

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2018

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *There Is No Dragon in This Story* (Lou Carter)

Dragon really wants to be a hero. He travels from fairy tale to fairy tale offering to rescue the characters, but everyone sends him away. Then, a giant's sneeze blows out the sun, and Dragon finally gets his chance. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Keena Ford and the Second-Grade Mix-Up* (Melissa Thomson)

Keena Ford's new teacher makes a special cake for each student's birthday. When Keena's birthday gets marked on the wrong date, will she tell the truth or celebrate anyway to get the cake? The first book in the Keena Ford series.



■ *The House That Jane Built* (Tanya Lee Stone)

In the 1800s, a woman named Jane Addams was determined to make life better for those in need. This biography tells how she founded Hull House, a community center in Chicago, and helped people find housing and jobs. Addams then went on to become the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

■ *The Wing Wing Brothers Math Spectacular!* (Ethan Long)

Humor + math = learning fun in this comic book-style story. Five duck brothers put on a comedy show. As they juggle pies and spin plates, readers can compare amounts, learn math facts, and more. Part of the Wing Wing Brothers series.

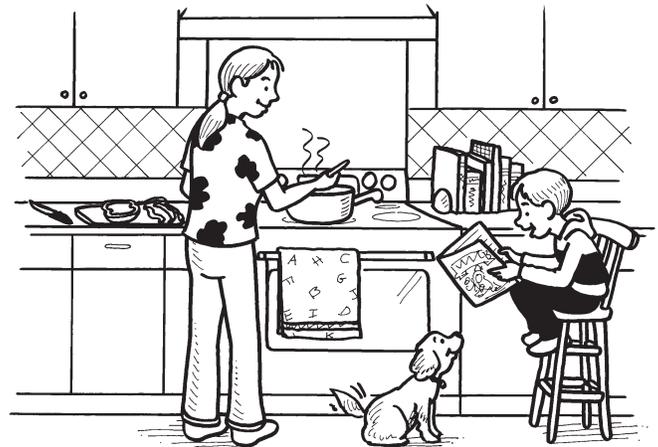


Family reading routines

Reading with your child each day helps him grow as a reader. And just a few minutes here and there really add up. Consider these suggestions for fitting more reading into busy days.

Mealtime practice

Serve up a side of reading! During breakfast, keep the cereal box on the table. You can help your child read the name of the cereal, the slogan, and any riddles or activities. While you make dinner, invite him to read a familiar storybook aloud, or let him browse through a cookbook for words he recognizes (*milk*, *pizza*).



highlight upcoming events like back-to-school night or picture day.

A reading surprise

Like a tooth fairy who leaves money, be a reading fairy who leaves reading material for your child. Tape comic strips to the bathroom mirror for him to read while he brushes his teeth. Place a poem on his pillow so he can enjoy it before bed. And stash a few books or magazines near his seat in the car.♥

School days

Together, read the papers your youngster brings home from school, perhaps a story he wrote in class or an announcement about a field trip. Also, post the school calendar on the refrigerator. Read it regularly with your child, and have him

Things I can write about

Your youngster's life is full of creative writing material, whether she's picking apples or riding her bike. Encourage her to collect story ideas with these steps.

1. Let your child decorate a box. She might cover it with stickers or wrap it with construction paper and draw pictures.
2. Together, brainstorm topics she could write about, like becoming a big sister or visiting a new playground. She can write or draw each idea on a slip of colored paper and store it in her box.
3. Have her pull out a slip for inspiration when she wants to write a story, or before school if she knows she'll get to write on a topic of her choice that day.♥



Stand up and write!

Writing on a vertical surface strengthens your child's arm and wrist muscles and improves the coordination she needs for handwriting. Plus, it's fun. Try these tips.

Windows. Have your youngster use dry-erase markers to draw and color shapes on a window, turning it into "stained glass." Be sure to take a photo of her work before she cleans the window!



Walls. Hang poster board on her bedroom wall, and let your child design a sign using crayons. She might write her name and draw a border of flowers, for example. Also, consider getting a small dry-erase board from the dollar store. Use it to play hangman or to leave messages for each other.

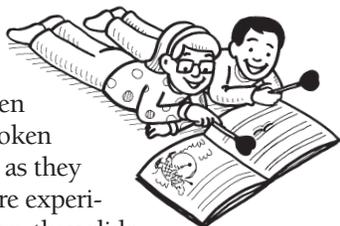
Outdoors. Encourage your youngster to make a crayon rubbing on a tree. She can hold paper against the bark and rub it with the side of an unwrapped crayon to see the pattern. If you have a wooden fence, suggest that she decorate it with sidewalk chalk. She can hose it off when she's done.♥



Parent to Parent My magic reading wand

My daughter Brianna came home excited about the special pointers her teacher lets students use while they read.

I asked the teacher about this. She explained that children enjoy touching the pointers to each word as they say it aloud—and this helps them match written words to spoken ones. Then, as they become more experienced readers, they slide the pointer under the words (rather than tapping each one) so they read smoothly.



I suggested to Brianna that we find pointers to use at home. We filled a plastic jar with items like a bubble wand, a chopstick, a paintbrush, and a pencil with a heart-shaped eraser.

Brianna is always on the lookout for more "magic reading wands." When she finds one, she can't wait to try it out. I love that such a simple thing is boosting her reading skills.♥

Q&A Vocabulary-boosting conversations

Q I've heard that kids with bigger vocabularies have an easier time learning to read and write. How can I help my son learn more words?

A You're right—a good vocabulary does help with reading and writing. Kids absorb many words just by hearing them regularly, so try weaving new words into everyday conversations.

When you talk to your son, use bigger words to expand on what he says. For instance, in response to "That siren is loud!" you could say, "You're right. It's *earsplitting*." Or if he says, "I let the air out of the balloon," you might reply, "It *deflated* really quickly."

Then, encourage him to use the new word often to help it stick in his mind. "What else can you think of that makes an *earsplitting* noise?" To jog his memory you might say, "Remember that jackhammer? That was *earsplitting*, too."♥



Fun with Words Nursery rhyme phonics

Playing with letter sounds prepares your youngster to decode new words. Read this nursery rhyme together, and do the activities that follow.

*Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.*

Rhyming words

Have your child tell you which words rhyme (*diddle* and *fiddle*, *moon* and *spoon*). He could circle the letters they have in common (*iddle*, *oon*).



Letter sounds

Ask him to listen for specific sounds. Can he tell you which words have a C sound (*cat*, *cow*) or a D sound (*diddle*, *fiddle*, *jumped*, *dog*, *laughed*, *dish*)? Where in the word does he hear the sound—beginning, middle, or end?

Silly swaps

Let your youngster make up his own verse by changing some of the words.

Example: "The horse jumped over the star. . . And the fish ran away with the car."

Note: Try these ideas with other nursery rhymes from library books or websites.♥

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Resources for Educators,
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■ *This Book Just Ate My Dog!*

(Richard Byrne)

When Bella takes her dog for a walk across the pages of this book, he “disappears” into the crease. Everyone who comes to help find him disappears, too—including Bella. It’s up to the reader to rescue them all in this fun picture book.



■ *Inspector Flytrap in the da Vinci Cold!*

(Tom Angleberger)

Meet a Venus flytrap who solves mysteries. He travels by skateboard and



has a clue-eating goat sidekick. In this first book in the Inspector Flytrap series,

the clever plant cracks a case about smelly cookies, follows the trail of a missing rose, and more.

■ *Living Things and Nonliving Things: A Compare and Contrast Book*

(Kevin Kurtz)
The bright photos in this book encourage readers to compare things they see every day and ask questions. Do all living things move? Do all nonliving things stay still? The answers may surprise your youngster!

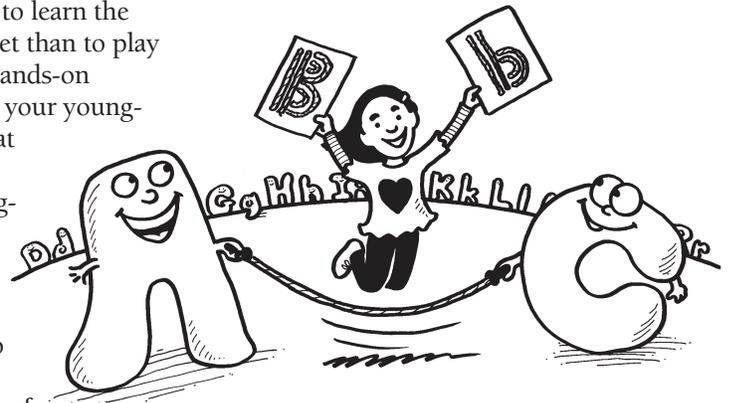
■ *United States Capitol*

(Julie Murray)
Take a glimpse inside the U.S. Capitol in this nonfiction book. Readers learn who works in the Capitol, what jobs they do, and why the building plays an important role in the American government. Part of the U.S. Landmarks series. (Also available in Spanish.)



A-B-C...play with me

What better way to learn the letters of the alphabet than to play with them? These hands-on activities encourage your youngster to look closely at each letter’s unique features so she recognizes the letters when she reads.



Crafty letters

Ask your child to write a large version of it on paper for her to trace over with glue. She can cover it with craft supplies (glitter, yarn, toothpicks). Talk about each letter’s lines, curves, or loops. (“What will you use for the slanted lines of the A?” or “Good idea to use yarn for the curve of the P.”)

Secret-letter bag

Can your youngster identify a letter by touch? This activity helps her notice small differences between letters. Secretly choose two magnetic letters with similar features, and put them in a brown paper

bag. Examples: E and F, M and N, or O and Q. Have her reach in without looking, feel both letters, and name them.

Letter match

Use a set of uppercase letter tiles from a game, or let your child make her own “tiles” by printing each capital letter on a separate scrap of paper. Place the letters in a bowl. Now help your youngster write all the lowercase letters randomly on a sheet of paper. Take turns drawing a tile from the bowl and placing it over the matching letter on the paper (A on a, B on b).♥

“What did you read in school today?”

Reading is a big part of your youngster’s day at school. Show interest by asking about books he listened to or read. Here’s how.

1. Have your child tell you the title of a book his teacher read aloud or that he read by himself.

2. Ask him what he learned from the book or what it was about. Maybe the teacher read a nonfiction book on pumpkins—can he describe how pumpkins grow? Or perhaps he chose a graphic novel about dragons during silent reading time.

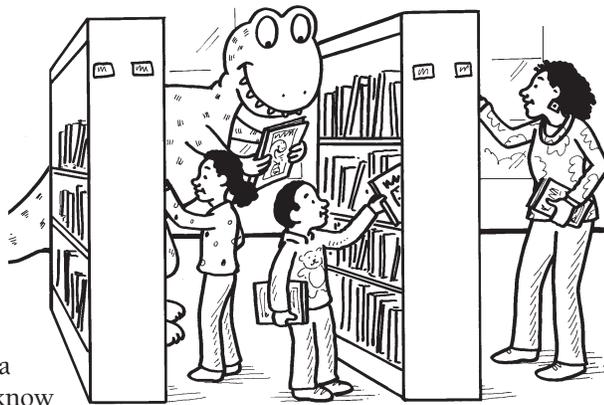
3. Suggest that he draw a picture of his favorite part of a story. Let him describe the action in the book, using his drawing as a guide.♥



Make the most of library visits

Regular trips to the library make reading a habit that will benefit your child throughout his school years—and his life. Try these tips for putting library visits into your family routine.

Before you go. “Advertise” the library as a source of information. You might say, “I know you love construction vehicles. We should check out a book about them.” Show him how you use the library, too.



Example: “I need some slow-cooker recipes. I bet we’ll find a cookbook that’ll help.”

While you’re there. Take time to explore together and become familiar with the layout. The more at home your youngster feels, the more he’ll enjoy the library. He can share his discoveries with you, too. He may be excited to find a shelf of sports books or more titles in a favorite series.

Back at home. Suggest that your child showcase the books he checked out by creating displays like those he saw at the library. For instance, he could put plastic farm animals on a table with books about farms. He might even hold story hour for your family—just like at the library.♥

Fun with Words

Be a word collector

Galaxy, crimson, caterpillar... your youngster can grow her vocabulary by collecting words that look or sound interesting to her.

When your child finds a word she likes, help her write it on a craft stick and add it to a jar. *Tip:* If she doesn’t know a word’s meaning, look it up in a dictionary together.



Now encourage your youngster to play with her collection so the words become familiar. For instance, she might sort them into categories (colors, animals) or by number of syllables. Or take turns pulling out a random word and giving each other clues to guess it. For *crimson*, you could say, “My word is a color. It’s a shade of red.”

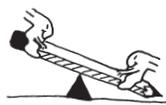
Note: It’s okay if your child chooses words she can’t read. Youngsters can say and understand big words like *triceratops* or *nectarine* long before they’re able to read them!♥

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Autumn writing

Fall is full of fun reasons to write. Encourage your youngster to write words or sentences with these seasonal activities.

Fall shapes

Together, draw and cut out leaves, apples, and other fall shapes from construction paper. On each one, help your child write the object’s name (“leaf”) or something he does with it (“I like to jump in leaves”). Then, let him use the shapes to decorate his bedroom.



Five senses

Your youngster can use his senses to enjoy autumn activities. Suggest that he make a five-senses chart with columns labeled “I saw,” “I heard,” “I smelled,” “I tasted,” and “I touched.” He can write words or draw pictures to go with the labels (an orange leaf beneath “I saw,” an apple pie under “I tasted”).♥

Q&A Support for speech therapy

Q My daughter receives speech therapy at school. We do exercises at home that the speech therapist recommends, but are there other ways we can help her make progress?

A Reading with your child is a fun way to practice speech at home. Take turns reading aloud from a book. When it’s her turn, she can point out words that contain sounds she’s working on and say them out loud.



Help her find words with the target sound at the beginning, middle, and end so she practices saying it in all parts of words. For instance, if she’s focusing on *ch*, she might find *chair*, *ketchup*, and *beach*. While she reads, ask her to show you how the therapist teaches her to form the sounds with her lips and tongue.

Finally, be sure to read with your daughter just for fun, too. Not every reading experience needs to turn into speech practice—it’s important for her to read simply for the joy of reading.♥