**Book of the Month**

*Scaredy Squirrel, by Mélanie Watt*

Scaredy Squirrel never leaves his nut tree. It’s way too dangerous out there. He could face all kinds of terrible things. Day after day he watches and waits, and waits and watches, until one day his worst nightmare comes true!

Spend more time with Scaredy Squirrel:

More laugh-out-loud books from Mélanie Watt to help develop print awareness:

*Chester and Chester’s Masterpiece*

**Kinds of books that develop print awareness:**
- Books with lots of punctuation marks
- Books with signs, lists, labels, menus, charts, instructions, etc. as part of the illustrations
- Books in which characters are using print in different ways, such as writing a letter, or making a checklist
- Any book!

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**Awareness of Print**

Being familiar with printed words helps children feel comfortable with books and understand that print is useful. It is one of the six early literacy skills that help young children become readers.

**Here are some ways to help your child develop print awareness:**

- Show children that print is all around them. Point it out in signs, on menus, and in books and newspapers.
- Run your finger along the bottom of words while reading. This helps children understand that print runs from left to right and that you are reading text rather than looking at pictures.
- Point to some words as you say them, especially words that are repeated.
- Label objects around your home, such as “bed,” “window,” “door,” and “toys.”
- Let your child turn the pages. When you are done reading, let her hold the book and tell you the story.
- Talk about and play with punctuation marks. Show your child what an exclamation mark (!) and a question mark (?) are, and why you read those sentences differently.
- Encourage children to play with print every day. Help them make lists, write notes, make signs, etc.

Children with print awareness understand that print has different functions: menus list food choices, a book tells a story, a sign can show a favorite restaurant or warn of danger.
More fun with *Scaredy Squirrel*

**Print awareness**... Help your child make a daily schedule like the one in the book. Hopefully your child's day is more exciting than Scaredy's.

**Around the house**... Create an emergency kit for home or for outings. What would be good things include? Ask your child questions such as, “What would you need if you scraped your knee?” “What kinds of things would help pass the time while we wait for the bus?” Help your child draw and label a list, then help her gather those things and put them in a small bag or backpack.

**Arts and crafts**... Make squirrel feeders by tying sturdy string around several dried corn cobs or pine cones stuffed with peanut butter and bird seed. Hang from the branches on your trees.

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**Recognizing Reading Problems**

*By: Reading Rockets (2007)*

Learning to read is a challenge for many kids, but most can become good readers if they get the right help. Parents have an important job in recognizing when a child is struggling and knowing how to find help.

**What to look for:**

- Difficulty rhyming
- Difficulty hearing individual sounds
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty re-telling a story
- Struggles to sound out most words
- Avoids reading aloud

If you think your kindergartener is struggling with learning to read, talk to her teacher sooner rather than later. The school can provide free support if needed!

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**Song to sing with your child**

**Squirrel Song**

*Tune: “She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain”*

I’ll be gathering all the acorns till they’re gone.
I’ll be gathering all the acorns till they’re gone.
I’ll be gathering all the acorns,
I’ll be gathering all the acorns,
I’ll be gathering all the acorns till they’re gone.

(Children make collecting motion with their hands)

**Additional verses:**

And I’ll put them all inside my little home...
(Children pretend to place nuts in tree house)

And I’ll eat the nuts until the winter’s gone...
(Children pretend to eat acorns)

Then I’ll do it all again come next fall...
(Children make gathering motion with hands and arms again)

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**What your library can do for you...**

Your library offers many services for teens and adults, too. Visit your library’s website for information about job searches, audio or electronic books, special programs, book reviews, and much more!

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