ForeWord Reviews

JUVENILE NONFICTION

What Does a Lion Say? And Other Playful Language Games
Between the Lions Staff
Gryphon House
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"Leona didn't like the ending of 'The Three Little Pigs,' so she wrote a new version where the pigs invite the wolf to tea." With enchanting suggestions that encourage a child to read and write, understand and follow directions, and create or retell stories, *What Does a Lion Say* announces a new partnership between Gryphon House and the staff of *Between the Lions*. The TV show is an Award-Winning PBS Kids Literacy Series and is produced by WGBH Boston, Sirius Thinking, LTD, and Mississippi Public Broadcasting. The program and this book help children develop skills while exploring different ideas through playing word and number games.

The authors detail each genre with informative components: general age group guidelines—most are for ages four to nine; the number of players required to play the game—usually two or more; and which specific educational skill is of primary focus. On-the-go games help pass traveling time in a car, on a bus or train trip; while waiting in a doctor's office, or anytime to share fun and learning. For example: use the twenty-six letters of the alphabet to give names to imaginary lion cubs.

Oral language benefits include listening to and responding to others, being attentive to stories, poems, and songs, and increased vocabulary. A game to heighten this skill: One player thinks of an animal and the others ask "yes or no" questions until they guess the animal. Questions may be: Is it a pet? Is it bigger than this book? Does it have four legs?

The games also help children appreciate books, comprehend stories, and become aware of many other functions of language and print. Suggested games: Do a word comparison of food: tasty, tastier, tastiest; explain a "dream dinner," describing how it tastes and smells, why you would choose particular foods; tell who is with you and where you are eating. Imagine if clothes could talk, what stories would they tell about you; begin a story with one sentence and then each person adds a sentence. Tape a sheet of paper around the children's arms and pretend they wear casts. To get signatures on his cast, each player must tell a story that ends with "…and that's how I broke my arm."

This small volume is chock full of ideas to help adults entertain and teach the children

they care about. It’s a resource to keep for countless occasions: fun on a rainy day, puppet shows, sing-alongs, and trolling the dictionary. The back pages list a multitude of book titles with descriptions of contents. This section alone makes the book invaluable—a go-to-reference book for parents, teachers, and children.

Mary Popham