



BELOVED CLASSICS, INSPIRED CONVERSATIONS,
AND BIG IDEAS... NOW DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR.

PRIME TIME

preschool

BOX



GROWN-UP
GUIDE

CREATED BY

PRIME TIME
PRESCHOOL READING



Welcome to the Prime Time Family

The Prime Time Preschool Box you have received contains an at-home version of Prime Time Preschool. Prime Time Preschool is an early literacy and learning program inspired by Prime Time Family Reading, an award-winning program of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. Prime Time Family Reading has supported tens of thousands of families like yours in bonding together through joyful reading, discussion, and play!

The goals of Prime Time are to:

- Deliver quality humanities education experiences
- Increase public library use
- Increase family bonding and reading time
- Positively affect reading-related attitudes and behaviors
- Improve academic achievement

Families who have participated in Prime Time programs have consistently reported improvements in their child’s relationship to reading, as well as increased self-confidence, critical thinking, and even a strengthening of their bond to their families.

The Prime Time Preschool Box is designed to help you achieve the same goals and positive results on your own. Welcome to the Prime Time family!



What’s in your Prime Time Preschool Box:

- a set of award-winning books focusing on humanities themes that connect us all.
- a Prime Time Grown-Up Guide (it’s in your hands!) to help you make the most of your kit with your child.
- extra goodies to extend the joy of reading and learning together as a family.

What makes Prime Time unique

There’s a reason Prime Time has received so many awards and is so beloved by families. Prime Time combines quality children’s literature with collective learning strategies that engage every participant in rich conversations about the issues that matter most in our lives. At Prime Time programs, we go beyond the Who, What, When, and Where, and dig into the Why. Through the use of open-ended questions about big ideas, Prime Time fosters critical thinking and also, connection. At Prime Time, there are no wrong answers—only opportunities to deepen understanding through story-sharing, joyful conversation, and play. This collective and welcoming approach launches a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Making the most of your Prime Time Preschool Box

Prime Time Preschool programs occur one night a week over six weeks. We encourage you to select your own “Prime Time night” once a week, and to stick with it. Establishing a regular reading routine will help embed reading as a beloved activity to return to again and again. Many families read together before bedtime. Some read together before talking about the books over a shared meal. When you read together is less important than making your Prime Time time meaningful. Your Grown-Up Guide provides both general tips and session-by-session ideas for how to do just that!

Story-Sharing vs. Story-Telling

We like to think of reading aloud with children as story-sharing rather than “story time.” When we “tell” stories, we may take on the role of a performer, which can then turn your child into a passive member of an audience. When we share stories, we are equal participants. Giving your child—even your very young child—the opportunity to participate actively in story-sharing will help develop their confidence, creativity, and critical thinking.

Story-Sharing Strategies that Build Big Ideas:

Invite your child to make sound effects

Ask them to chime in on parts of the story that repeat

Add hand gestures and motions to the story, and have your child do them with you

Use facial expressions to convey reactions to the story and characters’ feelings

Draw attention to the illustrations in the story

Invite your child to compare the story to their own experiences

Ask your child to predict what the story will be about—and what will happen next

Ask your child what they would do if they were in the story

Ask your child to extend the story by adding to it or changing the ending

Encourage your child to find evidence in the story to support their ideas

Tips for Talking toward Big Ideas

After story-sharing, ask your child an open-ended question. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” and have no one right answer.

To dig deeper into the big ideas, ask “Why?”

Embrace silence. If your child doesn’t have a response right away, use the five-second rule (silently counting to five before moving on or trying again) in order to give them more time to think.

Listen for understanding. Sometimes when we talk with others, we listen while thinking up our own response. Demonstrate that you’re listening by restating what you heard. If you don’t understand your child’s response, try saying, “I don’t think I understand. Can you say that a different way?”

If your talk takes an off-topic turn, go back to the book!

Building on Big Ideas through Play

Simple Centers

If you disagree with your child, feel free to say so, but do so in a way that doesn’t undermine your child’s point of view. Simply stating, “I disagree because…” helps your child understand that differences of opinion are normal, and that you can disagree without harming others. At Prime Time, everyone’s ideas are equally valuable.

Bigger ideas often emerge when you make comparisons between books or connections to other texts or ideas. Try “Does this remind you of any other stories?” (or experiences or events).

Young children need experiences that include exploration and interaction. At a Prime Time Preschool program, children build on the story-sharing by engaging in center-based play. “Centers” are stations around a room where materials are present for a child to freely and safely create and explore. If you can, set up a few centers where you are, and encourage your child to play once you have completed your story-sharing. Ideally, your child will have three options to choose from (choice is empowering!). Make the most of your role as your child’s primary source of learning by asking your child to explain their creations and play. Encouraging them to verbalize their actions helps build vocabulary and critical thinking.

Book Center: Every home should have a welcoming place for a child to read. If you don’t have a bookshelf, a stack of books on a table near a beanbag or other soft seating will do!

Art & Writing Center: You don’t need elaborate materials to set up this center. Blank paper and crayons will invite your child to generate ideas from their imagination.

Dramatic Play Center: A laundry bin stocked with old clothes can allow a child to act out the adult roles they know. Add a few old kitchen items, stuffed toys, a basket, and a blanket and your child has everything they need for a pretend picnic!

Block & Building Center: This center has materials for building. Wooden or cardboard blocks, Duplos (or another connector-type block) will allow your child to build worlds that look to them like the big world around them.

Science Center: Materials that help your child learn about cause and effect make up a science center. Flashlights or other toys that go into motion through the push of a lever or button work well. So do items from nature, such as an assortment of rocks or shells or leaves of different sizes, shapes and colors. Measuring tools like a ruler or measuring cups allow children to explore amounts.

Puzzle Area: Puzzles are great tools for exploration and creative play. So are maps. Both are extensions of the Science Center.

And now, on to your Prime Time Preschool program: Prime Time Cares

The Prime Time Cares book series and discussion guide feature themes that emerge during times of crisis: coping, self and community, creativity and improvisation, bravery, generosity and altruism, and resilience. The questions and center activities provided here are crafted to help you and your child consider these themes together. Before you read together, review the questions and center suggestions. Pick a few questions and plan a center activity that you think will inspire rich conversations with your child. Between sessions, keep building on your conversations through extension activities you can do at any time.



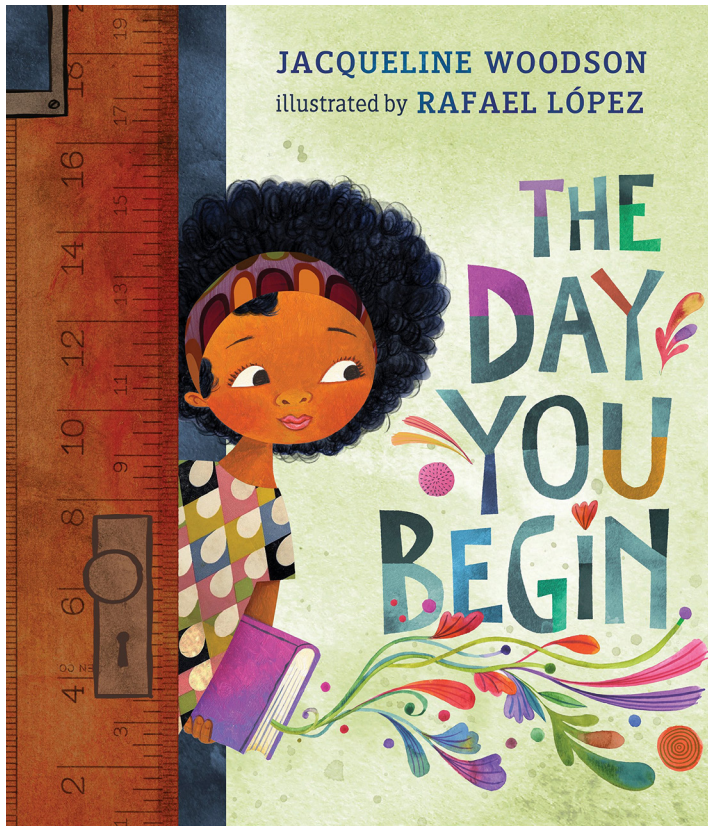
Session 1:

Oral Tradition and Coping

Through Story-Sharing

How do stories help people cope with difficult times?

Stories come to us in many different ways. We watch stories on our various devices and read them in books, but we also tell each other stories all the time. For this first Prime Time session with your child, set the stage for Prime Time nights by sharing a story or stories that have been important to you during difficult times. Perhaps there is a story that has been shared in your family that has helped you feel connected to your loved ones. Share it! Do you have a favorite book that you have read over and over again? What do you love about that book? Demonstrating to your child that stories have lifted you up will help them see how stories can do the same for them.



The Day You Begin

by Jacqueline Woodson

Angelina and her classmates share stories of their summer travels. But Angelina didn't go anywhere particularly special, and that leaves her feeling less than special. What she learns, though, is that our differences may, in fact, be our strength.

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 How are we different? How are we alike? If we are different then can we share stories together? How? What did the author say in the book about being alike and different? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
- 2 What does the title of the book mean? The author repeats it in the story. On the day you begin - what do you think?
- 3 Have you ever been part of a group when a new person joined? Tell us about it. What did they do? What did you do? Did they stay a part of the group? Did they move on?
- 4 Sometimes our group stays the same, but the circumstances are what change. What happens then? What do we begin then?
- 5 How does sharing all these stories make you feel? Why do we tell stories?

Art Center

Materials needed: Paper, markers and/or crayons, scissors, glue sticks.

Place your hands on the paper and trace around them. Cut them out and glue them all on one piece of paper together. Look at how they are different and how they are alike. Write the name of your family on the paper. Label each of the hands with the person's name.

Book Center

Materials Needed: Copies of all of the Prime Time books for the coming weeks.

Look over all of the books. Do not read them; just give them a preview. Wonder about the pictures and what the stories might be about. Think about how great it will be to share these stories, and which ones you are most interested in reading with the group.

Block Center

Materials Needed: Set of blocks, small plastic figures of people. (paper cutouts will work too).

Build some walls with the blocks for the people to visit. Act out the story and having new people enter the group. What makes them each different? What makes them each alike? Help them find a way to fit in.



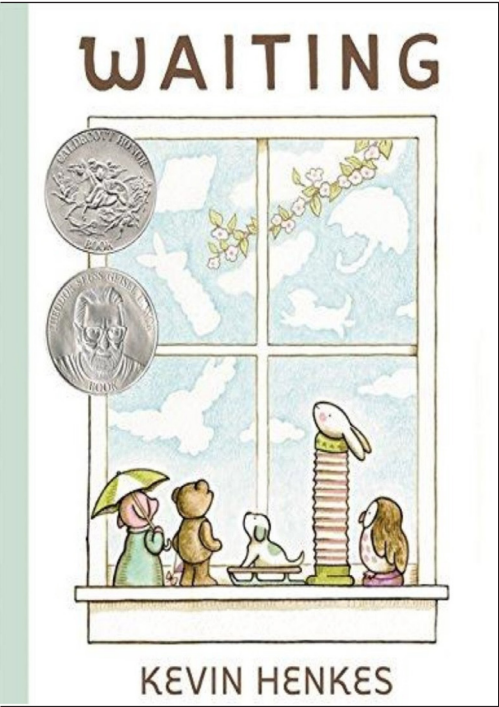
Keep Building!

- Think of a story about a family member that has been passed down through your family. Share it this week with your children.
- If you have photos of the person involved share them too. Talk about what they mean to your family then and now.

Session 2: Self and Community

Can you be yourself without a community to support you?

We like to think of ourselves as individuals, people who are not dependent upon anyone else. At the same time, most of us value being part of different communities. Some of these communities are large, such as our country, while others are quite small, such as a religious organization or a town where we live. Some say that it is only through the impact of other people that we can truly have a sense of ourselves. The books and activities for this second session will allow you and your child to explore the relationship between self and community.



Waiting by Kevin Henkes

A group of figurines on a windowsill sit waiting for... well what is it that they are waiting for? Does “waiting” with a particular outcome in mind change the way we see the world?

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 Have you ever waited for something? What was it? How did it feel to wait? How did it feel when it finally happened?
- 2 This story shows us there are different things to wait for, but are there different ways to wait as well? How can you tell? What clues do you have that there are or are not different ways to wait?
- 3 On the cover of the book (and inside) what do you notice about the view out the window? Why do you think the author made the clouds that way? Have you ever looked at clouds and saw pictures? Tell us about it.
- 4 How do you think the owl, pig, bear, rabbit, and puppy came to be together? What keeps them together? What makes them a group?

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 5 The cats joined the group and became a part of “the community.” Who is in your community? Why do you think the cats were able to join the “waiting” group?
- 6 While the cats were successful in joining the group, the elephant was not. Why do you think that happened that way? Is there a way it could have been different? Have you ever joined a group but not stayed for long? Tell us about it.
- 7 In the story, sometimes one of the group would leave. How did the rest feel about that? How do you feel when someone leaves? It also said they would always come back. How do you feel when someone returns?
- 8 What do you think will happen next for the group on the windowsill? Why do you think that?

Art Center

Materials needed: Blue construction paper (or a dark color) and white chalk; hairspray to set the chalk.

Show your child how to turn the chalk on the side, lengthwise, against the paper and rub with it. Let them make clouds by swirling the sideways chalk in rounded motions. Do they see any pictures in the clouds they made? Spray lightly with hairspray to set the chalk so it doesn’t smudge.

Writing Center

Materials Needed: Plain paper and markers or crayons.

With your child, draw a picture of the people who live in your home. Now add other people who are close to you and you see often. Now add other people you see and talk to but maybe don’t know as well. Label the people in the picture. This is your community!

Block Center

Materials Needed: Set of blocks. Small toy figures of various types (they do not have to match those in the story).

Encourage your child to use the blocks to make a long windowsill like in the story. Line up the figures on the sill. What are each of them waiting for? What do they see looking out the window? Do any of them leave? Do they come back? Could someone new arrive? What can happen out the window?



Keep Building!

Spend some time outside this week looking at clouds. Share what shapes you see and maybe try to draw them. Who else do you think sees those clouds? What do you think they would see in them?

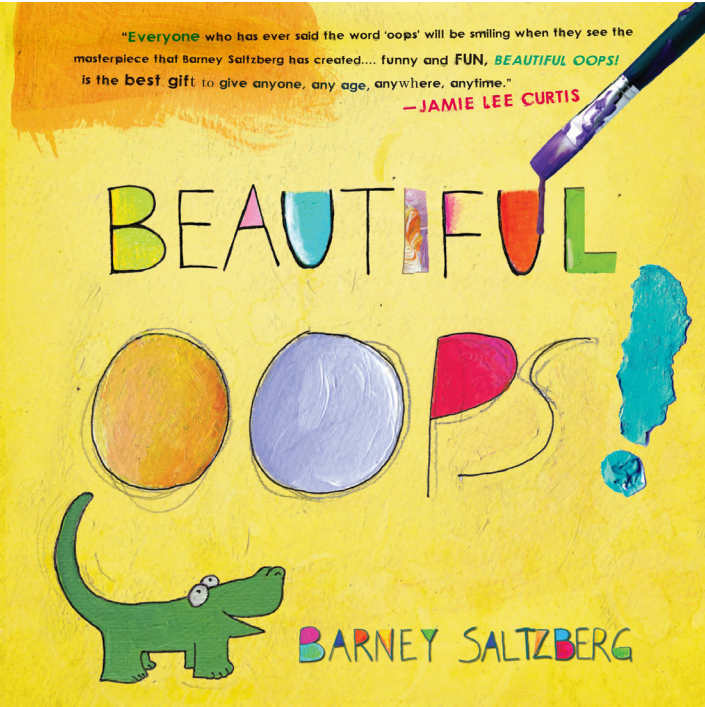
Set a timer for one minute (or 30 seconds if that is more tolerable). Sit together and wait for the timer to go off, doing nothing. How did it feel to wait?

If you can catch a time during the week when you are waiting for something together, point it out (i.e. waiting for a show to start, some food to cook, someone to arrive, etc.). Talk about how it feels. Is this different than waiting for the timer? How?

Session 3: Creativity and Improvisation

Is art as important to our lives as food, clothing, and shelter?

Many of us learned that food, clothing, and shelter are the essentials for human life. But what about art? Is it less important than life’s so-called “basics”? Many people think not. After all, art—and this term stands for all creative activities such as painting, making music, dancing, etc.—is generally deemed very important by most people. This session asks you to consider why art is so important. After all, a poem cannot feed anyone. Or can it?



Beautiful Oops by Barney Saltzberg

This manipulative board book allows you and your child to look at “mistakes” through different lenses—and by making new things from the story’s many “oops.”

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 We usually say “oops” when we make a mistake, but the title of this book is Beautiful Oops. Why do you think the author called it that?
- 2 Have you ever said “Oops!” before? Why? What happened? What did you do about your “oops”? Does this story make you feel differently about your “oops”? Why or why not, and if so, how?
- 3 What surprised you about the illustrations in the book? Which was your favorite? Why?
- 4 In one of the illustrations, the spill, the author changes the picture three times. Why would he do that? Look at the spill. Can you see anything else it could be? What? Why do you think that?
- 5 What does it mean to be creative? What does it mean to improvise? What other ways besides art can we be creative? Are there other ways we improvise?

Art Center

Materials needed: Plain paper, and markers or crayons.

Draw a simple scribble on a sheet of paper. Have your child tell you what they think it looks like. Have them turn the scribble into what they see (or help them), like in the story.

Art Center 2

Materials Needed: Colored paper, glue sticks.

Your child will need to start with 2 sheets of clean paper. Have them write their name on the back of one sheet. Start a tear in the second sheet. See what happens? What shape do they get? Would they like to glue it down or tear it again? Let your child continue to tear and glue to create a torn paper collage. They can make a picture if they would like, or a patten... anything. Enjoy seeing what happens when the paper tears!

Block Center

Materials Needed: Set of blocks, other odds and ends (nuts and bolts, erasers, old corks, plastic lids, empty pill bottles, shoe strings, etc. Think kitchen junk drawer).

Let the children build whatever they would like with the blocks. Encourage them to add the odds and ends in creative ways. Celebrate their creativity!



Keep Building!

Think of a story about a family. Talk together about a time when you made a mistake. What did you do about it? Did you try to hide it? Did you try to fix it? What happened in the end? Was it OK in the end, or did

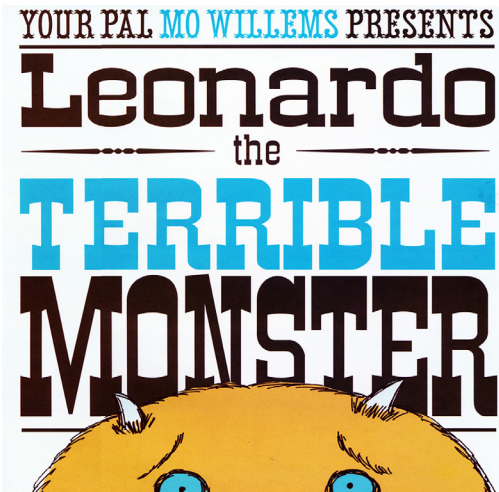
it take a long time to get over? What did you learn from the process? Would you do things differently now?

Session 4:

Bravery

Can you be brave and scared at the same time?

There are times when we are called upon to be brave. Trying new things for the first time, confronting a conflict, and stepping out of our comfort zones all require us to muster up some courage. But what makes something, or someone, truly brave? Are we being brave if we are acting out of fear?



Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems

Leonardo thinks he is a terrible monster because he can’t scare anyone. As the story progresses, though, he learns that maybe being “scary” isn’t what he really wants to be.

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 Was Leonardo a terrible monster? What would a great monster be like? What did you think of the other monsters in the book—were they better monsters than Leonardo? Why or why not?
- 2 Why do you think Leonardo wasn’t scary? Is there anything he could have done to be more scary? If no, then why? If yes, how?
- 3 What word would you use to describe Leonardo? Why that word? What word would you use to describe the boy? Why?
- 4 Our theme is bravery. What does that have to do with this story? Was anyone brave in the book? What does it mean to be brave? Are there different ways to be brave?

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 5 Why do you think the boy is not afraid of Leonardo? Leonardo researched the perfect person to scare - was he just wrong? What do you think?
- 6 In the book it says Leonardo made a “big decision.” What was it? What made it a big decision? Was it the right decision? Why or why not?
- 7 What do you think would make Leonardo happiest: to be a great monster, or to be a great friend? Why do you think that? What clues do you see in the story?

Art Center

Materials needed: Paper, markers, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, paper cutouts of shapes like circles, triangles, etc.

Design your own terrible monster! Will they be big? Will they have lots of teeth? Will they be hairy and have big feet? Will they have horns and claws? Draw your monster or use paper shapes to construct them. Give them a name and see who they will scare!

Dramatic Play

Materials Needed: Various costume props for being “monsters,” such as fuzzy scarves or wraps to drape on, gloves for pretend claws, large fuzzy slippers for feet, and/or fuzzy hats or headbands with horns or feelers. These can even be made from paper or cardboard. They don’t have to be fancy. They just have to suggest “monster.”

Pretend to be the monsters in the story. Who is the scariest monster?

Block Center

Materials Needed: Set of blocks.

Build a block monster! What will he look like? What will he sound like? What will you call him? Or, build a tall tower for the terrible monsters to come knock down! Take turns being the builder and the monster. Rules: No knocking down until the builder is ready, and no knocking blocks in a way that might actually hurt someone!



Keep Building!

Keep talking together throughout the week about what it means to be brave. Have you ever known someone who was brave? Did you ever have to make a “big decision” like Leonardo did in the book? What was it? How did it work out? How do you feel now about the choice you made?

Session 5:

Generosity and Altruism

Can people really do things to help others or do they only do what makes them feel good?

Many people think that human beings are inherently selfish, out only to increase their own well-being. From such a point of view, generosity and altruism become problematic. After all, contributing to a fund to relieve poverty—an act of generosity and even altruism—does not benefit oneself but those to whom the funds distribute goods. Yet, hardly anyone does not feel the pull of being generous, of doing things to help those “less fortunate.” Why is this so? How does being generous help the person doing the giving? And doesn’t altruism—which involves helping others at some cost to yourself—require someone to act against their own interests? This session’s books will allow you to discuss what it means to give and receive.

JEFF NEWMAN & LARRY DAY

Found

by Jeff Newman
and Larry Day

In this wordless picture book, a young girl who is grieving the loss of a dog finds a lost one and struggles with returning the dog to the owner. When you share this story, you can simply narrate it by describing what you see—or by asking your child what they see.



Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 Why do you think the author chose to make this book without words? Was that a good idea? Why or why not?
- 2 What do you think of the title of this book, Found? Who or what is found in the story? Is anything or anyone not found?
- 3 Have you ever found a pet without an owner? What did you do? What happened? Tell us about it.
- 4 Was it a good idea for the girl to bring the dog home in the rain? Why or why not?

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 5 Would you return the dog to the owner? Why or why not?
- 6 At the end of the story, the girl sees another dog who needs a home. What do you think will happen? Why do you think that?
- 7 What does it mean to be generous? Who was generous in this story? Why do you think that?
- 8 Can you think of a time when someone was generous to you? What happened? How did it make you feel?
- 9 Can you think of a time when you were generous to someone? What happened? How did you feel?

Art Center

Materials needed: Plain paper, stickers, stampers, crayons, markers, scissors, glue, embellishments.

With your child, make a card for someone you know who could use some cheer. Help them write a message in the card and sign it. Make plans to deliver it. You can mail it, or deliver it by hand, or maybe surprise the person with a ring and run! Afterward, talk about how it feels to do something nice for someone for no reason at all.

Dramatic Play

Materials Needed: Coats and a puppet or plush toy dog

With your child, act out the story, perhaps changing its ending. How does it change the way the story feels with words? How does your different ending change the way you feel about the book?

Sharing Center

Materials Needed: Several toys that can be shared either by playing together or by taking turns.

Take turns sharing toys with your child. As you do, talk together about how you are able to share without conflict. How does it feel to work together that way? What would it be like if you didn’t share? Which do they prefer?



Keep Building!

Take time this week to deliver your child’s card made in the art center. Talk about how it feels to do something nice for someone else. As your child to take note of acts of kindness during the week—ones they give and ones they receive.

How does it change your week to approach it with an “Attitude of Gratitude?”

Session 6: Resilience

What can we do when life doesn’t go as planned?

There is an old saying: When life throws you lemons, make lemonade. The idea is that, even when things don’t go the way you would like, you can still get things to turn out as you would like. That’s the idea behind the notion of resilience. A person who is resilient isn’t defeated by negative events that come their way but rather seeks to turn things around to an outcome that is in their favor. They refuse to let circumstances—lemons—defeat them; instead, they take them and turn them into a positive outcome: lemonade. Resilience is an important character trait for people to have, for it allows them to face the difficulties that every human being has to face without being defeated. During this session, talk with your child about how you can make lemonade from lemons—together.



Saturday by Oge Mora

Ava and her mother love their Saturdays together. They make big plans and spend the day together. But on this particular Saturday, nothing seems to go as planned, leading them to reevaluate what’s really important about Saturday. Through this book, talk with your child about how they can cope when things don’t go as planned.

Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 3 When things went wrong, Ava and her mother paused, closed their eyes and let out a deep breath. Why do you think they did that? How did they know to do that together? Let’s try it now (pause, close your eyes and let out a deep breath). How does it make you feel?
- 4 Have you ever had a day when it felt like everything went wrong? What did you do to make it better? Did it work? Why or why not?
- 5 Why do you think Ava and her mother played with puppets when they got home? Why do you think families share stories? How do you feel when you share or hear stories with your family?

Book Center

Materials Needed: Puppets of different types and stories familiar to children like The 3 Bears, The 3 Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, and other old fairy tales. The puppets can be anything! Improvise and use your imagination. Even socks work—just like Ava and her mother used. Chopsticks or wooden spoons work with cutout paper faces glued to the top. Even stuffed animals will work in a pinch. It doesn’t have to be fancy.

Encourage your child to retell the stories they know. Talk about how old the stories are (as old as us grown-ups at least) and how we pass stories along. Wonder together about why all cultures in the world share stories. What is the magic of storytelling?

Lagniappe Center

Materials Needed: Large calendar of the current month, stickers, stampers, markers, and/or crayons to mark the calendar.

Put up a calendar of the coming year. Let your child mark special days for your family on the calendar. This might be family birthdays for the month, holidays, or special outings they are planning. When those days arrive, connect those days to this special Prime Time Preschool time you have spent together. How have your lives been changed? What have you learned about yourself and each other?

Art Center

Materials needed: Plain paper and crayons or markers.

Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Unfold it to show 4 boxes. In each box draw a face that shows how you think Ava felt at different points in the story. For example, 1) when the story time was canceled, 2) when she was having her hair done, 3) when she found out the tickets were left at home, 4) when she played puppets with her mother. Talk about how the feelings are different. Remember together what Ava and her mother do to keep it a good day? Try it together!



Questions to Build Big Ideas:

- 1 What do you think of Ava’s Saturday? Was it a good day? Was it a terrible day? What made it that way? Could it have been different? How?
- 2 Ava and her mother look forward to Saturdays. Do you have a day that you think of as special? What day is it? What makes it special to you?

Try practicing Ava’s coping strategy this week when things don’t go quite as planned. Or make up your own routine for coping and practice that. Report back next week about what you did and how it made you feel.

Pick a special day this week on your calendar together. Make a date to spend some time together playing, reading, cooking, gardening, or anything you enjoy. At the end of the day, talk together about how things did or didn’t go as planned, and how you coped together.



Celebrate and Continue Sharing

When you complete all six of your story-sharing and center sessions, take some time together to reflect and celebrate! Talk together about which books you liked best or least and why. Share one thing you learned that you didn't know when you began your Prime Time sessions and ask your child to do the same. Gather any art or writing you and your child made together. Consider creating a special book so you can look back on this time in the future. Use this "wrap up" session to express your pride in your child, and don't be afraid to say that you are proud of yourself! Finally make a plan to borrow books from your local library... a plan to keep reading and learning, together.

Keep Building with Us!

To learn more about how you can support your child's reading, critical thinking, and learning, visit www.primetimefamily.org. We would love to see you at a Prime Time program, and to hear from you!

Thank you for being part of our Prime Time Family!

The Prime Time Grown-Up Guide is funded in part by the:



NATIONAL
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FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Prime Time, Inc. is a project of the:

