



Told in simple, sweet rhyme, *I'll Build You a Bookcase* celebrates the joy of reading and discovering new stories.

Early literacy specialist Jean Ciborowski Fahey, PhD has crafted a story that celebrates literacy and inspires parents and caregivers to read to their child every day. Coupled with charming and vibrant art by award-winning illustrator Simone Shin, *I'll Build You a Bookcase* makes a wonderful addition to every bookshelf.

Reading for even ten minutes a day has proven to build important language skills, curiosity and memory in young children, and encourages a positive association with books and reading later in life.



Questions for parents and caregivers to ask themselves:

- What do you like about reading?
- How do books make you feel? What do you like most about books?
- Do you remember reading your favorite stories when you were little? Which books were your favorite? Why?
- What do you like about reading with your child?
- What do you like to read about?
- What is your favorite book that you like to read together? What do you like about it?
- If you could build your own bookcase, what would it look like? How would you decorate it?
- Why is it important for everyone to have access to books? Why are books special?

Questions to ask children during and after the story:

- Where do you see the books on this page? Point to the books.
- Who is in this picture?
- There are lots of colors in the artwork. What colors do you see?
- How do you think the family feels when they are reading together?
- What number do you see on this page?
- What animals do you see in this story?
- Where do you like to read books?
- Who do you like to read books with?



Art by Simone Shin from *I'll Build You a Bookcase*

Activities:

- Inspired by the families in the story, you can build and decorate your own bookcase at home. Consider the following materials to use in your own home to begin your special bookcase:
 - Shoe boxes
 - Cardboard boxes
 - Milk crate
 - Cloth basket
 - Side table
- If possible, decorate your bookshelf with reused materials, crayons, markers, or any other art products you have at home. You can use construction paper, tissue paper, wrapping paper, and more. Consider posting a picture of your child's family.
- Create a drawing with your child about what they like most about reading. Where do they like to read? What do they like to read about?
- Ask family and friends to send a picture of them reading. Print out these photos and post them near your special reading space with your child.



How to Read with Your Child

1. Have a small bookcase or dedicated space where your child can keep their books. You can borrow a number of diverse and culturally rich books from the library to start building your special bookshelf.
2. Keep all the books at your child's height so they are easy to pick up and read.
3. Let your child choose which book to read, even if it means rereading the same story countless times.
4. As you and your child read, track the words with your fingers. Touch the spot below each word as you say the word together.
5. Every few pages, stop and pause. Ask a question, point things out, and listen to what your child has to say about the pictures before them.
6. Read with expression! Make the stories come alive by changing your tone with the action or using a different voice for each character.
7. At the end of the story, share your favorite parts. What were your favorite characters, passages, illustrations, and new words? Why? What did the story make you think about? Team up with your child to retell what happened using the pictures for reference.
8. Make reading together a routine! Set aside a special time every day, even if it is just ten minutes. You might read together during breakfast, before naptime or bedtime, or while commuting on a train or bus.



Reading with Babies (age 0 to 2)

- Read with your infant from birth. You can sit your baby on your lap or have them engage with books during tummy time on the floor. This is a great way to bond!
- Read aloud for a few minutes at a time and try to do it as often as you can. If possible, try to provide board books, pictures of babies, and books with rhymes.

Reading with Toddlers (age 2 and up)

- As babies get older, they start to get a lot more active! It's okay if your toddler moves around while you're reading. They're still listening.
- Toddlers like to read the same books over and over again. Repetition is helpful for their brain development. You can also read things like signs and other labels.

For more information on reading with your children at specific ages, look at Reach Out and Read's Parent Resources

<https://rorsd.org/resource-center/parent-resources/#1488329182043-f166810e-1e65>



Creating a Reading Routine:

- Reading routines at home are important. Research shows reading aloud to children at least once a day helps children with language and literacy skills that benefit them not only in school, but for the rest of their lives. For more on the importance of reading out loud to children, see ReadAloud.org for more information <http://www.readaloud.org/why.html>
- Make a special place to read together, such as in bed, under a tree, in a homemade fort, or in a comfortable chair or the couch.
- Set aside a special reading time every day, even if it is just for a few minutes. You can read together during breakfast, before nap time or bedtime, traveling on a train or bus, or while waiting at the doctor's office or laundromat.
- For more ideas on how to make reading with your child fun and engaging, Colorín Colorado has different tips on how to make reading interactive and effective <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/fun-and-effective-ways-read-children>
- Wondering about what reading skills your child needs at their age? Reading 101 from Reading Rockets provides more information about the milestones for children in their age group. For more, go to Reading 101 from Reading Rockets <https://www.readingrockets.org/reading-101-guide-parents>
- Storyline Online is a great resource for busy parents. Celebrated actors read aloud picture books that children can watch anytime. Look out for several Lee & Low Books on the website, such as *Zombies Don't Eat Veggies* and *¡Los zombies no comen verduras!* read by Jaime Camil,

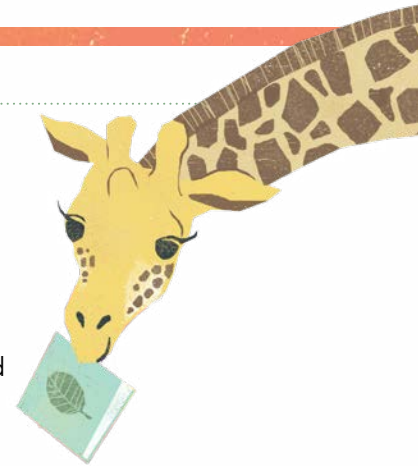
- *Rent Party Jazz* read by Viola Davis, *Hula-Hoopin' Queen* read by Oprah Winfrey, and *Catching the Moon: The Story of a Young Girl's Baseball Dream* read by Kevin Costner and Jillian Estell.
<https://www.storylineonline.net>

How to Curate a Rich Collection of Books at Home

Wondering how to start a small book collection at home, or how to choose the best books from your school or public library? The following resources will help you select wonderful books for you and your child:

- Colorin Colorado has book lists for bilingual children and families, and much more!
<https://www.colorincolorado.org/help-your-child-learn-read>
- The Conscious Kid has book lists that will help you start conversations about race, racism, and much more with your family. <https://www.theconsciouskid.org/>
- Reading Rockets has tips and suggestions for creating a home library that's unique to you and your family. <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/creating-home-library>
- Consult your local PTA for additional support on building your home library. The PTA's parent website, Our Children, has resources for supporting reading at home.
<https://ptaourchildren.org/building-a-home-library/>
- EmbraceRace is an organization dedicated to helping parents with conversations about race and racism. They offer free webinars, book lists, and more, all in the efforts to raise children who are thoughtful, informed, and brave about race. embracerace.org
- Lee & Low Books has reading lists based on theme and broken down by grade. Lee & Low Books also has books that are about specific cultures and traditions that are relevant to your family.
- Read by 4th offers family resources broken down by age group.
www.ReadingPromise.org





About the Author

Jean Ciborowski Fahey, PhD., is an author, parent educator, and speaker dedicated to promoting an early love of reading in children. She was the 2016 Toyota Family Teacher of the Year and won the 2019 William Penn Foundation/OpenIdeo contest for the best children's story manuscript in a field of 500+ competitors. She also consults for a variety of literacy initiatives, and organizations and creates home literacy curriculum for parent home visitors and early intervention specialists. She lives in Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, with her husband, Tom, and dog, Indigo. Visit her online at readingfarm.net

About the Illustrator

Simone Shin is a children's book illustrator whose work is included in Lee & Low's poetry collection *I Remember: Poems and Pictures of Heritage*. Shin is the recipient of a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators, and her illustrations have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Real Simple*, *Wired*, and other publications. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. You can see more of her work at simoneshin.com.



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Themes: Beginning Concepts, Diversity, Families, Literacy, Home, Joy, Imagination, Bilingual, Biracial/Multiracial Interest, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Dreams and Aspirations, Dual Language, Kindness and Caring, Optimism and Enthusiasm

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