

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2017

South-Western City Schools

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Kitten's First Full Moon*

(Kevin Henkes)

Is that a bowl of milk in the sky? An adorable kitten sees the full moon for the first time and tries her hardest to drink from the “bowl.” But no matter what, it never seems to get closer. After a night of mishaps, she returns home to a surprise on her porch. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya*

(Mary and Rich Chamberlin)

In this story about sharing, Adika and his mother go to the market where Mama Panya makes pancakes. Even though she doesn't have much money, she cooks enough to feed everyone in the village. Includes facts about Kenya, greetings in Kiswahili, and, of course, a pancake recipe!



■ *Her Idea* (Rilla Alexander)

A little girl named Sozi has a big imagination and is always dreaming up ideas. Like many kids, she figures she'll do something with them later. Then an unlikely helper gives Sozi the perfect place to save her ideas—and the motivation to follow through.

■ *I See a Pattern Here*

(Bruce Goldstone)

Patterns are everywhere—in nature, on buildings, and on your youngster's clothing. This nonfiction book will encourage your child to look for patterns, figure out what comes next in the patterns pictured, and even create his own.



Build empathy with stories

Some of the same strategies that boost your child's reading comprehension can also help her develop empathy. These activities let her practice recognizing and thinking about feelings as she explores books.

“I know how she feels...”

When you read to your youngster, have her look for clues that hint at emotions. If a story says, “A tear rolled down her cheek,” your child might say that the character is sad. Identifying characters' feelings will help her understand people's emotions in real life, too.

“If I were that character...”

Encourage your youngster to put herself in a character's shoes. What would she do differently, and how would that change her feelings—and the story? For example, in *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Crockett Johnson), the little boy felt scared after he drew a dragon to guard his apple tree. Your child may say she'd draw a friendly dragon and feel



happy—but her dragon wouldn't make a very good guard!

“This reminds me of...”

Help your youngster make connections between storybook characters and real people. This can deepen her understanding of the story and build empathy. Perhaps a character who moved to a different town makes her think of the new kid in her class. How did the character feel, and how does she think her classmate feels? (She might answer, “Scared,” “Nervous,” or “Excited.”)♥

Make your own books

Your youngster will feel like a real writer when he creates a homemade book. Try this plan.

Draft. Help your child write a rough draft. A fun title for a little author is “All About Me.” He could write about his family, friends, school, and favorite things.

Publish. Cut sheets of white construction paper in half. On each page, your youngster can copy one sentence from his draft and illustrate it. When he's finished, staple the pages together.

Share. Hold a “Meet the Author” night. Your child gets to read his book aloud to your family and answer questions about it.♥



Great reasons to visit the library

Making the public library a regular family hangout spot has a lot of benefits. Consider these points.

It's a nice place to read. Your child will never run out of books. Plus, there may be plenty of cozy reading spots like beanbag chairs and quiet corners. Let him pick a few stories, and choose a place where you can read—and enjoy time together.



There are fun activities. Ask about special reading-related events, and plan to attend some as a family. You might make a craft after listening to a story, watch a puppet show based on a favorite book, explore ABC books and do alphabet activities, or even read with dogs.

Reading opportunities are endless. Your youngster may decide to read every book by a particular author or all the books in a series. He could check one out each time you visit the library. Or perhaps he'll pick a topic he'd like to learn about. Let him check out nonfiction books to become an "expert" on his choice, whether it's polar animals or hockey.♥

Fun with Words

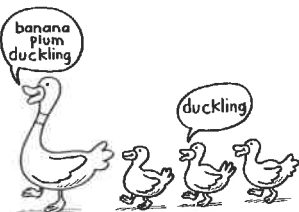


Odd word out

Build your child's vocabulary and thinking skills with this simple game that you can play at home or on the go.

1. Ask your youngster to listen carefully while you say three words—two that go together and one that doesn't "belong."

2. Have her tell you which is the odd word out. For instance, if you chose



banana, plum, and duckling, she would probably say *duckling*, because the other two are fruits.

3. If she picks a word you didn't expect, that's okay! Let her make a case for it, and she'll stretch her thinking. Maybe she'll say *plum*, because bananas and ducklings are both yellow.

4. Now it's her turn to say three words, and you decide which doesn't belong.♥

Parent to Parent

A household joke station

My son Leo has been on a joke kick lately. It seems like every day he tells us a new joke he heard or made up. Because he's learning to read, we decided to create a household "joke station" where he could read jokes whenever he wants.

We got a few joke books and put them in a basket in the family room. Soon afterward, when I read Leo a funny joke I found online, he asked if I would print it out and put it in the basket. And now when he tells me a joke, I help him write it down, and he adds it to the station.

Our family joke station has become a favorite household spot. If we're feeling silly or someone needs to be cheered up, we visit the station and take turns reading jokes aloud. Leo's reading skills are improving—and there's more laughter in our home!♥



Q&A Writing backward?

Q My first-grader sometimes writes letters or words backward. They look just like mirror images! Could she have a learning disability?

A When children are first learning to write, they occasionally write backward. Most kids outgrow this. But if you notice your daughter doing it more often, talk to her teacher.

Find out whether the teacher has any concerns. Is your child performing below grade level? Does she have a hard time spelling new words? Are her skills uneven (she reads well but struggles with

writing, for instance)? If you suspect a problem, or the teacher does, ask about the possibility of testing your daughter to see if she needs extra help.

In the meantime, you could work with her on writing correctly at home. Remind her that we write the way we read—from left to right. Whenever you see her writing backward, ask, "Do you notice anything unusual about those letters?" Then, help her correct them.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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