

Families Reading

Together.



A Reading Celebration Guide
Reading Rocks!



Hopa Mountain is a Bozeman, Montana based nonprofit organization that invests in rural and tribal citizen leaders, adults and youth, who are working to improve education, ecological health, and economic development.

A growing body of research confirms that a strong early-learning home environment predicts children's success as readers and students. Success in school strongly predicts good health and economic self-sufficiency in adulthood. With relevant information and resources, parents and caregivers across the economic spectrum can provide their children with the early experiences that lead to their children's success. Hopa Mountain's *StoryMakers* program supports families of children with high-quality early learning resources and encouragement to shape home life for their children's long-term success. www.hopamountain.org

Benefits of reading with children every day:

- **Reading together builds stronger relationships.** As children grow more independent, having a positive routine together will allow parents and children to slow down and connect with each other. A child that has a strong relationship with at least one adult is more likely to feel safe and confident, do better in school, and lead a healthy and happy adult life.
- **Reading together improves communication skills.** The contact children get with parents while reading allows children to feel more comfortable expressing their own feelings. This can help children communicate in healthy, productive ways.
- **Reading together promotes concentration and memory retention.** Reading aloud together, even after children learn to read alone, encourages children to concentrate on the story to remember what was read. These skills will serve children well both in and out of school.
- **Reading together encourages children to think critically.** As parents and children talk together about the characters' actions and the plots of stories they are reading, children are learning how to apply logic and good judgment to their own lives.
- **Reading more supports academic success.** Research shows that daily reading helps children build the foundational skills they need to excel in many aspects of school. Reading often and having access to books over the summer can also help a child retain the information learned throughout the school year.
- **Reading together fosters a lifetime love of reading.** Children who are exposed to regular reading view themselves as "readers" and see reading as a pleasurable activity rather than a chore.
- **Reading supports math and science learning.** Reading enables children to ask questions and investigate new math and science concepts.

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Getting Started

Recommended Books

- **If You Find A Rock** by Peggy Chistian
- **Let's Go Rock Collecting** by Roma Gans



Materials

- **Parent Handouts**
Learning to Create Conversations (page 8)
Talk Together/Play Together (page 9)
- Markers and Pencils
- *Rocks Rock!* Activity Worksheets (one per child/parent pair)
- Snacks or Meal
- An assortment of rocks (at least 1-2 for each participant)

Book Alternatives

- **A Rock Is Lively** by Dianna Hutts Aston and Sylvia Long
- **Everybody Needs a Rock** by Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall
- **If Rocks Could Sing: A Discovered Alphabet** by Leslie McGuirk
- **Rocks: Hard, Soft, Smooth, and Rough** by Natalie M. Rosinsky and John Matthew
- **Rocks in His Head** by Carol Otis Hurst and James Stevenson
- **The Big Rock** by Bruce Hiscock

Book Resources

You may choose to give away books during your event. Visit these websites to see if you qualify for books through their programs.

- **First Book** – A nonprofit providing new books at 50%-90% off retail price.
www.firstbook.org
- **Scholastic Literacy Partnerships** – A program that supports literacy efforts of organizations nationwide.
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/literacypartnerships/>
- **Book Drive** – Host a book drive in your community to gather gently used books to offer at your event. Here are a few tips for a successful book drive:
www.serve.gov/toolkits/book-drive/four.asp



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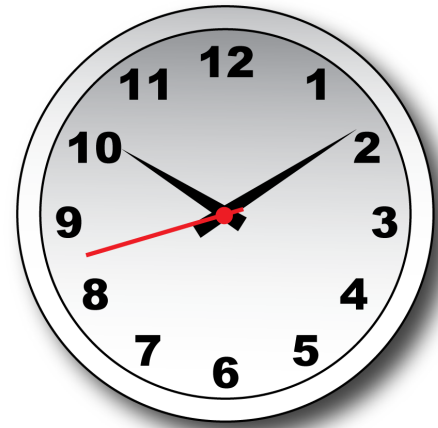
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Reading Celebration Schedule

Welcome

5 Minutes
Everyone

Welcome families, introduce yourself, and quickly review the event schedule.



Activity 1: Read Aloud & Model

15 Minutes
Everyone

Read aloud to families while you model asking questions and starting conversations.

Activity 2: Simultaneous Break-Out Sessions

20 Minutes

Children's Group
Science Exploration

Parent Group
Learning to Create Conversations

Activity 3: Family Science Exploration

10 Minutes
Everyone

Parents and children will complete a science activity together.

Activity 4: Food & Book Distribution

25 Minutes
Everyone

Serve dinner or snacks, collect evaluations, and distribute books.

Wrap Up: Thank everybody for coming!

5 Minutes
Everyone

Encourage family reading at home.



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Guide to Activity 1: Read Aloud & Model

15 minutes

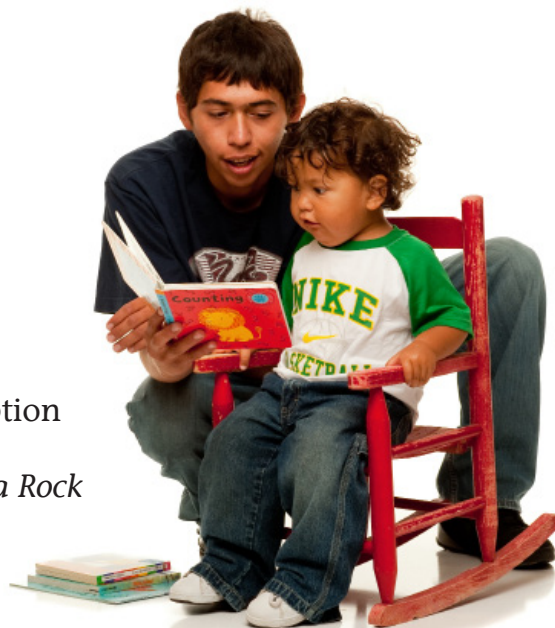
Everyone

Before the Activity

- Pile rocks in groups of 10 - 20 on tables or spread them out on the floor.
- Have four rocks to demonstrate the activity.
- Gather *If You Find A Rock* and *Let's Go Rock Collecting* books.

During the Activity

- Introduce yourselves and give a brief description of the event's purpose and schedule.
- Ask parents to listen as you read *If You Find a Rock* to their children and ask them to notice the questions you use to engage the children.



Conversation-starters to use while reading aloud:

Before Reading

- Show the book to the children. "What do you think this book is about?"
- Turn to your neighbor and tell them where you like to look for rocks.
- Share what you heard.

Example:

"I heard Donald say that he likes to look for rocks in the creek near his house."

"Jane likes to look for rocks on her walk to school."

"Where do you like to look for rocks?"

While Reading

- "I used to love skipping rocks as a child. Who else here has skipped rocks?"
- Hold up a rock. "Do you think this is a skipping rock?"
- "Does this part of the story remind you of a time when you skipped rocks?"

After Reading

- Thank them for being such good listeners.
- Invite children to pick out a special rock and share it with their parents.



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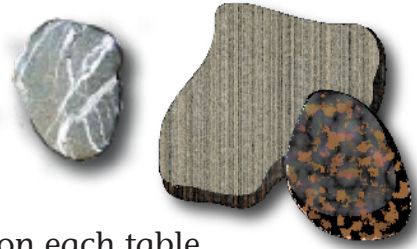
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Guide to Activity 2: Rock Sorting

20 Minutes

Children's Science Exploration



Before the Activity

- Arrange tables around the room with 10-20 rocks on each table.
- Gather children on the floor around you along with a copy of *If You Find A Rock*, and various rocks. Ask children if they can find a skipping rock, or a wishing rock.
- Ask children to share words that describe these rocks. You may say things like, "I notice my rock is pink, rough and shiny."
- Explain to the children that they can use different descriptive words to help them classify and sort the rocks you have placed out for them. Encourage them to work in small groups and sort the rocks any way they like.

During the Activity

- Arrange children in groups of four and invite them to begin sorting the rocks.
- Move about the groups and have children show you how they sorted their rocks.

After the Activity

- Explain to the children that when their parents return, they will be asked to show and explain to their parents how they sorted their rocks. If children want to rearrange their rocks, allow them to do so.

If time allows, read another book.

Here is a suggestion: *Let's Go Rock Collecting* by Roma Gans.

Before Reading

- Introduce the book. Tell children that you are going to read them a book about rock collecting and different kinds of rocks and minerals.
- Turn to the person next to them and discuss something they collect.
- Ask 2-3 children to share what their partner collects.

While Reading

- Ask if anyone has found rocks with crystals in them.
- Ask if anyone has a rock with stripes.

After Reading

- Ask who can name a type of rock mentioned in the book?
- Encourage children to turn to their neighbor and name something that is made of rock.



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Guide to Activity 2: Learning to Create Conversations

20 Minutes

Parent Group

Before the Activity

- Distribute Parent Handouts:
Learning to Create Conversations
Talk Together/Play Together
- Distribute *Rocks Rock!* Family Activity Worksheet

During the Activity

- Begin by thanking parents for coming.
- Explain that this event is an opportunity to share ideas and resources so that parents can support their child's academic, social and emotional growth.
- Use the parent handouts to guide you in sharing tips and ideas. Be sure to model examples for each point. Invite questions and suggestions from the parents.
- Ask parents to briefly review the practical and easy-to-use strategies on the handouts.
- Discuss the *Rocks Rock!* Family Activity Worksheet. Explain that they will be doing this activity with their children in a few minutes and encourage them to use some of the tips you have just shared with them. Remind them that though this activity is specific to rocks, they can do this activity with their children any time with any topic.
- Explain that hands-on activities help children develop ideas about who they are as individuals and about the world around them.
- Invite parents to rejoin their children.



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Guide to Activity 3: Family Science Exploration

10 Minutes
Everyone

During the Activity

- Bring parents back to the room where children have been sorting rocks.
- Pass out pencils. Have parents join their children to complete *Rocks Rock!* Family Activity Worksheet together.
- Walk around and model questions and conversations with the children for parents to hear and see.
- Invite children to pick a rock to take home.

Guide to Activity 4: Food & Book Distribution

25 Minutes
Everyone

- **Invite** families to dinner or snacks if you have chosen to offer them. Thank everyone for coming.
- **Food:** Offering a light dinner, such as soup, pizza, or spaghetti, is a good way to build community and draw in families. Popcorn, hot cocoa, or cookies and milk are easy treats to serve as a dessert.
- **Book Giveaway:** We have included tips for collecting and distributing books to give away at your event.
- **Raffle:** A raffle drawing while families are enjoying their dinner or snacks can also be fun for families and a way to thank families for coming.
- **Announcements:** Announce your next family reading event and any other important information you have for family literacy activities.
- **Evaluations:** We encourage you to have families fill out evaluations before they leave for the evening. Pass them out with pens during dinner, and ask them to fill them out and leave them on the table for you. Walk around and collect them as you see families finish them.
- **Closing:** Be sure to take the time to thank your families for coming while they are eating dinner as some may leave before others.

Keep your Rocks!

- Tell participants to take their rocks home and put them somewhere special!



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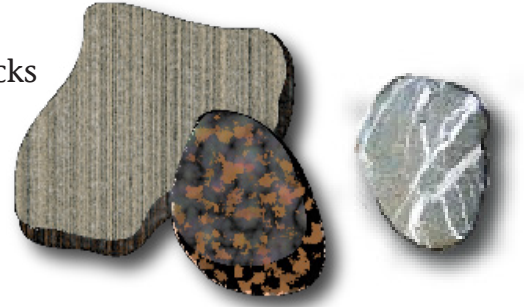
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Rocks Rock! Family Activity Worksheet

Intentional Dialoging with your Child(ren)

- **Rejoin** your child(ren), who will have sorted rocks into similar groups in any way that they wanted.
- **Observe** the way that your child has grouped their rocks.
- **Ask** your child:
“How did you sort the rocks?”
“What does each group of rocks have in common?”
“What are other ways you could have sorted these rocks?”



- **Invite** your child to pick two favorite rocks – one for you and one for him/her.

1. **Observe** your rocks very closely.

2. **Circle** two words from the list below to describe your rocks.

smooth dull round flat rough shiny jagged

speckled striped dark light sparkly heavy bumpy

3. **Compare** your rocks. Talk about one way they are the same and one way they are different.

4. **Keep your Rocks!** Take them home and put them somewhere special!



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Learning to Create Conversations

Parent Handout

You are your child's first and most important teacher and you have a lot to offer to encourage a love of learning and reading in your home! Below are tips for ways you can read, talk, and play with your child.

Read Together

Read aloud to and with your children, even after they learn to read alone. Reading aloud:

- helps children develop new language.
- helps children build positive relationships with books.
- introduces children to words, ideas, and information they do not usually encounter.
- promotes listening skills, which are critical for school and life.



Reading with Intentional Dialogue

Intentional dialogue is simply creating a conversation with your child as you read. You may stop to ask questions to deepen their understanding, check their comprehension, introduce new vocabulary, and make connections from the book to their lives. Here are some suggests for reading with intentional dialogue:

Before Reading

- Look at the cover and the title of the book. Guess together what you think the book will be about.
- Do a picture walk. Go through the book and look at the pictures and talk about what might be happening.

While Reading

Ask questions! Asking your child questions about the book will help to deepen meaning, build comprehension, vocabulary, and will engage them in the story. Ask questions like:

- "Has that ever happened to you?"
- "Does this book remind you of another book we have read?"
- "How is the book similar? How is it different?"

After Reading

Reflect on the story you have just read. Ask your child questions and share your thoughts as well:

- "Tell me what you liked or didn't like about this book."
- "Who was your favorite character?"



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Talk Together

Parent Handout

Use Intentional Dialogue with Your Child.

Talk with your child often! Keep these things in mind when talking with your child:

- Use appropriate vocabulary. The more words you use, the faster your child's vocabulary will grow.
- Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered by "yes" or "no". These often begin with words like what, how, who, why.

Asking open-ended questions is a wonderful way to actively involve your child in a book or daily life. It shows them you are interested in what they think and that their ideas are important. Open-ended questions encourage your child's natural curiosity, challenging them to think for themselves, and inviting them to share their view of the world.

Open ended questions will also give you powerful insight into how your child thinks and feels, building a personal and powerful connection.



Play Together

Nature-based activities can help tie books into the real world and deepen a child's interest in science. Choose one or more activities from the list below to try together this week:

- **Explore Nature Together:** make a list of things from nature to find such as a red, orange or yellow leaf, a pine cone, four leaf clover, round rock, etc. Head outdoors and explore!
- **Take a Rock Walk:** go to the library and check out more books about rocks, and then head outdoors to find more rocks!
- **Cloud Movie:** head outside and look up! Make up a story about what you see in the clouds. Share it with someone else.



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How was this Reading Celebration?

Evaluation for Parents: Please rate the following items by circling one number in each row on this scale: **5 - Excellent** **4 - Good** **3 - Adequate** **2 - Fair** **1 - Poor**

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Fair	Poor
A Registration & Pre-event Information	5	4	3	2	1
B Parent Workshop Session	5	4	3	2	1
C Parent and Child Workshop	5	4	3	2	1
D Parent Resource Materials	5	4	3	2	1

Comments & Suggestions:

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Fair	Poor
A As a result of this event, my knowledge of how I can support my child with science learning activities at home has increased.	5	4	3	2	1
B As a result of this event, I have increased knowledge about how to use books and reading with with my child at home.	5	4	3	2	1

Comments & suggestions for future family events:

