ABOUT THE STORY
Robert enjoys being an only child, and has difficulty adjusting when little Stevie begins staying at his house during the week while his parents work. Dwelling on the annoying things Stevie does, Robert can’t wait until each weekend when Stevie’s parents come to pick him up. But when the day comes that Stevie and his family move away, Robert is surprised at how he feels.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/Illustrator
John Lewis Steptoe attended the High School of Art and Design in New York City but did not graduate. He instead submitted illustrations to Harper Junior Books, where an editor encouraged him to write a book to accompany his drawings. Steptoe’s first picture book, Stevie, earned him national recognition and a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators. Steptoe illustrated sixteen books, ten of which he also wrote. Two of them, The Story of Jumping Mouse and Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters, were named Caldecott Honor Books. He was the recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, for Mother Crocodile and Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters. Mr. Steptoe died in 1989.

INTRODUCING THE STORY
Ask the group if they have ever had another child come stay at their house for an extended period time. Describe the experience. Explain that in this book, Stevie is a little boy who stays with Robert, an older boy, and Robert’s family during the week while Stevie’s parents work. Point out that the story is told from Robert’s point of view, and focuses on all of the trouble Stevie causes him.

READING ACTIVITIES
Comprehension/Thinking Skills
a. Why did Robert’s mother look after Stevie? (Stevie’s parents worked)
b. What did Robert think of Stevie? (that he was a pest)
c. What were some of the things Stevie did that bothered Robert? (crawled on his bed, played with his toys, was a crybaby)
d. Why wasn’t Stevie allowed in the park? (got hurt there)
e. Why did Robert’s cereal get soggy at the end? (he was remembering good times with Stevie)

Vocabulary
Write these words on the chalkboard and review their meanings. Then ask volunteers to use the words in sentences.
greedy company nerves breadbox boogieman mickies marshmallows

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Language Arts/Critical Thinking: Give It Some Thought
- Discuss the reasons why Robert, who spends most of the story complaining about Stevie, has only nice things to say about him at the end.
- At the end of the story Robert says that Stevie was “kinda like a little brother”. Ask the group if they agree or disagree with Robert’s statement and explain why.

Home and Career Skills: Break the Stereotype
Robert’s friends make fun of him and call him a “babysitter”. Find out if any boys in the group have ever babysat. Were they uncomfortable with it? Discuss why babysitting has traditionally been a female role.

Language Arts: Confounded Compounds
Write the following two lists of words on the board. Review the definition of a compound word. Have volunteers draw lines to connect words that form a compound found in the story.
cow work
door prints
foot plane
cry bell
bread baby
air box
home boys

Language Arts: What’s in a Name?
Write “Stevie” on the board vertically. Think of adjectives that describe Stevie for each letter. Have each member of the group do the same with their own names.

Art Appreciation/Research Skills: Illustrator Honors
Point out that several of Steptoe’s books received awards for their artwork (see “About the Author/Illustrator”). Have students research his books to see which ones have one, as well as which awards they were given. Examine the Caldecott Honor Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration stamp. What do the awards look like? (This activity could also be done as an Internet activity.)

INTERNET ACTIVITY
Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

John Steptoe
Have students research this interesting African American author. (Note that he died from AIDS related complications.)

Caldecott Medal
Do research to learn more about this medal. Why is it given? When was it first awarded? What does it look like? What are some of the books that have won it?