeds? Let’s talk about it and find out.” As you go through the book, instead of reading all the words, encourage your toddler to participate as much as possible on each page by telling you what happened, and how the character felt about what happened on each page. Ask the question for the third read after you finish.

E Engage and Enjoy

In addition to acting out words as described in the first read, use different voices for the different characters when you read. Encourage your child to act out things in the story with you, and take their hands and gently help them act out gestures as you read the story if they need support. For example, you might say, “Look at the rain. It’s raining!” while making your fingers wiggle like falling rain from high to low, and then help your child imitate that action, while saying, “rain!” and pointing at the rain in the book.

A Ask Questions

Remember that the talk surrounding the book is the most important thing. Encourage interaction during each story reading time by asking these questions at the end of each read:

After Read 1, ask: “Why is the boy digging here? (on the cover) (*because he’s planting a garden*)

After Read 2, ask: “How does the boy feel when he sees the sprouts come up from the dirt? Why? (*excited or really happy, because he had forgotten about them, because they take a long time to start growing*)

After Read 3, ask: “Why did the boy water the seeds? (on p.10) (*because plants need water to grow; water & sun.*)

D Do More with the Book

Continue the fun of the story by choosing some of the activities on the back to do with your toddler.

Do More with the Book!

Activities for Families with Toddlers for “In the Garden”

- Take your toddler outside on a nature walk. Stop and point out *trees, leaves, dirt, water, plants*, and the *sun* as you see them, and say things like, “We just read our book about dirt and leaves. These leaves are just like in our book!”
- While outside, allow your toddler to use an old measuring cup to *dig* in the *dirt* outside with your help. Point to the *dirt* as you talk about it, and repeat the word *dig* as you dig, pairing the word with an action. Use the same gestures you used when reading the book to talk about *digging* and *dirt* (brushing hands together as if brushing dirt off of them), and encourage your child to copy those gestures, too.
- At bath time, point out the *water*, and use a small cup to pour the water and let your toddler watch it trickle. Repeat the word *water* as you pour it back into the tub each time, and make the words musical as you say them. For example, “Look, it’s water! Water! Here comes the water! Water! This water looks like rain!”
- If you have *plants* inside or outside your home, bring your toddler with you as you *water* the plants. Describe what you are doing. Narrate your actions. You might say, “These plants are getting dry. They need some water. I think I’ll fill up this pail and water them. Look, here comes the water! Plants love that water! It helps them grow!” Try to be an everyday sportscaster for your toddler, to help them make sense of the world.
- As you are changing your toddler’s diaper, talk about how they are *growing*. Stretch an arm up high as you say the word “*grow*” to help your toddler understand that to *grow* is to get bigger. As you get your toddler cleaned and dressed, talk about each part of her body that has *grown*. For instance, you could say: “Your legs have grown and are getting so long! Your arms have grown, and now you can reach up so high!”
- At the grocery store, point out the *leaves* and *plants* you see in the produce section. Talk about the names and textures of all the different foods that *grow* in nature, such as: “Wow, those strawberries smell so sweet! They are bright red and look so bumpy! And look at the leaves on the top of each one. Those are tiny little leaves!”
- In the car, as you drive, talk about whether it is *sunny* or *rainy* or cloudy. Talk about how the *sun* makes us feel warm, and *rain* cools us off. Talk about how sometimes we need sun shades or sunglasses, because the *sun* can be too bright for our eyes in the car sometimes. Talk about how the *sun* helps *plants* *grow* and is up high in the sky.
- As your toddler gets ready for a nap, sing a soothing song that relates to this book, such as “You are my Sunshine” or “Oh Mr. Sun.” Here are the lyrics:
*Oh Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun, Please shine down on me.
Oh Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun, Hiding behind the tree?
These little children are asking you, to please come out so we can play with you.
Oh Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun, Please shine down on me.*
- If your toddler is old enough to eat soft foods, during meal and snack times, describe the foods he is eating and how those foods grow. Talk about how bananas grow on trees and are yellow, and we have to peel them to get to the soft part. Talk about how rice grows in water and is a grain, and we have to boil it in water to make it soft enough to eat. Talk about how peas grow in pods, and we have to take them out of their shells so that we can eat them.
- Read your toddler other books related to this one. For example, you could read: “Toddler Loves Spring” by Karen Katz, “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle, “Grow Up” by Nina Laden, or “Big Little” by Leslie Patricelli.
- While your toddler is sitting on your lap, play the “So big” game. Ask your toddler, “How big are you?” Then, help your toddler spread her arms out wide and say, “So big!” in a musical voice. Repeat this game over and over, and your toddler will soon learn to open her arms wide and make you laugh. Then, talk about how your toddler is *growing*, and getting so big.
- Sing the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” with your toddler while you are doing the dishes or laundry. This will give your toddler more chances to hear the words “rain” and “sun” in another situation besides the “In the Garden” book, which will help them understand the words better and better. The words are: *The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Up came the sun and dried up all the rain, so the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again.*

The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School is committed to providing teachers and school leaders professional development in research-based strategies to foster the language and literacy skills of young children.



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