

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2018

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *We Dig Worms!*

(Kevin McCloskey)

Little wiggly worms have big important jobs. This comic-style nonfiction book blends humor and facts to teach your youngster about earthworms. She'll learn where they live, how they help the soil, why they come out when it rains, and more.



■ *Daisy Dreamer and the Totally True Imaginary Friend*

(Holly Anna)

Daisy is a daydreamer and doodler who spends most of her time pretending. When she receives a magic journal, Daisy's doodle of her imaginary friend Posey comes to life. Now she's off on a trip to the World of Make-Believe! The first book in the Daisy Dreamer series.



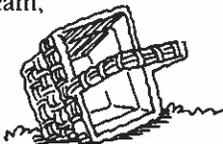
■ *Life in Numbers: Write Haiku*

(Lisa Holewa)

Haiku are short poems that follow a pattern. This guide explains the history of haiku and gives your child advice for writing them. He'll find tips for finding topics, choosing words, and playing with structure to create powerful poetry. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *The Lost Picnic*

(B. B. Cronin)
Two children and their grandfather set off on a picnic, but along the way, their lunch falls out of the basket. Your youngster will enjoy using clues from the story to spot the missing watermelon, ice cream, and other foods in the busy illustrations.



Writing: Inspired by nature

Spring is the perfect time to head outside and encourage your youngster to use nature as inspiration for writing. Here are ideas for enjoying different types of writing in the great outdoors.

Rainbow list

Let your child decorate the sidewalk with a colorful list of nature words. Help him use green chalk to write the names of green things he spots (*grass, leaves, caterpillar*) and yellow chalk to list yellow things (*daffodil, butterfly, sun*). Can he find and list something for every color in his box of chalk?

Nature guide

Give your youngster a basket for collecting items like pebbles, feathers, and twigs. Then, suggest that he use the collection to write a nature guide. He could sketch each object in a notebook and add a description. ("This is a blue

and black feather. I think it came from a blue jay.")

Animal tales

What is that cute little chipmunk thinking about as he scurries around? What is the grasshopper doing? Your child can work on creative writing skills by writing a story from an animal's point of view. Maybe the chipmunk is training for a marathon. Or the grasshopper is having a jumping contest with his friends. Let your youngster illustrate his story and read it to you.♥



Read how-to books

Crafts, science experiments, drawing... there's a how-to book for just about every young reader. Try these tips for introducing them to your child:

- Encourage your youngster to choose books based on her interests. If she loves magic, she may like a book on performing tricks. If she's into science, she might pick a book of experiments.

- Help your child see how words and illustrations work together to explain things. For example, she could read the text and then follow a diagram to make a tricky fold for a paper airplane.

Idea: Suggest that your youngster write and illustrate her own how-to book about something she enjoys—perhaps building marble runs or making jewelry.♥



What's that word?

Reading new words is kind of like cracking a code. Share these code-breaking strategies with your youngster.

Break it up. Help your child split a longer word into separate syllables. Ask her to cover up the word with her hand. She can slide her fingers to reveal each syllable, reading them in slow motion as she goes. (“Un-der-cov-er. Undercover!”)

Switch vowel sounds. Long and short vowel sounds sometimes make words tricky. For instance, your youngster might misread *robot* as



rowboat if she thinks both Os are long. If a word doesn't sound right, she could substitute a different vowel sound to see if that works better.

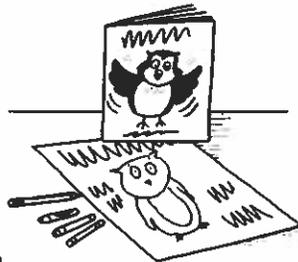
Leave a blank. When your child comes across a word she can't easily sound out, suggest that she read the entire sentence, saying only the first sound of the unknown word. (“The dog jumped over the fff.”) Then, have her think of a word that starts with that letter and makes sense in the sentence (*fence*). She can try reading the sentence with the word to decide whether it's right.♥

Characters with character

Storybooks are full of good role models for your child. This activity will get him thinking about positive character traits he has in common with his favorite fictional friends.

Identify traits

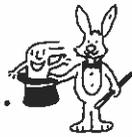
First, read a book together. Ask your youngster to pick a character to draw a picture of.



Then, help him think of good traits the character showed. For instance, maybe an owl demonstrates perseverance and a positive attitude about learning to fly. Help your child write the character traits in the margins around the drawing.

Look at me!

Next, have him draw a “character sketch” of himself showing the same traits, say, while learning to roller-skate. As he discovers examples of good character in other books, he can draw more sketches.♥



Fun with Words

Musical chairs

Put on a little music, and let your youngster and his friends practice spelling words they're learning in school with this version of musical chairs.

Set chairs (one per player) in a circle, and pick one player to be the leader. That person will be in charge of starting and stopping the music and calling out spelling words from a list.

To play, the leader turns on music. The children walk around the chairs and freeze in place when he stops the music. Then, the leader gives each person a different word to spell. If the speller gets it right, he sits down in the nearest chair. If not, he's out and removes a chair from the circle.

Once everyone has had a chance to spell, the leader restarts the music. Play until one person is left—he wins and becomes the new leader. *Note:* If you use up all the words on the list, play regular musical chairs with the remaining players to find the winner!♥



Parent to Parent

Our family tree

My daughter Tara recently had an interesting homework project—to make a family tree.

She had drawn a tree trunk and bare branches on paper, and she brought home a stack of green construction paper leaves. Her assignment was to write each family member's name on a separate leaf and put them in the right spots.

I helped Tara spell the names of her grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Then, she glued the leaves on the branches.

After Tara shared her finished tree in class, she got to bring it home. She likes to practice reading the names, and she takes pride in showing off the tree when relatives visit. Recently, she was excited to find out she'll soon need to add a new leaf—for her baby brother or sister!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2018

Keystone Oaks School District



Book Picks

■ *Cosmic* (Frank Cottrell Boyce)

Twelve-year-old Liam is tall for his age, and he and his friend Florida think it's funny to pretend they're father and son. They go so far as to use this joke to win a trip to outer space. When their rocket veers off course, everyone expects "Dad" to save the day—not knowing he's just a kid. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Dara Palmer's Major Drama* (Emma Shevah)

Dara wants to star in her school's production of *The Sound of Music*. When she's not cast, she thinks it's because she's adopted from Cambodia and doesn't look the part. In this coming-of-age story, Dara learns to take pride in her heritage.

■ *A Child Through Time: The Book of Children's History* (Phil Wilkinson)

How did children live in the past? This book takes young readers on an exciting journey from the Ice Age to modern times. Profiles of 30 children deliver kid-friendly information on the games, food, and clothes from different historical eras.



■ *The Mayor of Central Park* (Avi)

Oscar isn't your typical mayor. He's a squirrel, and he's also the manager of Central Park's baseball team. When rats invade his park, Oscar must stop them before they drive out the other animal residents. Fans of animals and baseball will enjoy this tale.



Synthesizing from start to finish

Your youngster's understanding and opinion of a book he has just started reading may be very different from the way he thinks and feels when he's finished. That's because readers *synthesize*, or adjust their thinking, as they digest a story or topic. Try these activities to help your child notice how his thinking changes as he reads.

STORY NEWS



Make a jigsaw puzzle

Synthesizing is like putting together a puzzle—you don't see the big picture until you're done. Have your youngster draw lines to divide a poster board into 8–10 puzzle pieces, number each piece, and cut them apart.

Then, he could write about his growing comprehension of a story on separate puzzle pieces. The first piece might say, "This book seems to be about two kids who have nothing in common and don't like each other." And the final piece may read, "Now I know that the story was actually about accepting differences." Each time he fills out a piece, he adds it to the puzzle. When he finishes the book, he can read his puzzle in order.

Be a newscaster

Invite your child to pretend he's reporting on a "developing story." He can give you updates that reflect his latest understanding as he reads several nonfiction books on the same topic.

Say he's researching the Titanic. His original "broadcast" could be: "A ship sank, and there weren't enough lifeboats to save everyone." As he reads on and discovers that there's more to the story, perhaps he'll report: "Many more passengers would've been saved if the lifeboats had been filled to capacity." 📺

Experiment with point of view

One fun part of being an author is that you get to decide which character will tell the story. Help your child see how interesting a change in perspective can be!

● Encourage your youngster to rewrite a familiar story. For example, she might have Babe the Blue Ox tell the tale of Paul Bunyan. The original version makes the lumberjack's feats sound pretty amazing—is Babe in awe of his owner, or tired of his antics?

● If a visitor from the distant future came to your town, what would he think of it? Suggest that your youngster draw one comic strip showing a day from her point of view ("We rode the school bus"), and another showing the time traveler's ("We traveled in a rickety yellow capsule and stayed on the ground the whole time"). 📺



Poetry writing made easy!

Poems are a great way for children to express themselves and practice writing. Use these ideas to spark your youngster's interest in poetry.

Acrostic "selfie." Have your child write her name vertically down the left side of a sheet of paper. Now she could begin each line of a poem about herself with a letter of her name:

*Each day brings new adventures
Middle child and only girl
In dance class I love to twirl
Living in a little town
You know I love to be a clown!*



Shape poem. This idea encourages your youngster to choose words that will fit specific line lengths. Suggest that she draw the outline of an object, perhaps a ladybug or a flower. Then, she can write a poem that fills the space inside. For instance, the first and last lines of a poem about ladybugs would be shorter than the middle lines:

Bright speck of red on a green leaf; cute little ladybug with polka-dots. Fly away home!



Fun with Words

Sentence Scramble

Encourage your child to think about sentence structure and grammar with this cooperative game.

1. Secretly write a sentence from a book on a sheet of paper, and cut the words apart. Mix them up, and place them in a bowl on the ground.



2. Have two or more players line up 15 feet from the bowl.
3. On "Go," the first player runs to the bowl, grabs a word, and returns to the line.
4. He tags the next player, who runs to pick up a word, and so on.
5. Once the players collect all the words, they rebuild the sentence together. *Tip:* Suggest that they find the subject, add the verb, and then look for ways the remaining words could fit into the sentence.
6. Play again using a new sentence from the book. 📖

Parent 2 Parent

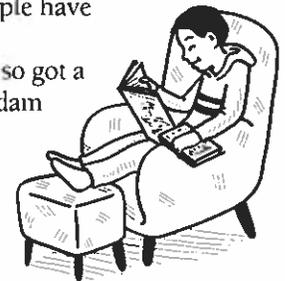
The perfect pair: Fiction and nonfiction

My son Adam loves adventure novels. Reading these stories has made him curious about things like exotic locations and extreme sports. When he asked questions I couldn't answer, it reminded me of how his teacher wants kids to read more nonfiction.

So when he wondered how many people have climbed Mt. Everest, I suggested that he look for a nonfiction book about the mountain. Adam borrowed a school library book and learned that more than 4,000 people have reached the summit.

Then, when he checked out a story set in Antarctica, he also got a nonfiction book about scientists living and working there. Adam said that knowing which events and details in the story were based on facts made the book even better for him!

Now Adam often reads fiction and nonfiction that are related. He's picking up a lot of new facts—and reading more books, too. 📖



Q&A

Building your child's book collection

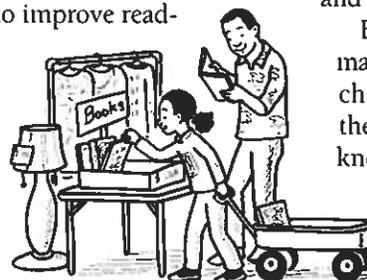
Q I've heard it's good for kids to have books of their own, but we're on a budget. Any tips on building a home library for my daughter?

A You're right. Having books at home is one of the best ways to improve reading achievement. And kids love seeing old favorites on their shelves to read whenever they like.

Now that spring is here, consider going to yard sales or flea

markets with your child to pick out books. The school book fair is another place to stock up on low-cost books. And don't forget year-round opportunities like used bookstores, thrift shops, and discount online bookstores.

Finally, friends and relatives may have chapter books or children's nonfiction books they're finished with. Let them know your daughter would love to inherit them—you could even offer to pick them up. 📖



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