



StrongStart Visits

Created in part by Mary Zheng, BSc

StrongStart visits share with young children the joy of books and bears. The key is to make a positive impression of literacy on young children and support their learning and curiosity in a multicultural, supportive, and loving atmosphere.

Theme

To introduce the Reading Bear program to StrongStart classroom children and participating parents.

Goal

The promotion of early reading and awareness of cultural diversity, including local Aboriginal culture.

Objectives

The ambassador will:

- Present his/her personal bear to the children.
- Demonstrate diversity through the example of different bear types.
- Read a book and role model how to read a book to a stuffed bear.

- Introduce the meaning of the bear for First Nations people.
- Introduce the bear paw and bear mitts to each child.
- Read together with the children and participating parents.
- Deliver books and bears to StrongStart children and parents.
- Sing a departure song at the end of the session and give each child a hand stamp bear paw print.

Materials

Reading Bear book bag that contains:

- Large black bear
- Reading Bear box that contains the bear mitts, and bear paw casting
- Bear paw marker stamp
- Oldland, Nicholas. (2009). *Big Bear Hug*. Toronto: Kids Can Press
- First Nations bear colouring sheet
- Student volunteers' personal bear
- First Nations bear bag
- Symptom Checker for Children pamphlets (optional if medical students are present)
- Boxes/RB tote bags of book, teddy bears & letter to child to read to their bear. leave with SS teacher and inform the parents that you have left bags of books for them to take home.

For First Nations, the bear symbolizes family, strength, and respect for the Musqueam traditional territory. This is an opportunity for storytelling and oral history to come alive. If a medical student is participating in the visit, he/she may also distribute the Symptom Checker for Children pamphlet.

Description of the visit (45-60 minutes)

The purpose of the visit is to introduce the Reading Bear program to StrongStart classroom children and parents. Tote bags of books and teddy bears will be available for families to take home. Ambassadors will promote early reading to the children by reading to stuffed bears and demonstrating cultural diversity through different bear species.

*Please call the children, friends and not boys or guys.

As the StrongStart program is a drop-in program, there may not be many students at the beginning of the visit.

Ambassadors can repeat activities, such as the reading of *Big*



Bear Hug, a second time if significantly more students have arrived since the first reading. The best time to plan the visit is at 11:00AM.

Session order

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

First, the ambassadors introduce themselves and their bears. They share the meaning their bears had for them when they were growing up and that they read with their bears. Please thank the teacher and children for having you visit today.

II. Diversity (10 minutes)

The ambassadors introduce the different types of bears and their country of origin (panda, black bear, grizzly bear, sloth bear and polar bear). If appropriate, the different types of stuffed bears are passed around among the children so that each gets a chance to hug the bears. They share one fact about each type of bear.

III. Literacy (10 minutes)

Ambassadors read *Big Bear Hug* to the class, with the stuffed bears on their laps. While reading, ask the class to make noises like a bear such as growling. Ambassadors get children to stand up and give themselves a big bear hug like in the book. Ambassadors share that children can read and hug their bears at bedtime.

IV. Bear facts (10 minutes)

Ambassadors then share the mitts and bear paw print, passing them around the class. If the children are attentive you can read the second book, *Bear hug*. The children love to touch the cover of this book so get them to feel it after you read this book.

V. Buddy reading and goodbye (30 minutes)

Ambassadors share with the class that the bears loved the books. Share with the children the First Nations bear colouring sheet (Appendix B). Student volunteers can read with the children and/or do the colouring sheet together.

VI. Departure song (4 minutes)

Sing with the StrongStart children and parents:

“If You’re Happy and You Know It” and “The Wheels on the Bus”

The children love the hug the large bear at the end of the session. You can go to each child and ask them if they wish to hug the bear.

VII. (Optional): Symptom Checker for Children pamphlets

If a medical student volunteer is present, he or she can hand out *Symptom Checker for Children* pamphlets (Appendix 4-2) to parents and provide to them a one-on-one information session about the content.



At the end of the session, please thank the parents, children and teachers for having you as a guest visitor.

Special notes to consider for StrongStart visits:

- Not all children will be paying attention but that is not an issue, ambassadors can proceed with those who are listening
- Children who may not be paying attention to the book readings may still be engaged through the touching of the paw prints or bear paws
- As Denise the bear is quite large, some children may feel too scared or overwhelmed to hug her, so ambassadors can help Denise offer a high-five instead (see picture), or hug a smaller stuffed bear.
- Please refer to the children as friends and not guys or boys.
- Three tips on presenting to young children:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=OB7eEmOJAAyl7b2g3Wl9RRWlnUOU>



Suggested book list

Book of Play: With Northwest Coast Native Art. (2012) Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Counting Wild Bears of the Native Northwest Coast. (2013). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Discover the Animals: First Nations and Native Art Colouring and Learning Book. (2013). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Explore the Animals. Northwest Coast First Nations and Native Art Colouring and Learning Book. (2013). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Learn & Play: With First Nations & Native Art. (2010). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Learn the Colours: With Northwest Coast Native Art. (2010). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications. *Northwest Coast Native Animals*. (2011). Vancouver: Garfinkel Publications.

Sharing our World: Animals of the Native Northwest Coast. (2010). Vancouver: Garfinkel

Grooms, Molly & Guarnotta, Lucia. (n.d.). *We Are Bears*. Belgium: Yoyo Books. Harrington, Jennifer. (2014). *The Spirit Bear*. Toronto: Eco Books for Kids.

Joose, Barbara. (1991). *Mama, Do You Love Me?* San Francisco: Chronicle Books. Lind, Alan. (1994). *Black Bear Cub*. Norwalk, CT: Soundprints.

McEwen, Katharine. (2014). *Bear Hug*. Sommerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press. Morris, Jackie. (2014). *Something about a Bear*. London: Janetta Otter-Barry Books.

- Moore, Suzi & O'Bryne, Nicole. (2013). *Two Little Bears*. New York: Bloomsbury. Oldland, Nicholas. (2009). *Big Bear Hug*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.
- Oliviero, Jamie. (1995). *The Day Sun Was Stolen*. New York: Hyperion.
- Company. Rosen, Michael. (1992). *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Aladdin Books. Simon & Schuster. Silvey, Diane. (2001). *Little Bear's Vision Quest*. Victoria: First Nations Publication.
- Tessier, "Grandma" Tess. (2013). *White Spirit Bear*. Surrey, BC: Hancock House.
- Vanasse, Deb. (2006). *Totem Tale: A Tall Story from Alaska*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books.
- Windsor, Paul. (2011). *Good Morning World*. Vancouver: Garfinkel
- Wood, Don. (1998). *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and THE BIG HUNGRY BEAR*.

Additional Resources

- Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. (2011). Parents. Eyes on Your Child's Brain: Showing You Care Is Smart! In *Encyclopedia of Early Childhood Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/docs/coups-oeil/eyes-on-brain-development-in-children-stimulation.pdf>

Appendix 4-1A: Classroom visit script StrongStart visit

Please view session video: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cqw16plmg142v51/Kindergarten%20visits.m4v?dl=0>

1. First, before entering the classroom. make sure you have your name tag and wear your bear hat and clothing. The children love to see you dressed up. The helper can also dress up and have a bear to present if comfortable with this.
2. Breathing first, done either by the classroom teacher or the student. (Ask the teacher if he/she would like to do the breathing exercise. If not, lead the class in taking three nice, deep slow breaths.) Optional
3. Please refer to the children as friends and not boys or guys.
4. Ambassador introduces him/herself (name, where you are from, what languages you speak, etc.)
5. Ambassador introduces their bear and shares that they love to read to their bears at bedtime. Introduce your partner.
6. Introduce the large black bear.. Hold the bear to your ear as if she is whispering this to you. Tell the class that she is telling you that she brought the children books and teddy bears. She is also asking to read her two favourite books - *Bear Hug*, because she loves to hug everybody,
7. Ambassador reads *Bear Hug* to the class. While reading, ask the class to make noises like a bear and to look like a bear (i.e. when the bear is behind the man, ask what they think the bear is going to do on the next page and what that will looklike
8. Ambassador gets kids to stand up and tell kids to give themselves a big bear hug as though the bear in the book is hugging them. Also, say, "Don't forget, you can do this at bedtime and when you're upset."
9. Put Bear to your ear and say that she is whispering to you that she wants to share some things about herself: Bears can stand on two hind legs so they can hear better, ask the children if they can do that? (Children can stay standing until they read the next book.)
10. In Aboriginal culture, the bear is valued as a symbol of strength and motherhood
11. Bears don't get lost! Bears have an amazing ability to find their way around. Bears have a keen sense of smell. Mother bear can even smell what's cooking in the cafeteria!
12. Bears snore! Bears make many sounds. Bears can make popping or woofing sounds when they are worried. Mom will often talk to her cubs by grunting or blowing. (Ask the kids snore like a bear.)

13. Ambassador reads *Bears Don't Read or Bear Hug* (the book is abbreviated as kids will start to lose attention) and share with the class that soon a buddy will be coming to bring them a bear they can take home. This bear will be so that they can read to their bear at home, just like they did today.
14. Have helpers pass around bear mitts, and say that they are like real bear paws. Also pass around the casting of the bear paw. These will come in the large book that opens and that belongs to the bear.
15. Helpers stay to help pass out the sheets and colour the bears. While children are colouring, the helper can stamp each child's hand with the bear paw stamp. If time runs out, leave the sheet with the teachers for them to colour later, but still give everyone a stamp.
16. Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands" with the classroom.
17. Thank the teacher and the children for having you and ask the parents to read to their children.

Appendix 4-1B: StrongStart Example Letter to Participants



Dear Parents,

The children at this program range from newborns to five years old. Here are some tips for success when working with such a young age group!

Rhymes and songs are prerequisites for reading. Before learning to read, young children learn words through songs and rhymes. You can sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, The Wheels on the Bus, Five Little Monkeys, Five Little Ducks, Slippery Fish and more! YouTube is a great source for songs and rhymes.

If the child seems uninterested in the book, take a break and play with the toys. There are lots of opportunities for literacy during play as well. For example, you can ask them what foods are in the kitchen or what colors are the blocks.

Use other languages. For many children and families, English is not their first language. If you and the family have a shared language (e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin), don't be afraid to speak it. This will make them feel comfortable first before you start reading in English.

Have fun! Be silly, use funny voices, act surprised. Children love when the storyteller is animated. If you sound excited and happy, they will want to know what's going on. Don't worry if you don't finish the book. Remember, there are many ways to encourage literacy in early childhood classrooms!



Appendix 4-1C: First Nations Bear Colouring Sheet

Draw and color a forest for mother bear and her cub. Include other animals, trees, a river and her favorite foods, salmon and berries and a place to sleep. For Indigenous people the bear is a symbol of motherhood and strength.



With permission from Ben Houstie.
Bear family by Bella Bella artist Ben Houstie.
Sponsored by Native Northwest Vancouver, BC.
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Appendix 4-1D: Symptom Checker for Children Pamphlet

Developed by Christine Wang, UBC Medical student 2013 and revised by Pediatrician,
Dr. Janet Greenman. A part of SDPO practicum.



DIARRHEA

How to make your child feel better...

- ⇒ Give your child lots of fluid to drink
 - Infant: continue breastfeeding or formula
 - Young children: oral rehydration solution (such as watered down Gatorade or juice)
- ⇒ Clean up thoroughly
- ⇒ Wash hands frequently

See a doctor if your child... (any of the following)

- ⇒ Diarrhea gets worse
- ⇒ Diarrhea is not better in 3 days
- ⇒ Refuse to eat or drink for more than a few hours

It is an emergency when your child... (any of the following)

- ⇒ **Is 3 months or younger and has a fever**
- ⇒ Has signs of bad water loss:
 - Not going to bathroom for 6 hours or no wet diaper for 6 hours
 - No tears when crying
 - Dry mouth
 - Sunken eyes
- ⇒ Becomes limp or floppy



OTHER RESOURCES

- [8-1-1 non-emergency health service line:](#)

- ⇒ Dial 8-1-1 (or 604-215-8110) to speak to a nurse, a pharmacist or a dietician any time during the day or night



- [Poison Information:](#)

- ⇒ 24-hour line: 1-800-567-8911, or 604-682-5050

- [Online interactive symptom checker:](#)

- ⇒ <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/sx.html>

- [Health Link BC—Children's Health:](#)

- ⇒ <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/conditioncenter/center1007.html>

References: Up To Date, MD Consult, Health Link BC, Canadian Pediatric Society

Healthcare Professional Reviewers: Dr. Joanne Roussy, RN, PhD; Clinician 2; Clinician 3

Participatory Reviewers: (getting consent for putting name on brochure)

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Symptom Checker for Children



Cough

Fever

Vomiting /

Throwing Up

Diarrhea

This symptom checker is only a quick guide. If you are still worried about your child after reading it, please see a doctor.



COUGH

How to make your child feel better...

- ⇒ Avoid anything that causes coughing
- ⇒ Give your child lots of fluid to drink

Cold and flu medication is NOT recommended for children under 6!

See a doctor if your child... (any of the following)

- ⇒ Has weird whistling or hoarse breathing sounds, or has a barking cough
- ⇒ Cough gets worse
- ⇒ Is coughing for 2 weeks
- ⇒ Throw up from the cough
- ⇒ Has a fever that returns after 24 hours

It is an emergency when your child...

(any of the following)

- ⇒ **Is 3 months or younger and has a fever**
- ⇒ Is short of breath
- ⇒ Has difficulty breathing
- ⇒ Lip turns blue or change colour
- ⇒ cough up blood
- ⇒ choked on something
- ⇒ has chest or belly pain with breathing or coughing

FEVER

What are fever temperatures?

- ⇒ Higher than 37.5°C (99.5°F) in the mouth
- ⇒ Higher than 38°C (100.4°F) in the bottom

DO NOT give aspirin to your child!

How to make your child feel better...

- ⇒ Give your child lots of fluid to drink
- ⇒ Room temperature sponge/water bath may help lower body temperature
- ⇒ Do not use ice water or alcohol baths
- ⇒ Do not over bundle your child

It is an emergency when your child ...

(any of the following)

- ⇒ **Is younger than 3 months**
- ⇒ Fever comes and goes for days
- ⇒ Has fever for more than 2 to 3 days
- ⇒ Becomes limp or floppy
- ⇒ Has rash, stiff neck, or bad headache
- ⇒ Has bad stomach ache



VOMITING/THROWING UP

How to make your child feel better...

- ⇒ Give your child lots of fluid to drink
- ⇒ Clean up thoroughly
- ⇒ Wash hands frequently

See a doctor if your child... (any of the following)

- ⇒ Throws up for more than 24 hours
- ⇒ Has bad stomach ache
- ⇒ Has a fever for more than 3 days
- ⇒ Does not/cannot take any fluid

It is an emergency when your child...

(any of the following)

- ⇒ **Is 3 months or younger and has a fever**
- ⇒ Has stiff neck
- ⇒ Throw up **green** or **red/brown** vomit
- ⇒ Becomes limp or floppy
- ⇒ Has signs of bad water loss:
 - Not going to bathroom for 6 hours or no wet diaper for 6 hours
 - No tears when crying
 - Dry mouth
 - Sunken eyes



Appendix 4-1E: One-to-One StrongStart Reading Buddy

Present yourself to the classroom and introduce yourself to the SS teacher. Inform her/him that you are there to read with a child. She will assign you a child. Please introduce yourself to the child and parent. Tell them where you are from and what you are studying. Ask them where they are from and what languages they speak.

The purpose of the visit is to share with the child and parent your love of books and reading. Growing up, some parents may not have had the opportunity to have books in the home or to be read to as a child. In these instances, you can act as a role model on how to make reading fun. You are there to make reading fun, not to teach a child how to read. You may select the books from the classroom or let the child select the book he or she wishes to read. It's ok if the child wishes to read the book several times! You can also bring in one of your favorite childhood books.

Suggested book list

Oliviero, Jamie. (1995). *The Day Sun Was Stolen*. New York: Hyperion.

Company. Rosen, Michael. (1992). *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Aladdin Books. Simon & Schuster. Silvey, Diane. (2001). *Little Bear's Vision Quest*. Victoria: First Nations Publication.

Tessier, "Grandma" Tess. (2013). *White Spirit Bear*. Surrey, BC: Hancock House.

Vanasse, Deb. (2006). *Totem Tale: A Tall Story from Alaska*. Seattle: Sasquatch

Books. Windsor, Paul. (2011). *Good Morning World*. Vancouver: Garfinkel Wood, Don. (1998). *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and THE BIG HUNGRY BEAR*.

Additional Resources

Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. (2011). Parents. Eyes on Your

Child's Brain: Showing You Care Is Smart! In *Encyclopedia of Early Childhood Development*. Retrieved from

<http://www.childencyclopedia.com/sites/default/files/docs/coups-oeil/eyes-on-braindevelopment-in-children-stimulation.pdf>