


SLPs as Authors:  
The Art and Science of  
Writing Children's  
Books for Preschoolers


Shari Robertson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Board Certified Specialist-Child  
Language



SHAV Convention, 2023

1


Literature-based  
intervention has been  
recommended as a  
best practice to support  
language and literacy  
goals for young  
children with language  
delays for over 25  
years.




2

We love using books in therapy because they are:

- Low cost or no cost
- Readily available
- Portable
- FUN!!!




3



Books naturally  
help develop both  
oral and written  
language and  
(when used  
correctly) facilitate  
a love of reading.

4

Language and Literacy Grow Together.




oral language

written language

5

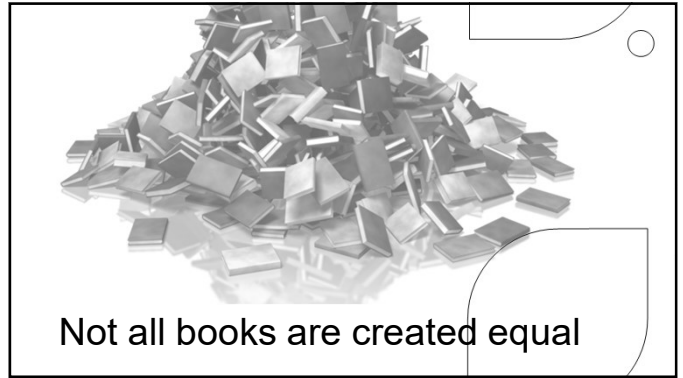
Given their comprehensive knowledge  
of language and literacy development  
speech/language pathologists are  
uniquely qualified to author books  
that supports development in both  
domains.



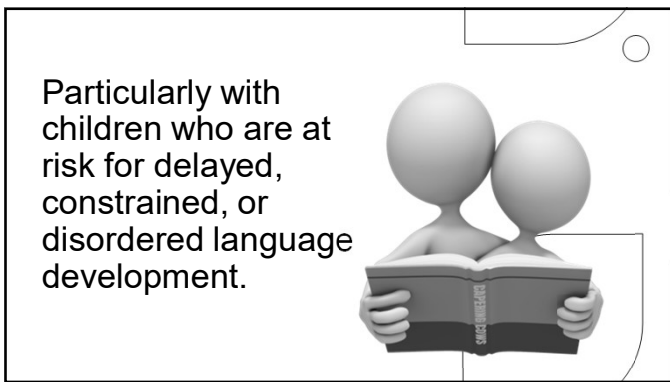
6

**BUT...**

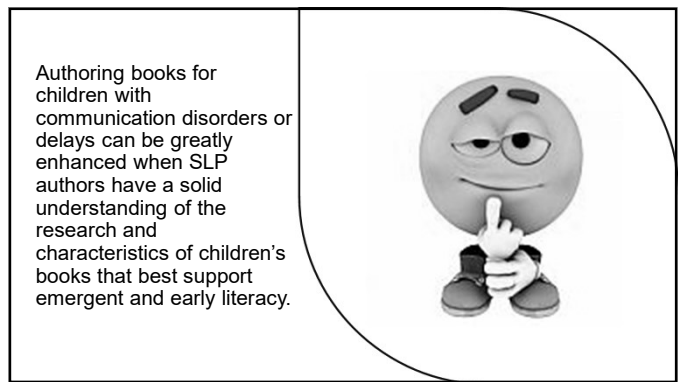
7



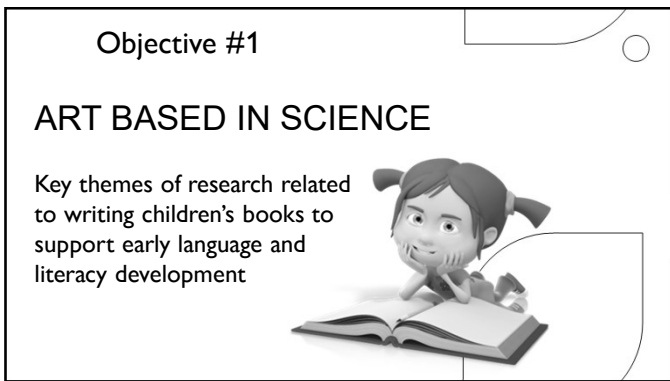
8



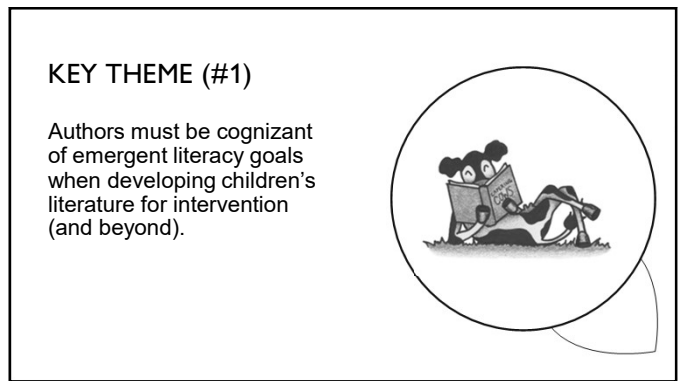
9



10



11



12


**Book Assessment Worksheet**

Skill	Notes
<b>Emergent Literacy</b>	
Print Awareness	
Phonological Awareness (rhyming, syllabification)	
Phonemic Awareness (isolation, identity, blending, segmentation, substitution, addition, subtraction)	

13

**KEY THEME (#2)**

To increase opportunities to use language in the natural context of joint reading, authors must consider how to build opportunities for active participation into reading interactions.



14

**Interactive Reading Strategies**

- Interactive reading strategies encourage children to be active participants in the reading interaction, paralleling how children learn language in the dyad.
- Can be implemented long before children can decode. (And after!)
- Are built on a robust literature base.
- Can be implemented in small groups and large groups and taught to parents/educators.

**LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOP IN THE DYAD!**

15

**RWM Book Characteristics**

Here's What to Look for When Selecting Books to Use with Read With Me Strategies

STRATEGY	LOOK FOR:
Echo Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only a few words on a page</li> <li>• vocabulary that is reinforced by the illustrations</li> <li>• bright, engaging pictures</li> </ul>
Paired Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• predictable text</li> <li>• engaging storylines</li> <li>• strong rhythm and rhyme AND/OR</li> <li>• a phrase that repeats throughout the story</li> </ul>
Friendly Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details that invite friendly questions</li> <li>• storylines that encourage critical thinking</li> </ul>
Predicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stories that provide opportunities to predict what might happen next</li> <li>• visual details that give clues to what might be on the next page</li> </ul>
Wordless Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• books in which the story is told through the pictures rather than through the words (some wordless books have a few words in them)</li> </ul>
Reader's Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stories that encourage movement and action</li> <li>• stories that can be acted out or work well with props (such as puppets, simple costumes, or manipulatives)</li> </ul>

16

STRATEGY	LOOK FOR:
Echo Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only a few words on a page</li> <li>• vocabulary that is reinforced by the illustrations</li> <li>• bright, engaging pictures</li> </ul>
Paired Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• predictable text</li> <li>• engaging storylines</li> <li>• strong rhythm and rhyme AND/OR</li> <li>• a phrase that repeats throughout the story</li> </ul>
Friendly Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details that invite friendly questions</li> <li>• storylines that encourage critical thinking</li> </ul>
Predicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stories that provide opportunities to predict what might happen next</li> <li>• visual details that give clues to what might be on the next page</li> </ul>
Wordless Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• books in which the story is told through the pictures rather than through the words (some wordless books have a few words in them)</li> </ul>
Reader's Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stories that encourage movement and action</li> <li>• stories that can be acted out or work well with props (such as puppets, simple costumes, or manipulatives)</li> </ul>

17

**Interactive Reading Strategies**

Echo Reading	
Paired Reading	
Friendly Questions	
Prediction	
Wordless	
Reader's Theatre	
Other	

18

**KEY THEME (#3)**

Authors must consider the impact of specific elements, characteristics, and genres of children's books on early language and literacy development in general and in relation to specific skills and targeted outcomes.



19

**Speech and Phonology Targets**

Articulation/Speech Sounds

Phonological Processes

20

**Language Targets**

Vocabulary

Word Categories

Syntactic Structures

Pragmatics

Skill

Notes

**Language Targets (cont)**

Reading Fluency

Reading Comprehension

Figurative Language

Narrative/Sequencing

Other Language Targets

21

**Critical Qualities**

Engaging Illustrations match targets

Character Diversity

Extension Activities for potential (or same)

Singing/Rhythm

Signs/Gestures

Sound Effects/Animal Sounds

Family/Parent Friendly

**Social/Emotion Developmental Other Targets**

As Noted

22

**Book Assessment Worksheet**

Skill

Notes

**Emergent Literacy**

Book Awareness

Phonological Awareness (rhyming, syllables)

Phonics Awareness (letter-sound, letter, writing, segmentation, letter-sound, letter-sound)

**Interactive Reading Strategies**

Echo Reading

Partner Reading

Read-Aloud

Shared Reading

Readers Theater

Other

**Language Targets**

Vocabulary

Word Categories

Syntactic Structures

Pragmatics

Skill

Notes

**Language Targets (cont)**

Reading Fluency

Reading Comprehension

Figurative Language

Narrative/Sequencing

Other Language Targets

**Speech and Phonology Targets**

Articulation/Speech Sounds

Phonological Processes

**Critical Qualities**

Engaging Illustrations match targets

Character Diversity

Extension Activities for potential (or same)

Singing/Rhythm

Signs/Gestures

Sound Effects/Animal Sounds

Family/Parent Friendly

**Social/Emotion Developmental Other Targets**

As Noted

23

**GETTING your STORY INTO PRINT**



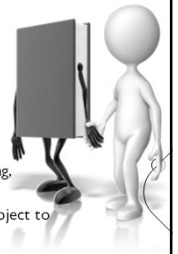
24

## Publisher versus Self-Publishing

25

## Working with a Publisher

- NO COSTS to author.
- Publisher works with the author to develop product.
- Publisher assumes all costs of developing, printing, marketing, selling, warehousing, etc.
- Contracts with illustrators, graphic artists, printers etc to bring project to fruition
- Book published under company imprint.
- Publisher owns copyright
- Pays the author an agreed upon portion of the profits from each book ("Royalty")



26

## Self Publishing

- Author pays for all costs of publishing, printing, marketing, etc.
- Author contracts with illustrators, etc.
- Typically printed "on-demand."



27

## Examples of Self Publishers

- Amazonproinc.com
- Kdpamazonbookmarketing.com (Kindle ebooks only)
- Outskirtspress.com
- Bookwritercoerner.com
- Lulu.com
- Penquinghostwriting.com

28

## Publisher ≠ Printer

- ✓ Publishers work with authors to develop products
- ✓ Printers print the finished product.



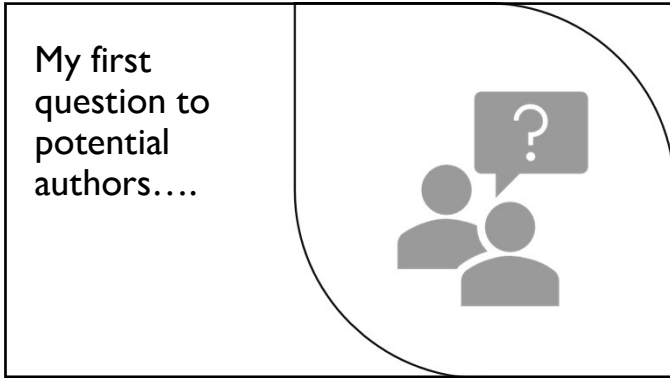
29

## What do Publishers Want

- Unique Idea
- A book they can market (it does no one any good if a book just sits in a warehouse because it doesn't fit the profile of the publishers)



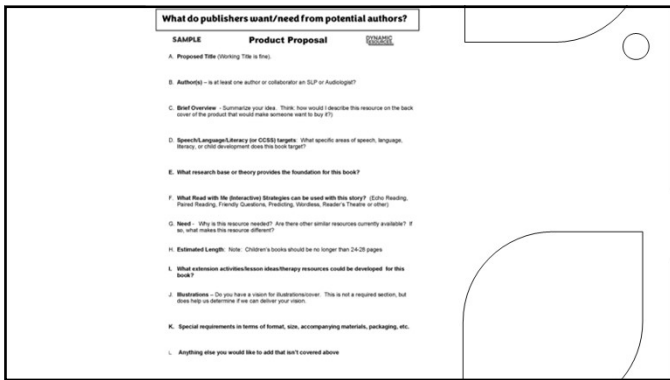
30



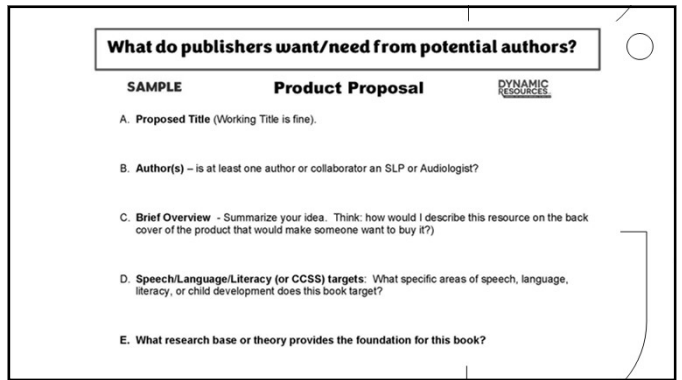
31



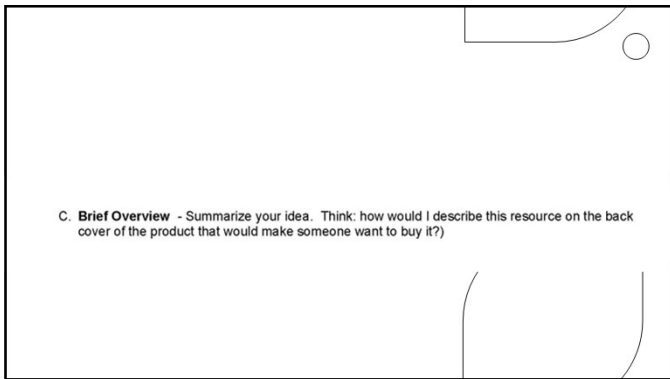
32



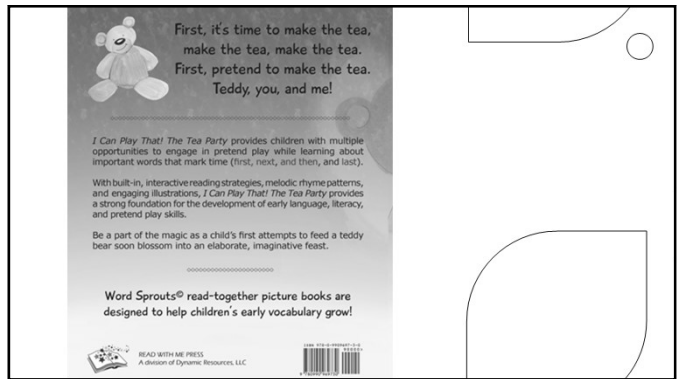
33



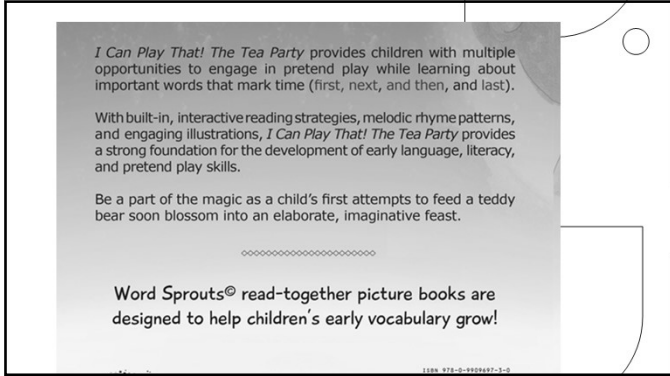
34



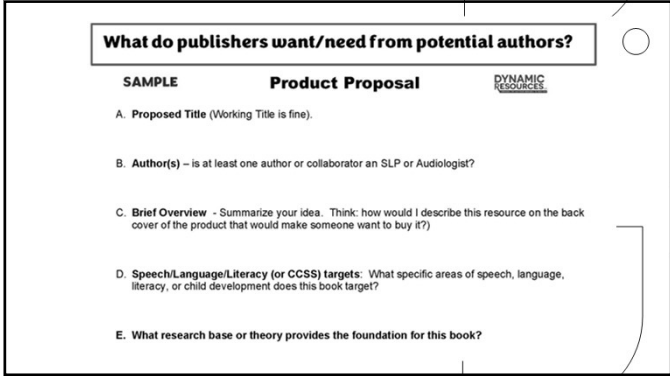
35



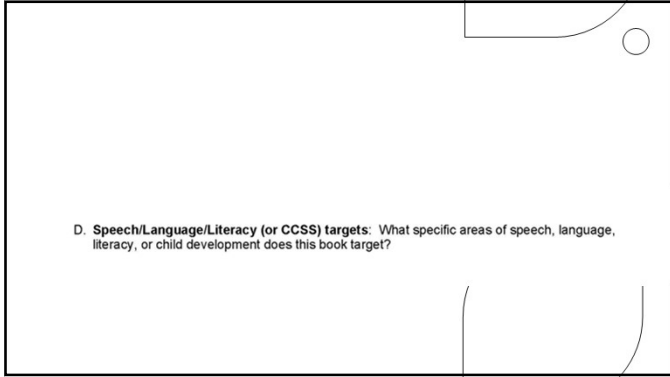
36



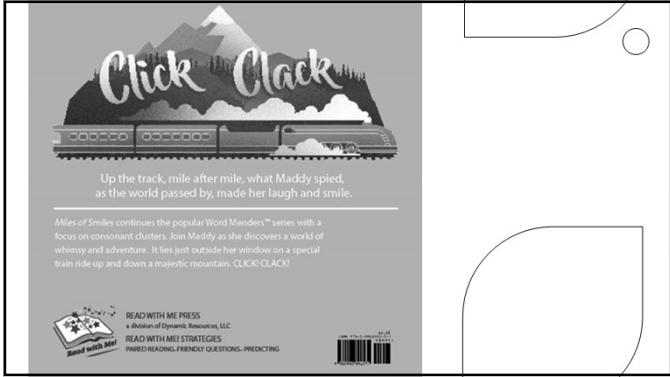
37



38



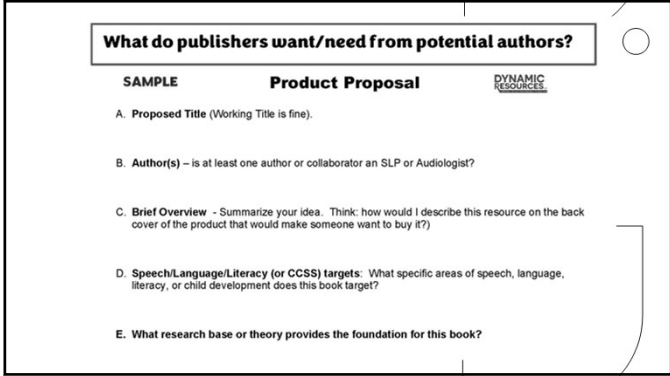
39



40



41

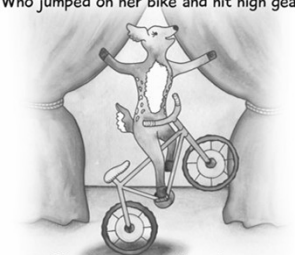


42

E. What research base or theory provides the foundation for this book?

43

Then came Katie's pretty, pet deer.  
Who jumped on her bike and hit high gear.



Minimal and Maximal  
Pair Therapy to treat  
phonological processes  
(well researched)

She did every trick we know.  
We clapped and shouted, "Go, doe, go!"

44

F. What Read with Me (Interactive) Strategies can be used with this story? (Echo Reading, Paired Reading, Friendly Questions, Predicting, Wordless, Reader's Theatre or other)

G. Need - Why is this resource needed? Are there other similar resources currently available? If so, what makes this resource different?

H. Estimated Length: Note: Children's books should be no longer than 24-28 pages

I. What extension activities/lesson ideas/therapy resources could be developed for this book?

J. Illustrations - Do you have a vision for illustrations/cover. This is not a required section, but does help us determine if we can deliver your vision.

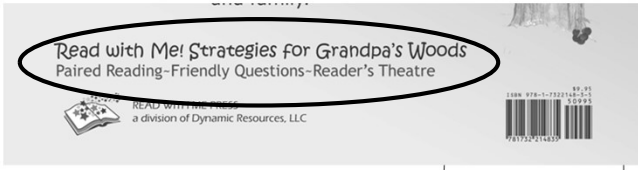
K. Special requirements in terms of format, size, accompanying materials, packaging, etc.

L. Anything else you would like to add that isn't covered above

45

F. What Read with Me (Interactive) Strategies can be used with this story? (Echo Reading, Paired Reading, Friendly Questions, Predicting, Wordless, Reader's Theatre or other)

46



Read with Me! Strategies for Grandpa's Woods  
Paired Reading-Friendly Questions-Reader's Theatre

READ WITH ME STRATEGIES  
a division of Dynamic Resources, LLC

ISBN 978-1-722142-2-1  
9 781722 142211

47

F. What Read with Me (Interactive) Strategies can be used with this story? (Echo Reading, Paired Reading, Friendly Questions, Predicting, Wordless, Reader's Theatre or other)

G. Need - Why is this resource needed? Are there other similar resources currently available? If so, what makes this resource different?

H. Estimated Length: Note: Children's books should be no longer than 24-28 pages

I. What extension activities/lesson ideas/therapy resources could be developed for this book?

J. Illustrations - Do you have a vision for illustrations/cover. This is not a required section, but does help us determine if we can deliver your vision.

K. Special requirements in terms of format, size, accompanying materials, packaging, etc.

L. Anything else you would like to add that isn't covered above

48



G. **Need** - Why is this resource needed? Are there other similar resources currently available? If so, what makes this resource different?

**IMPORTANT**

49

H. **Estimated Length:** Note: Children's books should be no longer than 24-28 pages

\*Multiples of 4

50

I. **What extension activities/lesson ideas/therapy resources could be developed for this book?**

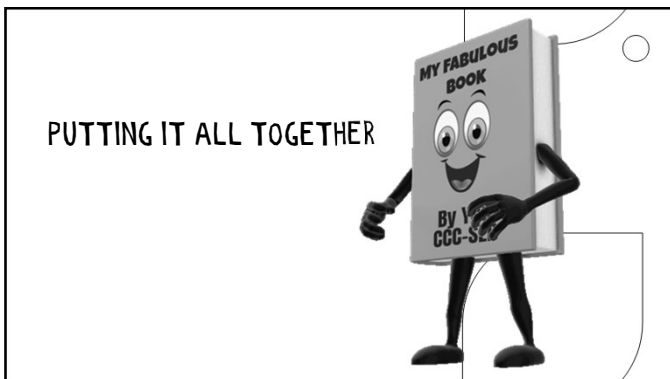
51

J. **Illustrations** – Do you have a vision for illustrations/cover. This is not a required section, but does help us determine if we can deliver your vision.

K. **Special requirements in terms of format, size, accompanying materials, packaging, etc.**

L. **Anything else you would like to add that isn't covered above**

52




53



54

Include opportunities for active participation in the reading interaction.


- ✓ Echo Reading
- ✓ Paired Reading
- ✓ Questioning Strategies
- ✓ Predicting
- ✓ Wordless Books
- ✓ Reader's Theatre



Social Learning Theory  
Robust literature base

55

### Make it Parent Friendly





How to Use This Book

How to Use This Book

How to Use This Book

56

Consider extension activities/materials (and possible sequels/series)

57

Engage Your Imagination!

Take Chances

Dream Big


Think Like a Child

Make Mistakes

Get Messy

COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES

CHANGE THE WORLD



58

Create Your Action Plan

SLP AS AUTHORS: ACTION PLAN	
Engage Imagination!	
What SKILL/S Do I want to target? (Why does this book need to be written?)	
How do these targets/skills related to language/literacy development?	
How will I incorporate opportunities for children to participate actively in reading?	
What kinds of extension activities could be developed?	
WRITE! (Date, Create a writing schedule)	
SELL Product? (Seek out Educator, graphic artist, publishing option, marketing strategy)	
PUBLISH! (Request, complete/provide product proposal)	
SHARE !!!	

Shari Robertson  
ADHA, 2022

59

SLP AS AUTHORS: ACTION PLAN

Engage Imagination!	
What Skill/S Do I want to target? (Why does this book need to be written?)	
How do these targets/skills related to language/literacy development?	
How will I incorporate opportunities for children to participate actively in reading?	
What kinds of extension activities could be developed?	

60