

LEARNING TIME

Family Tree

by Josh Pyke and Ronojoy Ghosh

It started with a seed, and the seed grew along with the family, until the day the family outgrew the tree.

Thinking of a story of how things grow over time, and how things change and renew – then this is the book for you. See the everyday experiences of family life through the eyes of the onlooking tree. Selected as the 2022 National Simultaneous Storytime book to be shared in schools, libraries and preschools across Australia on 11am, Wednesday 25 May 2022.



Rare and interesting words/concepts: growing day by day, scars in my trunk, feast and famine, drought and storms, silence, outgrown, boughs, dance through the air, settle in lands, bursts.

Key Message for Parents | Children learn language by listening to it, and using it.

Children’s brains are wired for communication.

Some ideas to share with parents/carers are:

- Choose books with varied topics and ideas to build new words into your child’s vocabulary.
- Spend time playing, reading and singing with your child. They love to be with you and share fun experiences.
- Encourage children to re-read books they enjoy, which helps with cementing the words and concepts.

Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

When children feel safe, secure, and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.

Educators can support children’s learning by

- Encouraging children to make choices and decisions. Provide open ended play opportunities that allow children to decide what they want to do.
- Spending time interacting and talking with each child. Talk about what you can see in the environment around you. Talk about what you are doing that day. Ask questions about what the child is doing.

Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

Good Morning

Good morning to you

Good morning to you

Good morning everybody

and welcome to you!



You may like to introduce the book at this stage, or use a song to help prepare your group and introduce the upcoming story and activities.

Song

The Trees are Growing Tall

(Tune: Farmer in the Dell)

The Trees are Growing Tall

(put elbows together – point hands up and spread fingers)

The Trees are Growing Tall

With soil and rain and sunny days

(talk with children to make up actions to suit these words)

The Trees are Growing Tall.



Before Reading

Practice reading the book before you share it with a group. Focus on the interesting words to get the pronunciation and meanings right.

Watch Josh Pyke – talking about the book <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY3kjqgEjXw>

Set up a display with objects from the book or other books from our reading list.

Set up a comfortable area to read the story. Once all the children are seated run through the guidelines of Storytime. Letting children know your expectations at the beginning of the session means there are no surprises for them, and they are more likely to engage with the session.

During Reading

Read the title, author, and illustrator. Point to the words. Use words to describe the book like cover, spine and endpapers.

Talk about what is on the cover, you might say 'There is a white bird, can you see it?', 'This is a big tree! Have you ever climbed a big tree?'

Read the blurb on the back and ask the children what they think they might see in the story.

Run your finger under the words as you read. This helps children make the connection between the text and the sounds/words you are saying.

The illustrations also tell the story so allow children time to look at the pictures on each page. After reading the text pause and let children digest that information along with what they are seeing in the pictures.

Visual literacy, which is the ability to interpret and make meaning from the illustrations, is an important skill for children to learn. Actively telling the children that it's their job to read the pictures while you read the text will help them develop visual literacy skills.

After Reading

There was a lot of information in the book as well as lots of unusual and rare words. Spend some time talking about these words as children may not have heard them before.

You could make a list, and then draw pictures (or have printouts of pictures/photos) to help explain what each words means.

Extension Ideas

Read

- Read more about the author and illustrator from the information on their social media or websites. <https://josh-pyke-touring.square.site/> and <https://ronojoyghosh.com.au/Bio>
- Non-fiction books on trees, showing the seed, root system and real life pictures.
- Read other books about growing up. Visit your local library and browse the collection.



Sing

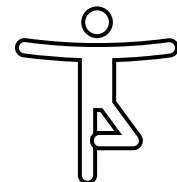
- After you read, talk about songs that include actions like Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.
- Singing slows down speech making it easier to hear the sounds in each word.
- Sing nursery rhymes everyday- check out the Raising Literacy Australia Spotify play list.

Talk

- Talk to other family members about things they like to do as a child. Did they ever climb a tree?
- Talk about all images in the book, did they enjoy a particular image or idea?
- Talk about growing up, what can they do now that they could not do before?
- Discuss things that use trees.

Play

- Allow time to explore a park and play amongst the trees!
- Build a tree or roll seeds using playdough.
- Act out the story!
- Do some yoga, and learn the tree pose.



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STEM Focus

Grow a seed activity

Fast growing seeds like radish make this an interesting activity.

You will need

Seeds, try some different types of seed for comparisons of growth (eg, cress, beans or wheat grass).

Soil (optional)

Container

Paper Towel or cotton balls (if you do not use soil)

Sunny spot

Water

Method

1. Make sure the seeds are clean and undamaged
2. Plant seed into soil or cotton/paper towel
3. Place in a sunny spot
4. Water when it looks dry
5. Watch and discuss the results



Science: make predictions, what will grow, when, and how?

Technology: draw the results, or photograph each day

Maths: measuring growth through time, size, comparisons

Engineering: designing the vessel/container. Could you use another container (egg carton, or folded paper/card)

Language:

Germinate, grow, develop, propagation.

Longer, shorter

Taller, smaller

Bigger, smaller

Slow, fast

Sore, less

Sunny, shady

Warm, cool

Ideas: How does the environment shape growth?

Goodbye

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. Raising Literacy Australia suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- ***Tilly's First Day Twist*** by Kylie Covark and Robin Tatlow-Lord
- ***As We Grow*** by Libby Waldon and Richard Jones (*Hardie Grant*)
- ***Grow*** by JoAnn Early Macken, Stephanie Fizer Coleman (*Random House US*)

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

Goodbye Song

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child's name in the place of 'you' as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (*Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*) or your choice.

Goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye (wave) say goodbye, say goodbye

This is the way we say goodbye to all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!

Tilly's First Day Twist by Kylie Covark and Robin Tatlow-Lord

