**Why a Picture Walk?**

*A picture walk has several purposes:*

1. To recognize what the child does or does not know. I have had children not recognize barnyard animals, so no matter how hard they try, if the object/idea is not in their schema/prior knowledge they will not understand.
2. To “warm up” their schema. We tell the children that schema is everything they brought to us in their brains. If they recognize the three bears in my text they should be able to link that to words such as fur, mother, father, baby, etc.
3. To help with the words – if they see a bear in the picture, there probably should be the word bear in the text.
4. To help understand where the story line is going – When they see Father Bear playing with the train and Baby Bear playing with the car they start to infer what is going on in the story.

*Starting a picture walk:*

1. Point to and read the title to your child. Open a discussion about what they think might happen in the story based only on the title and cover picture. Again this awakens the schema and also points out holes in background knowledge.
2. Cover the words as you go through the pictures and just ask your child: “What do you see?” “What do you think is going on?”
3. This is the time to explain pictures, not the whole story line, if they don’t recognize something.
4. When you are done with the walk ask them to tell you their favorite picture and why.
5. *Now* you are ready to start reading the story with the words.