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SECOND EDITION

# Charts

for Children

Print Awareness Activities  
for Young Children

Judy Nyberg



Good Year Books  
Culver City, California

## **Educational Standards**

*Charts for Children* contains lessons and activities that reinforce and develop skills as defined by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English as appropriate for students in PreK to Grade 1. These activities include early writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. See [www.goodyearbooks.com](http://www.goodyearbooks.com) for information on how lessons correlate to specific standards.

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Meighan Depke  
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Brian Karas  
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Doug Goewey  
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Ruta Daugavietis  
Additional Interior Drawings:  
Sean O'Neill



# Contents

## Introduction

Using Stories to Provide Print-rich Experiences ..... 4

## Stories and Activities

Goldilocks and the Three Bears ..... 10

The Three Little Pigs ..... 24

The Gingerbread Man ..... 38

The Three Little Kittens ..... 52

The Tortoise and the Hare ..... 66

Henny Penny ..... 80

The Three Billy Goats Gruff ..... 94

The Tale of Peter Rabbit ..... 108

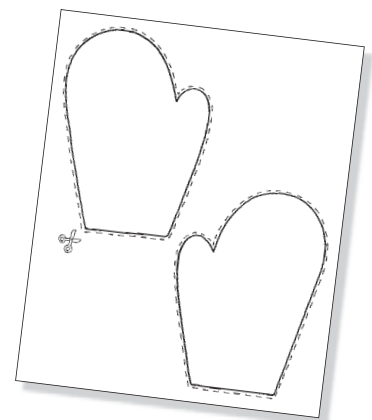
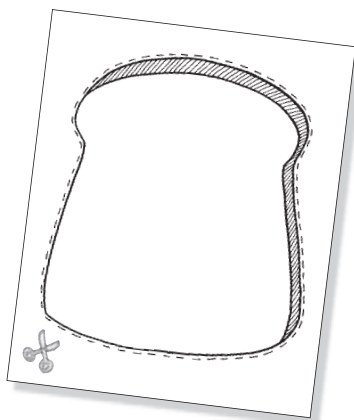
The Little Red Hen ..... 122

Stone Soup ..... 136

Five Little Monkeys ..... 150

Humpty Dumpty ..... 164

**Patterns and Charts for Each Story ..... 177**



# Using Stories to Provide Print-rich Experiences

*“ . . . and Goldilocks never went uninvited into a house again.*

**The end.”**

*“ . . . and the three billy goats lived happily ever after.*

**The end.”**

*“ . . . so I will eat the bread. And she did, every last bite.*

**The end.”**

## **The End of the Story Is the Beginning of Activities**

The well-loved story or favorite rhyme has been read and brought to its familiar conclusion. After a brief discussion, in which the young listeners relate their favorite parts of the story, they are often dismissed from the story rug and directed to their tables for a snack. Perhaps, after reading *The Little Red Hen*, they will feast on freshly baked rolls they have laboriously poked and shaped until the dough resembles hard little pebbles. The resplendent rolls will be served with delicious everyone-takes-a-turn-at-shaking-the-jar butter.

In a literacy-rich, print-rich early childhood classroom, the end of the story is, truly, just

the beginning. It is the beginning of a series of literacy events—events and activities that incorporate authentic reading and writing; events that focus on the wonders and functions of print; events that support the philosophy that young children are readers and writers. In a print-rich classroom, the recipe for the rolls would probably be written out for all to see and read together. The experience of baking and eating the rolls would be talked about and documented in writing for all to read together. Perhaps the class might together write an invitation to the Little Red Hen. Would she like to see how they all helped to make the rolls? Children might suggest words

describing the other animals in the story and watch as their teacher writes the words on a chart. Most likely they would then use those words in their own attempts at writing. Perhaps the class would compose a letter of inquiry to the local bakery. Could we please come and smell your delicious baking bread?

*Charts for Children* is a collection of activities for use following the telling of selected, familiar stories and rhymes. The activities focus on creating charts or visual displays in the classroom that provide reading, writing, and thinking opportunities for young children. The chart activities extend the stories into other curriculum areas, such as mathematics, social studies, or science. The well-loved stories and rhymes become the theme or package around which daily activities are developed. The major focus or intent of the activities is to provide opportunities for groups of children to see reading and writing modeled and to involve those groups in the reading and writing process.

The sample charts pictured in *Charts for Children* are adult-created. They are models of activities that can be carried out in your own classroom.

### **Literacy in the Early Childhood Setting**

Current theories regarding how children learn to read and write have favorably affected the experiences offered young children when they enter the early childhood classroom. We know that young children come to school—preschool, kindergarten, or the primary grades—with all kinds of literacy history and experience. We know, for example, that children have been reading lots of environmental

print, such as signs on the street and in the grocery store. We know that young children have been scribbling and drawing and writing, sometimes in sand, or on windows and walls, as well as on paper. We know that some young children have been read to for countless hours before they enter school. For other children, we know that the school setting provides the first opportunity to look at and investigate print and to begin to make meaning out of letters and words.

In a literacy-rich classroom, children are surrounded with print and their days are filled with activities that invite them to use and interact with that print. Children are encouraged to “pretend,” or attempt, to read and to write. They are beginning readers and writers who are striving to make sense out of print. Thus the early childhood teacher’s responsibility is not to get children *ready* to read and write; but it is to get them reading and writing—in their own way. Given opportunities for practice with print, children will gradually move from “pretend” or approximate reading and writing to conventional or “adult like” reading and writing.

Of equal importance is the belief that all attempts at reading and writing are valued and honored. Mistakes are made and approximations are respected. Trying on the *behaviors* of readers and writers is an essential part of the process of becoming real readers and writers.

Given this understanding, the early childhood teacher is charged with providing a visually exciting environment where opportunities for discovery of and practice with print abound. Early childhood teachers have long known the inherent value of reading to children. They also understand that good children’s literature

can become the springboard for developing exciting curricula for the day or week. When developing a theme or topic that springs from literature, the classroom can become alive with opportunities for oral and written language development. *Charts for Children* provides ideas and activities centering on twelve well-loved stories and rhymes. The suggested activities can, however, easily be transferred to literature that goes beyond the traditional favorites presented in this volume.

The challenge is to let your imagination run wild as you dream up story-related activities. What would the children enjoy doing? What is relevant to their experience? How can I expand their thinking and imagining? What activities will help them focus on print? What activities reflect authentic reading and writing?

### **We've Heard These Stories Before**

There are, of course, reasons why stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* or rhymes such as "The Three Little Kittens" have endured and continue to be passed down from generation to generation. The traditional tales, with their different-time, far-away settings, let children see how less-than-threatening characters resolve conflicts. The tales give children an understanding of the world even as they transport them far away from their own circumstances, giving them a glimpse of the universality of human problems. Of course, young children are not aware that Goldilocks is a universal example of bad manners and lack of common sense as she enters the bears' house uninvited. Rather, they are swept up with Goldilocks in the unfolding drama.

The same old stories should be heard again and again because they provide pure pleasure

for children. Young children are very interested in folk tales. They are interested because they believe. They believe in magic and the presence of magic in their own lives. They believe that animals can think and talk. And they believe in a sense of justice that is often apparent in folk tales. The stories allow children to reexamine familiar themes and plots while providing examples for their own imaginations and story creating. Children derive a great deal of satisfaction from the familiar tales that give them a sense of control as they say, "I know that one!"

### **Extend the Story**

The activities presented in *Charts for Children* reflect a process that begins with story selection. As you choose stories and activities for your children, consider children's past story experiences, their background knowledge, and their interests. Conversation and background-building to heighten interest and to familiarize children with new vocabulary and concepts always precedes successful story reading or telling.

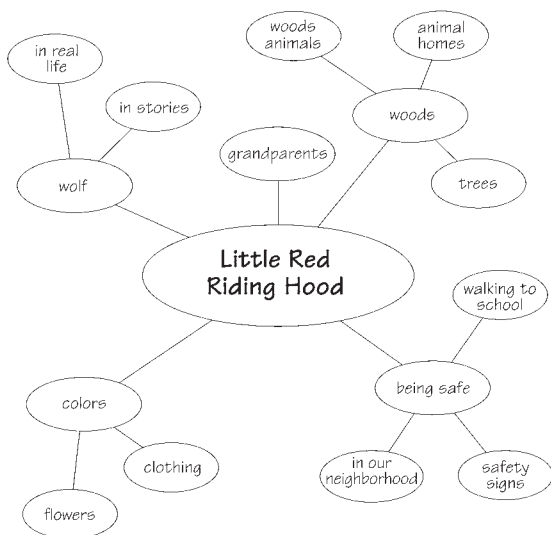
### **Read It Again and Again**

Read the story or rhyme for pure enjoyment and then read it again and again. Revisit the same book often. Read variations of the story so that children can compare texts and illustrations. You might start with the Grimm's version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, for example, and then read Ed Young's story of *Lon Po Po*, a Chinese tale.

Once children are very familiar with the story and know the ending well, they are ready to begin doing the extension activities.

### Make a Web of Concepts to Develop from the Story

All stories are rich with concepts that can be fully developed into activities and literacy events across the curriculum. You might begin by making a web of words or topics that are related to a story. Narrow the choices down to one or two topics that you think children would most like to explore. Constructing word webs often helps us, as adults, think about how stories present concepts to young learners—concepts we sometimes take for granted. The following word web illustrates some topic possibilities for *Little Red Riding Hood*.



### Create Language Experience Activities

Inviting children to become involved in the writing process by creating language experience charts has long been a popular early childhood activity. As children talk about and summarize a shared experience, they incorporate concepts and make them their own.

Language experience activities can take many forms. Your language experience activity for the day might be talking about Peter Rabbit’s devastating experience in the garden, for example, and then writing a class letter to Peter. On another day, children might contribute to a chart by telling how they made peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. As you record the words and sentences children create and offer, you model writing. As you read the charts together, you provide opportunities for children to use conventions of print, to understand the concept of word, and to build their sight vocabularies. As the completed charts are displayed around the classroom, they become tools for children’s independent reading. “Look! I know what this says!” The charts can be read and savored again and again.

It is important to acknowledge that language experience activities or charts are only *one* piece of the total reading-writing process that young children should experience. The beauty of language experience activities is in the opportunity to model reading and writing. The activity crosses all curriculum areas as various topics and charts are conceived.

We know that children learn to read and write by doing just that—by reading and writing. Thus children need to have experiences that go beyond the modeling process and group-dictated or group-created charts. They need many opportunities to use a variety of materials, encouraging writing and creating on their own. They need time each day to read books and to explore print independently. The activities suggested in *Charts for Children* focus on providing print activities for the entire class or group. As such, they are but only one print-awareness activity available in a literacy-rich classroom.



## Involve Children

The *Charts for Children* activities promote children's participation as charts are created. Children are not just observers, they are doers. When creating group charts or stories, try to involve all children in the process so that each child takes ownership of the end product. Children can not only contribute to the text by negotiating what is written and by providing specific words or sentences, but also by decorating or elaborating the chart with drawings or other art pieces, which involves deciding where each of their contributions should be positioned on the chart. When a group works together to create charts and murals, each product takes on its own life and identity, reflecting in this case the children in your classroom.

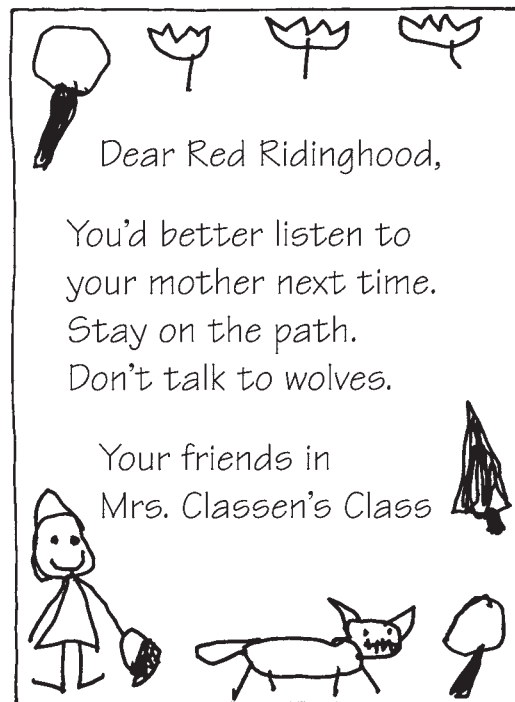
Creating a chart or group-dictated story encourages lots of oral language learning and conversation before the finalized version is written down. Children's thinking becomes public. This conversation and collective offering of ideas, this oral problem-solving, allows children to try out their thoughts on the group and see that their contributions are honored. Meaning is enhanced as children build on the understandings of one another.

When a chart is completed, read the words or sentences on the chart to model the reading process, and then encourage children to read with you. Point to each word as you read so that children can see and hear the one-to-one correspondence of the spoken to written word. Read the text again and again so that it becomes very familiar to children. And remember, if you think that children are memorizing the words, not really reading them, that's great! It's the *behaviors* of reading that are so important for beginning readers.

The imitation of the act of reading is a natural first step. Read and revisit the text as a group for several days. Encourage children to "read the walls," either as an individual or as a partner activity.

## Creating Independent Response Activities

You can make the charts more interactive by providing daily challenges for children based on the charts you've displayed around the room. Invite children to investigate concepts, solve problems, take polls, or answer questions in writing. If children are not yet reading, read the Take Another Look activity or question for them at the beginning of the day. Talk about the directions and possible responses. Then invite them to respond to the activity at their leisure sometime during the day. If you take a poll or record written responses, summarize the results at the end of the day.





### Take Another Look

Do you think Red Riding Hood would like to get this letter?

Write **yes** or **no**.

**Yes**

**No**

YES

NO

ys

NO

na

No

Children will eagerly anticipate each day's opportunity for personal response. "I wonder what surprise will be waiting for us today?"

### Literacy Across the Curriculum

As you plan your program, consider how you can turn all areas of the curriculum into literacy events. Read the words and labels on graphs and number charts, record science-related observations, write down steps in a process, and make up recipes for a healthy breakfast. Reading and writing don't stop when science time or math time begins.

### The Stories and Rhymes in Charts for Children

You'll find suggested activities for the twelve stories and rhymes listed. Use them in your program as you explore themes and topics. Then, expand on your own favorite stories and rhymes by creating additional charts, providing new reading, writing, and thinking experiences for young children.

*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*

*The Three Little Pigs*

*The Gingerbread Man*

*The Three Little Kittens*

*The Tortoise and the Hare*

*Henny Penny*

*The Three Billy Goats Gruff*

*Peter Rabbit*

*The Little Red Hen*

*Stone Soup*

*Five Little Monkeys*

*Humpty Dumpty*

# Goldilocks and the Three Bears

*See another activity for  
this story on page 177.*

## **Books to Read**

Marshall, James. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. (Dial, 1991).

Stevens, Janet. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. (Holiday House, 1986).

Barton, Byron. *The Three Bears*. (Harper, 1991).

Tolhurst, Marilyn. *Somebody and the Three Bears*. (Orchard, 1991).

## **About the Story**

All children seem to love the story of Goldilocks. When they first encounter the story, young children don't appear to mind that Goldilocks enters the three bears' house uninvited. They don't appear to be outraged by her eating up all the porridge or by her breaking Baby Bear's chair. They understand that Goldilocks is hungry, so it seems natural that she would help herself to the bears' food. Similarly, children often try out furniture in a new setting, so it seems perfectly normal that Goldilocks would flop down in the bears' chairs. It is only when the sleeping Goldilocks

is discovered by the bears that children begin to realize that the central character is in big trouble. Up until this point, young listeners usually have been marveling at bears who cook and eat and they delight in the predictability of the story elements that come in threes. Only after the story has been enjoyed again and again are young listeners ready to consider Goldilocks's inappropriate behaviors.

This story provides a perfect background for exploring breakfast foods and for finding out about real bears, among other things.