ARKANSAS IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Building the Reading Brain

Birth–5 Teacher Guide & Family Literacy Activities

Every Arkansas Imagination Library book is an opportunity to build the reading brain. This guide provides developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences aligned with the Arkansas Early Learning Standards to strengthen language, literacy, and school readiness through meaningful interactions with books.

The Big Slide by Daniel Kirk
Delivery Month: November
Group 3

Learning Goals & Objectives

Domain	Children Will...
Language & Literacy	Retell story events using sequence vocabulary; identify beginning, middle, and end; describe characters, actions, feelings, and motivations; make text-to-self connections; use new vocabulary related to courage, confidence, and emotions.
Science of Reading Foundations	Strengthen oral language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, print concepts, comprehension, inferencing, and emergent writing through interactive read-aloud and literacy-rich extension activities.
Math & Cognitive Development	Compare heights and lengths; make predictions; gather observations; solve problems using reasoning and discussion.
Social-Emotional Development	Identify emotions; recognize courage and persistence; practice encouraging language; develop confidence when trying new experiences.

Science & Inquiry	Explore ramps, motion, prediction, and cause-and-effect relationships through guided investigations.
Physical Development	Strengthen fine motor skills through drawing, dictation, and writing; develop balance, coordination, and body awareness through movement activities.

Arkansas Standards Alignment

The following standards are intentionally targeted through the read-aloud, literacy centers, social-emotional investigations, family engagement activities, and assessment opportunities.

Domain	Standard	Lesson Connection
Social & Emotional Development	SE1.1 – Demonstrates self-awareness	Children identify feelings of nervousness, excitement, courage, and pride and connect them to personal experiences.
Social & Emotional Development	SE2.1 – Interacts positively with peers	Children encourage one another and practice supportive language during classroom activities.
Social & Emotional Development	SE3.1 – Engages in cooperative play and problem-solving	Children work together to discuss feelings, solve challenges, and participate in collaborative literacy experiences.
Language Development	LD2.1 – Engages in conversations	Children participate in turn-and-talk discussions, story retelling, and personal storytelling.
Language Development	LD4.1 – Expands vocabulary and language use	Children learn and use emotional vocabulary and descriptive

		language related to courage and confidence.
Emergent Literacy	EL2.1 – Demonstrates comprehension of stories	Children identify story structure, character feelings, problem and solution, and make personal connections.
Emergent Literacy	EL3.1 – Demonstrates phonological awareness	Children identify beginning sounds, clap syllables, and participate in sound games.
Emergent Literacy	EL4.1 – Demonstrates print awareness	Children identify title, author, cover, letters, words, and punctuation.
Emergent Literacy	EL5.1 – Demonstrates emergent writing skills	Children draw, dictate, label, and contribute to class writing projects.
Mathematics	MT3.1 – Demonstrates measurement concepts	Children compare ramp lengths and distances traveled.
Cognitive Development	CD1.1 – Demonstrates curiosity and persistence	Children persist when faced with challenges and explore new experiences.
Cognitive Development	CD2.1 – Uses inquiry and problem-solving skills	Children make predictions, test ideas, and discuss outcomes.

Science of Reading Foundations

Vocabulary, oral language, phonological awareness, print concepts, comprehension, and emergent writing.

Oral Language Development Teachers model complete sentences and encourage children to explain thinking, describe feelings, and connect story events to their own experiences.

Vocabulary Development

1. Introduce the word.
2. Provide a child-friendly definition.
3. Connect the word to the story.
4. Act out the meaning.
5. Revisit the word throughout centers and discussions.

Phonological Awareness

Letter Focus: **Bb**

Children: Listen for /b/ in brave, big, balance, buddy, and book. Sort pictures by beginning sound. Clap syllables in courage, confidence, nervous, and persistence. Participate in rhyming activities.

Print Concepts

Comprehension Children

- Make predictions
- Ask and answer questions
- Identify character feelings
- Discuss problem and solution
- Retell events in sequence
- Connect story events to personal experiences

Emergent Writing

Children draw, dictate, label, and write responses related to courage and confidence.

MATERIALS

Literacy Materials

- The Big Slide
- Emotion vocabulary cards
- Story sequencing cards
- Pocket chart
- Chart paper and markers

- Writing journals

Inquiry Materials

- Small ramps
- Toy cars
- Measuring tape
- Clipboards

Social-Emotional Materials

- Emotion cards
- Mirrors
- Playground photographs
- Encouraging language cards

Art Materials

- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Markers
- Paint
- Glue

ENGAGE

Emotion Investigation

Display emotion cards showing nervous, excited, worried, proud, and brave.

Children use mirrors to create facial expressions that match each feeling.

Teacher Questions:

- What does nervous look like?
- How does excited feel?
- What helps us feel brave?
- Have you ever felt nervous before trying something new?

Prediction Chart

Create a chart titled:

What Makes Someone Brave?

Record children's ideas before reading and revisit afterward.

Playground Photo Walk

Display photographs showing children climbing, sliding, balancing, and trying new playground equipment.

Discuss:

- What do you notice?
- How might the child be feeling?
- What helped them keep trying?

EXPLORE

Use an interactive read-aloud format.

Before Reading

Introduce:

- Title
- Author
- Illustrator
- Target vocabulary

Prediction Questions:

- What do you think this story is about? What makes you think that?
- How might the character be feeling? Why do you think that? Tell me more.
- What clues do you see?

During Reading

Think-Alouds:

- “I notice the character looks unsure.”
- “I wonder what the character is thinking.”

- “I remember feeling that way when I tried something new. Have you ever tried something new? Tell me what that was like.”

Turn-and-Talk Questions:

- How does the character feel?
- What clues help you know?
- What might happen next?
- What would you do?

Character Feelings Anchor Chart

Beginning → Nervous

Middle → Trying

End → Proud

Children provide evidence from the illustrations and story events.

EXTEND

Literacy Center 1

Story Retelling Slide Sequence

Objective

Retell story events in order.

Materials

- Story cards
- Pocket chart
- Character props

Procedure

Children place story cards in sequence and retell events.

Teacher Prompts

- What happened first?
- What happened next?
- How did the character change?

Observation Opportunities

Look for:

- Sequence vocabulary
- Story comprehension
- Oral language skills

Extension

Children create their own story sequence book.

Literacy Center 2

Character Feelings Investigation

Objective

Develop inferencing skills.

Materials

- Emotion cards
- Story illustrations
- Character cards

Procedure

Children identify feelings and provide evidence.

Teacher Prompts

- What clues help you know?
- How did feelings change?

Observation Opportunities

- Emotional vocabulary
- Inferencing skills
- Story comprehension

Literacy Center 3

Brave Words Vocabulary Center

Objective

Develop expressive vocabulary.

Materials

- Vocabulary cards
- Picture cards
- Pocket chart

Procedure

Match words and pictures.

Use words in complete sentences.

Challenge Option

Sort words by beginning sounds.

Standards Connection

LD4.1, EL3.1

Writing Center

Our Courage Stories

Objective

Develop emergent writing and storytelling.

Materials

- Journals
- Crayons
- Markers
- Photographs

Procedure

Prompt:

"I Was Brave When..."

Children:

- Draw
- Dictate
- Label
- Write

Teachers record dictation when needed.

Culminating Activity

Compile pages into:

Our Courage Stories

Classroom Book

Place in library center.

Observation Opportunities

- Oral language
- Writing behaviors
- Story structure

Math & Inquiry Center

Ramp Exploration Lab

Objective

Investigate motion and prediction.

Materials

- Ramps
- Cars
- Measuring tape
- Recording sheets

Procedure

Children:

1. Predict
2. Test
3. Observe
4. Record

Teacher Questions

- Which traveled farthest?
- What changed when the ramp was higher?
- Why do you think that happened?

Vocabulary

- high
- low
- farther
- closer
- faster
- slower

Standards Connection

MT3.1, CD2.1

Dramatic Play

Playground Adventure Center

Objective

Practice social communication and problem-solving.

Materials

- Playground signs - engage children in coming up with these ideas. What kind of signs would they want on a playground? Would there need to be rules posted? Encouragements?
- Maps
- Clipboards
- Safety posters

Role-Play Scenarios

- Someone feels nervous.
- A child wants a turn.
- A friend needs encouragement.

Teacher Prompts

- What could you say?
- How could you help?

Literacy Extensions

Children create:

- Safety signs
- Playground maps
- Tickets
- Sign-in sheets

Assessment & Documentation

Language & Literacy Look-Fors

□ Uses story vocabulary

□ Retells events

□ Answers questions

□ Uses sequence words

□ Participates in discussions

□ Contributes writing

Social Emotional Look-Fors

□ Identifies feelings

□ Demonstrates confidence

□ Encourages peers

□ Persists through challenges

□ Participates cooperatively

Math & Cognitive Look-Fors

□ Makes predictions

□ Compares observations

□ Measures objects

□ Explains thinking

□ Demonstrates curiosity

Family Literacy Connection

Read Together

Read *The Big Slide* several times during the week.

Discuss:

- How did the character feel? How do you know?
- What helped the character feel brave? What makes you think that?
- Have you ever felt that way? Tell me about it.

Courage Story Activity

Invite your child to draw a picture of a brave moment.

Help your child retell the story using:

- First
- Next

- Then
- Finally

Write their words underneath.

Bring the story back to school for sharing.

Additional Home Activities

Playground Reflection

Visit a playground.

Discuss:

- What feels easy?
- What feels challenging?
- What helped you try?

Encouraging Words Practice

Create a list of family encouragement phrases. Be SPECIFIC with your praise.

- You did it!
- You climbed to the top of your slide by yourself.
- I believe in you.
- I'm proud of you.

Differentiation & Inclusion Supports

Language Supports

- Visual vocabulary cards
- Real photographs
- Emotion visuals
- Sentence stems

Fine Motor Supports

- Adaptive crayons
- Stickers
- Dictation
- Larger writing tools

Gross Motor Supports

- Seated participation options
- Modified movement activities
- Partner participation

Sensory Supports

- Quiet reflection space
- Visual schedules
- Alternative sensory materials

Social Emotional Supports

- Peer buddies
- Encouragement scripts
- Emotion cue cards

Enrichment Opportunities

Courage Wall

Display children's courage stories.

Community Helper Interviews

Invite:

- Teachers
- Coaches
- Librarians

to discuss how they encourage children.

Courage Role Plays

Children act out challenging situations and practice supportive responses.

Classroom Book Collection

Create a basket of books about

- Courage - *The Kissing Hand, The Brave Little One, & Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon*
- Perseverance *The Carrot Seed, Dream Big LIttle Pig*
- Growth mindset *Beautiful OOps!, After the Fall, The Dot*
- Trying new things: *The Magical Yet, Green Eggs and Ham*

Closing Reflection

I can try new things. I can keep going. I can be brave.Return to the chart:

What Makes Someone Brave?

Compare children's responses from before and after the lesson.

Ask:

- What did we learn?
- What helps us be brave?
- How can we encourage others?

End with the class affirmation:

I can try new things.

I can keep going.

I can be brave.

Family Literacy Night Activities

The Courage Telescope & Slide STEM Lab

Inspired by *The Big Slide*

Literacy Focus: Emotional Vocabulary (*Nervous, Brave, Perspective, Cheering*) • Sequence Words (*First, Next, Then, Finally*) • Phonological Awareness (/b/ in *Brave, Big, Balance*)

Science & STEM Focus: Optics & Perspective • Slopes, Incline & Velocity • Friction & Distance

Big Idea: When a big slide or new challenge looks scary from far away, changing our perspective helps us break it down into small, doable steps!

Learning Outcomes

Families will:

- Explore perspective and focus by constructing a "Brave Courage Telescope" to look closely at daunting challenges and break them into smaller steps.
- Investigate physical forces (gravity, slope, and friction) by adjusting table-top ramps and sliding different textured "brave sliders" (felt, plastic, wood) down the incline.
- Practice peer and family encouragement, using "Power Cheer Cards" to build confidence during group play.
- Strengthen fine motor skills by decorating telescopes with star stickers, target bands, and custom "I Can Do It!" labels.
- Create a Take-Home Courage Kit with their telescope, ramp slider, and fort prompts for home connection.

Materials

Each Family Receives:

- Brave Explorer Kit Bag
    - Paper lunch bag decorated with stars
    - 1 Sturdy cardboard telescope tube (or paper towel roll)
    - Colored cellophane sheets (blue, yellow, red) + rubber bands (for colored "lens" filters)
    - Star stickers and foam "Courage Badge" stickers
    - 1 Flexible plastic/cardboard ramp strip

    - 3 Small slider discs with different bottom textures (smooth wood, felt, plastic)
    - Crayons or markers

Station Materials (Shared Among Families)

- Table-top wooden blocks or tissue boxes (for propping up ramps)
- Painter's tape (to create "landing target zones" on table surfaces)
- "Power Cheer Cards" displaying simple encouragement phrases

Agenda (25–30 Minutes)

1. Welcome & Interactive Read Aloud: Looking Up & Looking Down (7–8 Minutes)

Introduce the story by saying:

> "Tonight, we're stepping up to *The Big Slide*! When you stand at the bottom looking UP, a slide can look huge and intimidating. But when you look closely, step by step, you realize you have what it takes! Tonight, we're building special tools to change our perspective and master the slide!"

Pause throughout the story to ask:

- *Look at how tall the slide looks on this page—how does your body feel when you see something really big or new?*
- *Listen for our sound of the night: /b/ /b/ BRAVE! Can you raise your hands up high every time you hear a /b/ word like Big, Brave, or Balance?*
- *What helped the character take that very first step up the ladder?*

Introduce key vocabulary:

- Nervous
- Brave
- Perspective
- Incline
- Encouragement

2. Family Activity: Craft Your "Brave Courage Telescope" (8–10 Minutes)

Invite families to build their perspective-shifting tool.

Explain:

> "Sometimes when a challenge feels too big, focusing on the whole thing makes us nervous. A Courage Telescope helps us zero in on just ONE step at a time!"

Step A: Build the Telescope & Choose Your "Focus Lens"

- Wrap and decorate the cardboard tube with star stickers and foam badges.
- Attach a colored cellophane sheet over the end using a rubber band (e.g., *Yellow Lens = Bright Thinking! Blue Lens = Cool & Calm!*).

Step B: The "Step-by-Step" Focus Test

- Children look through their telescope at a target card across the room or on the table.
- Practice zooming in on just the FIRST ladder rung instead of the top of the giant slide!

As families build, encourage discussion by asking:

- *When you look through your calm blue lens, how does the room look?*
- *How does focusing on just ONE step help you feel braver than looking at the whole giant hill?*

3. Family Activity: The High-and-Low Slide STEM Test (10–12 Minutes)

Explain:

> "Now let's test how different objects zoom down our own mini slides!"

- Families prop up their cardboard ramp against wooden blocks on their table.
- The Incline Test: Compare how fast sliders move when the ramp is low vs. when it's propped high like *The Big Slide*.
- The Texture Test: Slide a smooth wood disc, a soft felt disc, and a plastic disc down the ramp. *Which slider zooms fastest? Which one moves slowly and smoothly?*
- The Encouragement Cheer: Before each launch down the high ramp, caregivers and kids shout a power cheer together: *"1, 2, 3... Zoom with bravery!"*

Closing (2 Minutes)

Invite children to peer through their telescopes at the group.

Close by saying:

> "Whenever you come across a giant slide, a tough task, or a brand-new day, take out your Courage Telescope, zoom in on step number one, and remember: you are brave enough to tackle anything!"

Take-Home Family Challenge

Courage Telescope Fort Walk!

Take your Courage Telescope and Slider Kit home!

1. Build a "Courage Fort": Use blankets and chairs to build a cozy reading fort at home.
2. Telescope Story Time: Sit inside the fort, dim the lights, and use your mini flashlight through your Courage Telescope to spot words in *The Big Slide*.
3. Family Conversation Prompts:
    - *"What is one thing that felt a little big or scary today?"*
    - *"How can we use our telescope thinking to focus on just step #1 tomorrow?"*

Why This Works

- 100% Unique Artifact: The "Courage Telescope" with colored cellophane lenses gives children a brand-new physical tool focused on *visual perspective and focus*, completely separate from pocket tokens, clay, or stones.
- Seamless STEM Integration: Testing felt vs. wood vs. plastic sliders on high/low inclinations connects directly to the mechanics of a playground slide in a hands-on, clean way.
- Clear Tabletop Flow: Everything takes place right at the table stations, keeping transitions simple and manageable for 20–30 minutes.