

This activity works best with:

- INDIVIDUAL CHILD
- SMALL GROUPS
- CLASSROOMS/LIBRARIES
- ACTIVITY STATIONS AT LARGE EVENTS

Preparation Time: LOW

Materials: \$

OVERVIEW

Children make their own train books filled with stories told in words and pictures.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

MATERIALS:

- Plain white paper
- Assorted colors of construction paper
- Markers, crayons, and other writing tools
- Stapler or hole punch and yarn
- 1 or more copies of *The Little Engine That Could*

PREPARATION:

- Create blank books using a few pieces of white paper folded inside a piece of colored construction paper. Use stapler to secure binding or punch holes next to fold and use yarn to secure.
- Create examples of train books with pictures and words to share with children.

INTRODUCTION

- Begin this activity by talking about the story – Ask the children, “What was your favorite part of the story?” “Who was your favorite character?” “Which pictures did you like best?” Remember to wait for children to share their ideas before asking another question. Follow their lead and encourage children to share their thoughts. If children are having a hard time getting started bring out the book and review a few pages to stimulate the dialogue.
- Ask children, “Have you ever been on a train ride?” OR “If you could go on a train ride, where would you want to go?” Allow interested children to share their experiences.
- Tell the children that today we will make our own train books. You can write a story about a train trip you have taken, a trip you would like to take or something else from your imagination.
- Share example train books with children so children understand what they will be making. If time permits, read an example book to the children.

ACTIVITY

- Invite children to workspace with writing tools and give children blank books.
- Encourage children to fill their books with stories told in words and pictures.
- If children are struggling, provide a starter sentence – “I went on a train ride to ____.” OR “I want to go on a train ride to ____.”
- Encourage children to describe their ride and what they saw/wish to see along the way. Encourage children to write a few words about these descriptions. If children cannot write on their own encourage them to dictate to adults. Adults should write word for word what the children say and read back the language they have written.
- Encourage children to include a title and themselves as authors and illustrators! See *Tips for Conversation* below.

TIPS FOR CONVERSATION

- Using the cover of the *Little Engine That Could* book, ask children, “Where is the title of the book?” “What does it say?” “What does the title tell us?”
- Using the cover of the book, ask children, “Who is the author?” “What does the author do?” “Would you like to be an author?”
- Invite children to look at some of the pictures in the book. Ask children, “Who made these pictures?” Use the cover of the book to point out the illustrator and to talk about the job of an illustrator. Ask children, “Would you like to be an illustrator?”
- **Be sure to provide children with a simple definition for words – title, author, and illustrator.**
- Encourage children to read their book to you. Ask questions about the story and illustrations – “Can you tell me about this page? Have you been here before? Where did this train go?” Also ask children about their book’s title, author, and illustrator.

LEARNING CONNECTION

- New words: Title / Author / Illustrator
- The conversations you have after reading are just as important as the actual reading.
- Creating books helps children learn reading skills and the fundamentals of how books work. These early literacy skills help prepare children for school.
- Build on children’s ideas by introducing new words and information.