

The
Early Years Count
Literacy
Connection



**Shh! Bears
Sleeping**

Written by David Martin
Illustrated by Steve Johnson
and Lou Fancher

Infant/Toddler edition

Overview of Book

Seasons are depicted through the lives of a bear family as they move through their emergence from their winter den, through a year and back again. Watch the bear family grow in their beautiful forest wilderness.

Genre: Informational/non-fiction

Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Shh! Bears Sleeping* to introduce in your classroom:

season names	swirl
skinny	blizzard
rotten	gobble
underground	heap
frolic	

Each time you read the book, highlight 2 or 3 words.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or refer to the illustrations to help children understand each word's meaning.

Use the new words throughout the day, reminding children, "That's a word from our story!"

**Connecting with
HighScope
Curriculum**

COR Advantage 1.5

Social and Emotional
Development
Item F
*(Building relationships with
other children)*

Social and Emotional
Development
Item H
(Conflict resolution)

Science and
Technology
Item DD
(Natural & physical world)

Language, Literacy
and Communication
Item N
(Phonological awareness)

Reading Tips

Read with a slow, steady tempo to capture the rhymes within the text and to provide time for the children to see the rich pictures. Notice the changes in colors as the seasons progress. Ask, "Remember when the leaves here turned red and yellow?" Give time for the children to see the antics and play of the two bear cubs. Ask, "Would you jump in the creek like the baby bears?"

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. During each reading the adult can introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

Throughout the Routine

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Use a variety of materials to build bear dens at **Choice Time**. Provide blankets and pillows to enhance pretend play.

Pretend to be bears getting ready to hibernate at **Rest Time**.

Play like the bear cubs at **Outside Time**.

Sample berries and honey at **Snack Time**. Pretend to eat bugs and grubs.

Around the Room

Highlight the book's content and build on the children's excitement in a variety of locations.

Have other related books available in the **Book Area** for comparison. Examples include *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McClosky and *Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson.

Post and label photographs of various bears. Include black, grizzly, polar, spectacled, and panda. Encourage children to note differences and similarities. Also include photographs of other animals that hibernate.

Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These "wondering aloud" questions support children's developing focus and attention as they encourage young children's capacity to make connections and see possibilities.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Shh! Bears Sleeping*:

What are the bears dreaming about as they sleep all winter?

What is your favorite game the bear cubs play? Why?

What do you like to do in the winter?

*For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact **The Family Connection:***

website—
www.famconn.org

Facebook—
[@famconnsjc](https://www.facebook.com/famconnsjc)

phone—
574-237-9740

@ Home

Since many children in our county will have this book at home, use it to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *Shh! Bears Sleeping* with their children. Here's a sample message you can send:

The children have enjoyed pretending to be the bears from *Shh! Bears Sleeping*. As you read this book with your child, talk about the seasons from the experiences of your family. Ask, "What do you remember most about winter?" Add, "Remember when we couldn't get the car out because of all that snow? Do you remember what we had to do?" Talk with your child about the scenery in the story—that the bears need to be deep in a forest like the one in the story to live safely. Take a walk with your child and notice trees and any flowers. Mention, "The flowers are good for the bees. They take pollen and bring it to their hive to make honey. We like honey, just like bears!"