

Tip Sheet: Encourage Children to Make Connections

FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTConnect> to view a short video.

WHY?

Sometimes children get excited when they make personal connections during a read aloud. Help them manage their reaction by teaching them a hand signal, such as intertwining their two fingers and raising them above their heads. Allowing children to use a non-verbal signal connection signal helps let them respond to the story without interrupting.

WHAT?

When a story makes children think about something else, we say they are making a connection to the text. Making connections shows that they are listening and thinking about it. Children can make different types of connections.

- **Text-to-self:** when something from the book makes them think about something that happened to them personally. For example, a story about a girl getting a puppy may remind them of the time they got a pet.
- **Text-to-world:** when something from the book reminds them of what they know about the world, such as science, social studies, or math concepts. For example, children may connect what they know about birds to the story of *The Ugly Duckling*.
- **Text-to-text:** when something from the book reminds them of another book. For example, the book *The Runaway Tortilla* may remind children of the story of *The Gingerbread Man*.

HOW?

Teach children to use a hand signal to show they are making a connection by following these steps:

1. Model the hand signal you want them to make, such as intertwining their fingers and raising their hands above their head. Have them copy the hand signal.
2. Explain what a connection is: "A connection is when something reminds you of something else. When you hear something in a book, and it reminds you of something else, you're making a connection." Repeat the hand signal.
3. Give an example: "In this book the character has a birthday party with cake and ice cream. I had a birthday party with cake and ice cream, too! This story made me think about that party, so I made a connection to the book."
4. Explain your expectation: "When I'm reading a book, show me you are making a connection with this hand signal. It's a silent signal so it doesn't interrupt the reading for our friends." Model the signal and have the children copy you.
5. Give an opportunity to practice: "Who else can make a connection to this book? Show me the hand signal."
6. Pick a few children to share out their connections.



TEACHER TIP

Children are most likely going to share text-to-self connections when they first start making connections. As they become more confident making connections, model making text-to-world and text-to-text connections and invite them to make those types of connections. Help children make connections by continuing to talk about the book at centers, snack, or other times during the day.