



Aimee Funk Instructor: Mother/Child Reading Program for Incarcerated Women with Children

Supporting Reading through Cognitive Development

Topic: Understanding Cognitive Development and Supporting Reading Habits (Ages 3–10)

Objective:

By the end of this lesson, mothers will:

- Understand cognitive development milestones for ages 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, and 9–10.
 - Learn age-appropriate reading strategies and habits to support development.
 - Collaboratively create one reading activity tailored to their child's age for a video visit.
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Materials:

- Chart paper and markers
 - Cognitive development handouts (by age group)
 - Sample books (from "I Can Read" series and others)
 - Activity planning worksheet
 - Timer
 - Colored index cards with age ranges written on them
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Lesson Outline

1. Welcome & Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Quick check-in: "What's one book your child enjoys?" (Go around briefly.)
- Explain lesson objectives and end goal: preparing a personalized activity for a video visit.

2. Cognitive Development Overview by Age Group (20 minutes)

Break into **4 small groups**. Each group is assigned **one age range** (3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–10) using colored index cards.

Each group receives a **handout** with the following info:

Age 3–4: Preoperational Stage (Early Preschoolers)

- Developing memory and imagination
- Enjoys repetition, rhyme, and pretend play
- Struggles with perspective-taking

Reading Tips:

- Picture-heavy books with rhyme and rhythm
- Repetition and sing-song reading
- Asking simple “what” and “where” questions

Age 5–6: Emerging Readers (Late Preschool to Early Elementary)

- Begins understanding letters and sounds
- Loves predictable stories and patterns
- Can follow a story with beginning, middle, end

Reading Tips:

- Encourage pointing to words
- Ask questions about feelings or characters
- Practice rhyming and letter-sound games

Age 7–8: Growing Independence (Early Elementary)

- Begins reading independently
- Developing logic and problem-solving
- Understands story structure and character motives

Reading Tips:

- Ask “why” questions and make predictions
- Discuss problems and solutions in stories
- Encourage reading aloud together

Age 9–10: Independent Thinkers (Upper Elementary)

- Thinks more abstractly and critically
- Can infer, summarize, and connect themes
- Enjoys chapter books and series

Reading Tips:

- Discuss themes, lessons, and character change
- Encourage journaling or drawing after reading
- Ask open-ended questions during reading

Each group:

- Reads the handout (5 min)
 - Discusses what stood out (5 min)
 - Prepares a 2-min “teaching moment” to share with the whole group (5 min)
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3. Group Presentations (10 minutes)

- Each group shares what they learned and one tip for moms with kids in that age group.
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4. Collaborative Planning: Create a Video Visit Activity (15 minutes)

Mothers pair up with someone who has a child in a similar age range. Together, they:

- Brainstorm a **short reading activity** they can do with their child over video based on what they learned.
- Use the **Activity Planning Worksheet** to design it.

Example activities:

- **Ages 3–4:** “Read and Act” – Mom reads *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, and child finds an object of the same color.
- **Ages 5–6:** “Rhyming Challenge” – Read a rhyming story and ask the child to come up with rhyming words.
- **Ages 7–8:** “Prediction Game” – Read part of a book and pause to ask what will happen next.
- **Ages 9–10:** “Theme Talk” – Discuss what the story teaches us and how the characters changed.

5. Share & Close (10 minutes)

- A few pairs share their planned activities.
- Wrap-up reflection: “What’s one new thing you learned today that you’re excited to try?”

Assessment / End Product

Each participant will leave with:

- A completed **Reading Activity Worksheet** tailored to their child’s age
- A plan to use the activity during their next **video visit**
- New knowledge about **cognitive development and reading engagement**