



As children learn about language and books, they start to realise the difference between words and pictures. Talk about how the author writes the words (point out the words as you read) and the illustrator draws or paints the pictures. In this book, the words *and* pictures tell the story. Here are some ideas to help make the most of sharing *Millie Loves Ants*.

- **Involve your child**

Read the title, pointing to the words as you go. Who do you think Millie is? Is it the little girl or is it the echidna? Look through the book to find the word 'Millie'. An important skill in the early years is understanding what words are – that they are made up of letters and those letters make different sounds. The same word can also be spelt in different ways. Can you find the other Milly?

- **Make the connection between words and pictures to help your child's understanding**

"Ants" is repeated over and over throughout the story. Point to the word and then ask your child to find all the ants on that page. Talk about what the ants are doing. Each time you see the word ant again on other pages you can point it out again.

- **Explain the meaning of new and unusual words**

When you come across words like "debris", use the pictures to help your child to understand what it means. Look at all the rubbish the ants have taken underground. Apple cores, egg shells and banana peels. That's a lot of debris. What's another word we could use instead? It's important to not skip over these unusual words but use them as opportunities to help your child learn something new. What is a baby echidna called? Can we find out together? Books are great for exploring new words.

- **Point out the rhyming words**

Can you hear that "trees" and "leaves" sound the same at the end? What other words rhyme with trees? You can do the same with the other rhyming pairs throughout the book. Have fun making up your own silly rhyming words.

- **The end of the story**

When you get to the end of this book, talk about all the new things you learned about ants.

Go on a hunt around your house or backyard and see if you can find any ants. Talk about what they are doing or where they might be going. Children might like to draw the ants they see and make up their own story.

Young children are engaging in early STEM learning when they explore and describe the ways things look according to size, shape and colour. Some questions you could ask about ants include: Where do they live? What do they like to eat? What are some of the things they do?

Borrow junior non-fiction books from the library to learn more about ants and how they live and work.

To find out more visit

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