

NATIONAL Literacy and Numeracy WEEK

'Read Alouds'

These notes are provided to help schools organise and promote parent, grandparent and community "Read Alouds" in the playgrounds, library and classrooms throughout National Literacy and Numeracy Week (NLNW) or following the whole school involvement in "Read for Australia" event. Parents, grandparents and community members will be invited to read current popular books and/or books to small groups.

Before the event – checklist

1. Discuss the activity with the staff. Highlight the benefits of children hearing rich literature read aloud by significant adults in their community. Highlight the benefits to the school of engaging parents, grandparents and the community in children's learning.
2. Once you have staff agreement, talk with your P&C president/school council/board chair and seek their support to promote the event to the school community.
3. Appoint a NLNW school coordinator and committee. Maybe you can secure a representative from each stage of schooling.
4. Advertise NLNW in your school newsletter, using the logo, and highlight the *Read for Australia* activity and the parent and grandparent read aloud activity. Provide the link to Mem Fox's ten [read aloud commandments](#). Ask interested parents, grandparents and community members to contact the school at least one week before NLNW so you can show them the selection of books and support them in their role.
5. Ask your regular school volunteers to support this initiative. Perhaps you have a relationship with a local sporting team and the team and coach could come along to read aloud to children?
6. The staff committee can support your teacher librarian to select a range of books that will be successful for "Read Alouds". Look for stories with rhyme, rhythm or repetition especially for young children and books with rich literary language for older children. Short story classics like *The Loaded Dog* by Henry Lawson are a treat read aloud to year 6 or 7! Group the selected books into tubs or baskets suitable for different ages in the school (e.g. junior, middle, senior); however, there are some books that cross age groups so having copies of those books in multiple baskets is a good idea.
7. Identify areas in the playground, library, hall, corridors, classrooms, courtyards that will be fabulous read aloud spots (e.g. do you have a magic fairy garden, a special

- tree, a cosy corner, a hidden knoll, a little decked area, a lounge area?) and have special chairs, rugs, cushions, bean bags ready for NLNW.
8. Build up excitement with your children and teachers leading up to NLNW about the special “Read Alouds” that will pop up around your school.
 9. The week or so before NLNW make contact with your volunteer parents, grandparents and community members and ask them to come in to select the book/s they would like to read. Encourage the volunteers to take their selected book home to practise or you might like to host a morning tea for them and listen to Mem Fox on her website reading aloud. Have fun being dramatic reading aloud with the parents, grandparents and community members who come along to this preparation session. This time invested with these volunteers will reap rewards at school and at home long after NLNW.
 10. Once your volunteers have identified the book/s they will read, display a timetable with a picture of the book and a map of where and when ‘Read Alouds’ will take place. You might even add who is reading it e.g. *Wednesday at lunch time: Issac’s dad Roger is reading “Are We There Yet?” on the grassy knoll near the cubbies. Giani’s Nonna is reading “You Hoo Ladybird” in the fairy garden. Friday recess: Salmina, our girls’ cricket coach is reading “Mulga Bill’s Bicycle” in the library lounge. Tom’s uncle Paul is reading a chapter a day of “A Bridge to Wiseman’s Cove” every lunch time in the library courtyard.* This will build excitement with your children and help children to select the book and reader they want to listen to.
 11. Invite local media to attend the event.

An innovation: You might like to have children go on a ‘progressive read aloud trail’ moving from one story to the next throughout different classrooms. As a school, consider what is best for your children, your volunteers and your overall context.

On the day – Checklist

1. Your NLNW school coordinator and committee take the lead on the day or days you have selected for the ‘Read Alouds’.
2. Remind the children about the ‘Read Alouds’ in the playground and special spots around the school and also of the need to listen to the stories and thank the readers; have that timetable and map very clear for all to see.
3. Set up the reading areas around the school with the special reading chairs, rugs, mats, ottomans, cushions and beanbags.
4. Have the book tubs and baskets ready for your volunteers.
5. Have someone to meet each of the volunteers; this could be a senior student leader’s job. Give the volunteer a name badge, give them the book/s they have pre-chosen and show them to their special spot and chair. Remind your volunteers to “Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot”.
6. Ensure one teacher is nearby each volunteer reader to support managing students and to provide supervision.
7. Take lots of photos and videos.
8. Thank your volunteers for taking the time and energy to enrich the children’s learning by reading aloud fabulous stories and poems. Present volunteers with a special card made by children.

9. The school's NLNW coordinator might consider displaying photos of the day around the school (with appropriate permission) or on the school's website.

Read aloud at home – feel free to use this in your school newsletter during NLNW

Time

- Every child loves special time with the significant adults in their lives, so make a regular time in your family routine to talk, read and write with your child.
- Make this time cosy and privilege the bond and relationship that develop between the book, the child and the adult.
- Consider how you will sit with your child. Is it side-by-side so the child can see the illustrations? If it is a shared picture book, the book should be shared and held between the adult and the child.

Vocabulary

- Building your child's oral language and vocabulary is a cornerstone to their success as a literate young person equipped to manage the complex language landscape operating in their world today and tomorrow.
- Read books with rich literary language and talk about the words, have fun with the language and linger over the wonderful words writers have chosen. These are an 'author's gifts' and worth collecting with your child.

Choice

- Let your child follow their interests and passions through books, magazines, comics, websites, writing and reading.
- Talk with your school's teacher librarian and get suggestions of books your child might enjoy.
- Join your public library; ensure a book is always a part of a birthday or Christmas present for your child. Allow your child to select and give books to others as presents.
- Consider 'managed choice' of what they read too. Just as we provide a balanced diet of food for our children, so too should we provide a balanced diet of reading, exposing children to different genres, authors and fiction and non-fiction.

Play

- Puppets, drama, poetry and games are all ways to ignite a child's interest in reading and to build their vocabulary and deepen their understanding of characters and stories. All members of the family can act out a story and you can make your own puppets too!

Space

- Provide a bookshelf or a special box or basket for your child's collection of books and a writing desk/space with stationery. Allow children to decorate and organise this space to make it special.

Model

- Parents and carers are the most significant adults in a child's life. Model reading and writing and curiosity about language at every opportunity.
- Read aloud to your child well into their teens. Having a novel that is especially selected for shared parent/child reading can keep you connected to your teenager and be an ideal way to discuss themes and sophisticated vocabulary. They might not tell their friends you read to them, but they will love it!

Additional resources and links to other texts

- Parent Resources available on the [ALEA](#) website
- Mem Fox's ten [read aloud](#) commandments
- Fox, M. *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to our Children will Change Their Lives Forever*, Harcourt 2001
- Bayetto, A. (2009) *Read Record Respond. Appendix What makes Successful and Independent Readers- A Guide for Parents* Oxford University Press Australia
- NSW Education Department [resources](#)
- Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [booklet](#)
- [Reading ideas](#) Department of Education Western Australia

Writer

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