






CONQUERING KINDERGARTEN STORYTIME SIDEKICK

Books are a great way to teach reading and social-emotional learning (SEL) skills.

Here is how you can support children as you read books together:

1. Ask open-ended questions about the SEL skill in the book.
2. Respond to children's answers and build on them to start a conversation.
3. Connect the SEL skill in the book to real experiences in children's lives.

Try the strategy above with the story *The Dot*. In this book, children see the value of the SEL skill Demonstrates Consistent Effort, as they hear about Vashti, who learns the importance of trying even when something is hard. After reading the story, follow the steps below.

GUIDE	 ASK A QUESTION	 RESPOND AND EXTEND	 CONNECT TO EXPERIENCE
EXAMPLE	<p>You say:</p> <p><i>Why do you think Vashti didn't want to try drawing?</i></p>	<p>Child says:</p> <p><i>Because she thought she couldn't do it.</i></p> <p>You say:</p> <p><i>Exactly! She said she couldn't draw so she didn't want to even try.</i></p>	<p>You say:</p> <p><i>Have you ever felt like you didn't want to try something because you thought you couldn't do it? What happened?</i></p>



Want more examples of this strategy?

	1 ASK A QUESTION	2 RESPOND AND EXTEND	3 CONNECT TO EXPERIENCE
EXAMPLE 1	You say: <i>What happens once Vashti sees that the art teacher framed her dot?</i>	Child says: <i>She makes more!</i> You say: <i>Yes. She decides that she can make an even better dot and keeps working on her art to make it better.</i>	You say: <i>Can you think of something that you worked to get better at? Why did you keep trying?</i>
EXAMPLE 2	You say: <i>How do you think Vashti felt at the end of the story when all of her dots were hanging on the walls?</i>	Child says: <i>Good!</i> You say: <i>I think so too. She probably felt good and proud that she had worked hard to make her art the best it could be.</i>	You say: <i>Let's think of a time when you kept practicing something even though it was hard. How did you feel when you got better at it?</i>



What else can you do to teach the skill in this book?

Think like Goldilocks. In a children's story, a little girl named Goldilocks tastes three bowls of food. One is "too hot," one is "too cold," and one is "just right." For children to learn how to demonstrate consistent effort and try their best, they need tasks that are hard but not too hard to work on alone. If tasks are too challenging, children will get discouraged and be less likely to keep trying. If tasks are too easy, children will get bored and stop working. Try to give children tasks that are "just right" for their ability level.

Want to learn more about this strategy?

Research shows that reading and talking with children about books helps them build both reading and SEL skills. To get the most out of each book, read it again to support children's understanding.

It is also helpful to make real-time connections between children's experiences and the books they know. Point out when you see something in your real life that reminds you of a book.

Conquering Kindergarten aims to help families and teachers support children's development of 14 key SEL skills through evidence-based tools. For more tips, book recommendations, and reading guides, **visit CKPhilly.org**.



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