

## SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN FROM 18 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS USING THE BOOKSINBAGS® COLLECTION

**An Unexpected Discovery:** When facing a three-hour plane trip and a week in a foreign country with an 18-month-old granddaughter, I couldn't pack a large number of hardcover books to read aloud.

As an experienced reading teacher, I knew that I needed to bring a lot of books that had the following characteristics:

- Simple plots with a sense of “story” easily understood by a young listener.
- Winning illustrations or photographs that interest and/or amuse both mentor and child.
- Few pages per book.
- Easy portability in a sturdy bag suitable for packing in carry-on luggage (these small books should be quickly available when needed).

It was at this time that I borrowed some leveled books from the beginning BOOKSINBAGS® collection. I chose books from a variety of publishers that would engage my granddaughter's natural curiosity and sense of humor. I was amazed by her continued interest as I read these books again and again for the entire weeks' vacation. A new use for BOOKSINBAGS® was born!

Within four years I had six grandchildren, two girls and four boys. As I traveled frequently from Michigan to the East, I always brought my bag of assorted read-aloud books! Each of the children enjoyed them because I varied the book levels according to age and interest. As each child neared school age, I re-arranged the collection correctly for BOOKSINBAGS® reading instruction and support.

### **When and where to begin:**

- When the child is able to communicate in short sentences.
- With **Level One** stories, which are very short and contain elements of surprise, humor, or exciting facts about the natural world!

### **What to avoid:**

- Do **NOT** use the included mentor instructions! Save these for reading instruction and support when the child reaches age five.
- Do **NOT** use the books in small bags marked For **AGE FIVE** and older.

### **Considerations for those reading aloud:**

- As levels increase, the reader should feel free to add or subtract from the read-aloud collection.
- Children vary in attention span and ability. I shared these books with all of my grandchildren, and generally was reading books at higher levels by the time they were approaching five years old.
- When **Level 20** is reached, many other appropriate books are available for reading aloud.
- The BOOKSINBAGS® collection should then be returned to the original bags, and kept with the mentor instructions to be used after age five.

These book collections are not toys. After reading, gather the books and return them to the correct bags. Most children have other books that can be left out on bookshelves and tables. Because these particular books are part of a collection, they should be kept safely away from siblings, pets and casual use. If these guidelines are followed, the books may be read and enjoyed for many years.