

Peter's Chair

By Ezra Jack Keats

Peter has a new baby sister, and he's not happy about it. First his cradle and then his crib are painted pink. His chair could be next, and that's just too much for Peter! A perennial favorite by Caldecott-winner Ezra Jack Keats.

Discussion

Before reading *Peter's Chair*, ask your child what he/she thinks the book will be about by looking at the illustration on the cover. What does the body language of the boy convey? After reading the story, ask your child how Peter felt when his belongings were being given to his sister. Why was Peter upset about his cradle and high chair being painted and given to his sister?



Does your child have a favorite toy that means a lot to them? If so, what is it? Talk with them about their special something and why it means so much to them. Did someone give it to them, or does it provide that security for them? Has your child ever outgrown anything? Has your child ever been given anything that someone else has outgrown? When someone can no longer use something because it is too small, what can be done with the clothing or item?

Activities

- **Feelings Collage**

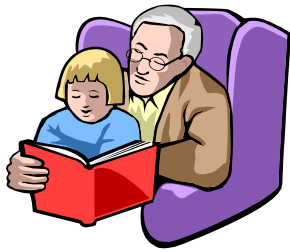


You will need: pictures from magazines and or newspapers showing people in different situations, poster board or construction paper, scissors and glue.

Directions: Talk with the children about the different kinds of feelings people can have. Have the children cut out pictures of people showing different feelings in everyday situations. Guide the children by helping them find some pictures and providing suggestions feelings they might look for.

Encourage the children to talk about the pictures they've selected and the way the people in the pictures may be feeling.

- **Create a Family Photo Album**



Together you and your child can talk about feelings of growing up and reaching new milestones as you make a family photo album. You can use actual photographs or draw pictures of your child, pointing out how little he or she once was, and how now he or she is a big brother or sister. Compare the older child's pictures with the new baby's pictures, and discuss how important he or she will be in the new baby's life.

- **Create a "Now I Can" Book or Chain**

Children sometimes need tangible evidence of how they have grown, and how they can now accomplish tasks that they were not able to when they were smaller. For example, Peter was creating a tower at the beginning of the story, and he was reaching to place the last piece on. If he had still been small enough to fit into his chair, he wouldn't be big enough to reach the top of his tower. Have your child create pages for a "Now I Can" book by illustrating accomplishments they were previously unable to do, but now can.



Or, have your child illustrate these accomplishments on strips of paper, taping, gluing or stapling the strips together to create a chain of accomplishments.

Other Books for Children:

I Love You As Much by Laura Krauss Melmed
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein
My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss
Brown Angles by Walter Dean Myers
Changes, Changes by Pat Hutchins
Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes



Don't forget to visit your local library!!!

Peter's new baby sister, Suzie, seems to be taking over the whole house. Peter's mother tells him to play quietly because Suzie is napping. Father is painting Peter's old crib and highchair pink because they belong to Suzie now. When Peter spots his old chair, he decides to take the chair and run away so they won't give that to the baby, too! How Peter finally comes to volunteer to paint the little chair pink himself makes for a delightfully universal story about growing up.

Before Reading *Peter's Chair*

• Find out how many of the children have younger brothers or sisters at home. Do they remember when their younger siblings were babies? Have the children take turns describing in as much detail as possible what it feels like to be jealous of the baby. What did they do when they felt jealous? Tell the group that they are going to learn a story about a boy who is jealous of his little sister.

After Reading *Peter's Chair*

· Have the children imagine all the reasons why Peter was jealous of Suzie (e.g., she got to use his crib and high chair, Mother and Father were paying lots of attention to Suzie, etc.). What made Peter change his mind about giving his chair to Suzie?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Bring 'n Brag Baby Pictures

When Peter leaves home, he takes his baby picture with him. Have the children examine Peter's baby picture and the illustration of Peter as he appears now. How are the two the same? How are they different? Provide each student with an envelope (discarded "junk mail" envelopes will do), and have the children use the envelopes to transport their own baby pictures, plus a recent snapshot, to school. Use a paper border or yarn to divide a bulletin board in half vertically. Post the baby pictures in a vertical line on one side of a bulletin board. Then, post the children's recent photos on the other side of the board. Have children take turns trying to use lengths of yarn to match the babies with the older children. As long as they guess correctly, allow each child to continue to try making matches. When a student guesses incorrectly, allow another student to have a turn. When all photo pairs have been correctly identified (and joined by lengths of yarn tacked to the board), ask children to notice physical features that are the same (e.g., hair color, skin color, etc.) and features that have changed (e.g., height, weight, etc.). What features do all the baby pictures and all the older children's pictures have in common, despite ethnicity? Can the children predict how they will appear in the future?

Collage a Room Design

The author-illustrator uses collage materials to create the illustrations for *Peter's Chair*. Have the class examine the book page by page to see if they can identify the common materials Keats incorporated into the illustrations (e.g., wallpapers, lace doilies and newspaper). Provide the children with similar materials along with catalogs featuring housewares and furniture. Also, provide each student with a piece of lightweight cardboard or oaktag (approx. 9" x 12"). Have students cover the cardboard with glued-on pieces of wallpaper scraps (gluing a strip of contrasting paper along the bottom of the cardboard to create a ground line. Encourage the children to add a construction paper window or a door to the collage. Then, have children cut items from the catalog and glue these onto the wallpaper to design a room of their dreams. Have children share their results. How many of them incorporated similar elements into their rooms? Do any of the rooms look exactly alike? Why or why not?