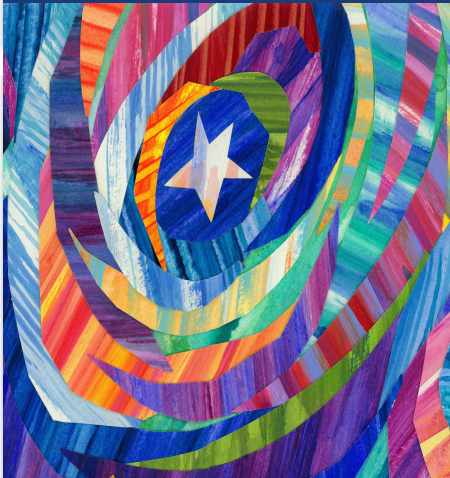


# The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



## Owl Moon

Written by Jane Yolen  
Illustrated by John  
Schoenherr

Preschool edition

### Overview of Book

On a quiet, peaceful but very cold winter night, Pa takes his youngest child (it is her turn) alone to the forest to seek the beautiful and silent Great Horned Owl. She has waited a long time for her turn. The big, full moon lights the way as she and Pa walk silently deeper into the woods. Pa waits for the perfect time to make the special owl call. Finally a Great Horned Owl answers Pa's call. "Sometimes there is an owl and sometimes there isn't." This time, there is.

Genre: Realistic Fiction

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Owl Moon* to introduce in your classroom:

faded	shadow
searching	shrugged
brave	clearing
threading	meadow

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

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

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

### Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

COR Advantage 1.5

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D (*Emotions*)  
Item E (*Building  
relationships with adults*)

Language, Literacy and  
Communication  
Item N (*Phonological  
awareness*)

Science and Technology  
Item BB (*Observing and  
classifying*)  
Item DD (*Natural and  
physical world*)

### Reading Tips

There is a quiet mystery to this story that is reflected by the vast silence of the winter night and the activity of owling. Use a hushed but excited tone when reading to reflect this as well as the child's wonder and curiosity of the experience.

Ask questions like, "How hard is it for the girl to be totally silent?" Ask the children to share what about this would be difficult (examples might include staying warm, being quiet, being in the woods at night, and wondering if any animals were around).

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to 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.

**Transition** children by asking them to “fly silently like the Great Horned Owl.”

At **Small Group Time**, brainstorm with the children about events or places that are best enjoyed when you are quiet or silent. Examples could include trying to fall asleep in your bedroom, a winter walk like in the story, watching your baby sister sleep, or sitting outside. Have a range of art materials for children to draw what they imagine.

Play real owl calls at **Greeting Time** for children to hear, compare and practice.

### **Around the Room**

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

Place extra boots, scarves and mittens in the **House Area** to enhance pretend play/dress-up.

Introduce other relevant winter stories in the **Book Area**, such as *Little Polar Bear* by Hans deBeer and *Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson.

Hang labeled photos of owls in the **House, Block or Book Areas** for children to see and compare. Find out which owls live in the area so children can be on the lookout for them.

### **Open-ended Questions**

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one “right” answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Owl Moon*:

Why does Pa take his children owling?

Why do you think they went owling so late at night?

I wonder what the owl was thinking when Pa and the little girl were looking up at him. Do you have any ideas?

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

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[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

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574-237-9740

### **@ Home**

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

*Owl Moon* is a gentle story about a father and his young child out late at night hoping to see a Great Horned Owl. As you read this book with your child, be on the lookout for critters watching their journey—a fox, a raccoon, a field mouse, a deer. Connect the story to home by pointing out to your child that there are owl types that live in the South Bend area including the Great Horned Owl from the story as well as the small Screech Owl and Barred Owl. Last winter, Snowy Owls were visiting from the arctic! If you have the opportunity to go to the Potawatomi Zoo, quietly visit the Barn Owl near the goats. Invite your child to compare the look of owls to other birds like robins or sparrows.