

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2015

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Miss Malarkey Doesn't Live in Room 10*

(Judy Finchler)

Like many kids, the little boy in this book believes that

his teacher lives at school. But when Miss Malarkey moves into his apartment building, he learns that she has a home and does everyday things like grocery shopping and taking out the trash.



■ *Take Away the A* (Michaël Escoffier)



Without the letter G, a *glove* falls in love. And *plants* wear *pants* if you remove the L! Each page in this alphabet book features clever wordplay and a silly illustration. Your youngster can learn about words—and enjoy guessing what will happen on the next page.

■ *The Camping Trip That Changed America* (Barb Rosenstock)

This picture book tells the true story of Theodore Roosevelt's camping trip to Yosemite. The president learns from naturalist John Muir that too many trees are being chopped down. When Roosevelt returns to the White House, he works to get laws passed that create our national parks.

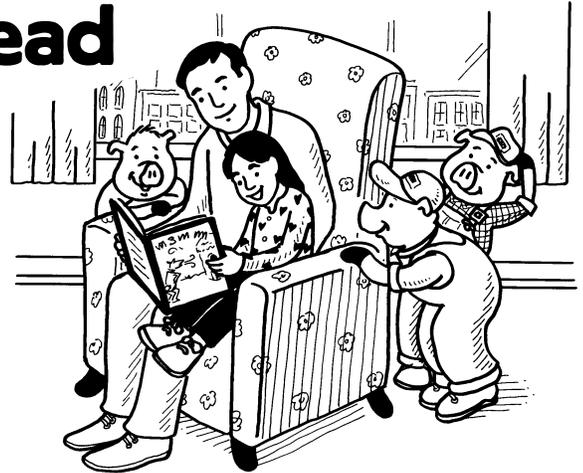
■ *Caps for Sale* (Esphyr Slobodkina)

"Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!" Your child will love this simple, rhythmic classic. No one wants to buy the peddler's caps—but the local monkeys sure do like wearing them. Now, the peddler must hatch a plan to get his caps back. (Also available in Spanish.)



Ready to read

When your child recognizes her name on her classroom cubby or turns the pages of a familiar book and recites the story, she's making the connection between printed words and spoken ones. Celebrate her early reading efforts and help her move toward independent reading with these activities.



Shared reading

As you read aloud to your youngster, run your finger under the words. This shows her that the words tell the story. Encourage her to follow along and read any parts she can, or try reading the words together. If there is a repeating phrase, let her read it. ("I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down!") Suggest that she move her finger beneath the words, too.

"I know what that says!"

Before children read by themselves, they rely on clues like logos, colors, and shapes to recognize words all around them. This is good practice for using pictures and context clues to read books.

At the grocery store, you might say, "Read the cereal boxes, and find the ones we usually buy." Or have her point to produce signs and tell you what they say. ("That says *bananas*.")

Listen to your child read

Ask your youngster to read books she brings home from school or ones she has heard many times. It's fine if she recites from memory—that's often how reading begins. Nudge her toward real reading by telling her to point to specific words on the pages. For example, if she says, "Goodnight cow jumping over the moon," you could ask her to touch the words *cow* and *moon*.♥

Let's write together

Between email messages and electronic calendars, you might not write by hand too often these days. But it's good for your youngsters to see you using pencil and paper—just like they do in school. Try these suggestions:

- Brainstorm family plans on paper. Ask everyone to write ideas for what they'd like to do on the weekend (picnic, bowling). Share lists, and vote on an activity.
- Make a guest list for a party or get-together. Your children could write names they know, including their own. Then, have them watch you write the rest.
- On a wall calendar, help your youngsters write their events ("Soccer game," "Dentist"). Let other family members add items, too, and remind your children to read the calendar each day.♥



Add words

Encourage your little artist to incorporate words or sentences into pictures with these ideas.

Labels. Tape together poster boards or large sheets of paper. Have your child lie down on them so you can trace around him. He could use crayons to draw his face and clothes and then label his body parts and clothing (*nose, foot, shirt*).

Bubbles. Show your youngster a comic book or comic strip. What does he think the “bubbles” are for? (That’s where the



author puts the words that the character thinks or says.) Suggest that your child make a picture with bubbles, too. He could draw people or animals, add bubbles, and write what they’re thinking or saying.

Sentences. Let your youngster draw a line across a piece of paper, a few inches from the bottom. He

can draw a picture above the line and write a sentence below the line to go with the drawing. For instance, he might draw a picture of himself at karate class and write about a move he has learned. ♥

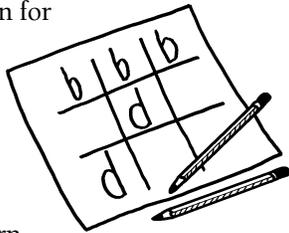
Q&A Is that a b or a d?

Q I’ve noticed that my first-grade daughter often mixes up letters like b and d or p and q. For example, she’ll say “dig” instead of “big” when she reads. Is this normal?

A It’s common for youngsters this age to confuse those letters. If your child is making good progress in learning to read and write, it’s unlikely that her mix-ups indicate a problem.

Ask your daughter’s teacher whether her reading skills are on target. Then, stay in touch with the teacher throughout the year to see if your youngster is on track or needs extra help.

In the meantime, here’s a fun way to help her learn the letters she’s mixing up. Play tic-tac-toe with *b* and *d* instead of *x* and *o*. Another time, play with *p* and *q*. Each of you can say the letters as you write them in the squares—that will help your daughter remember them. ♥



Fun with Words

An “opposite” dinner

Spice up dinnertime—and stretch your youngster’s vocabulary and thinking skills—by making your meal all about opposites. Your family will have fun with *antonyms*, or words that have opposite meanings.

Plan a meal

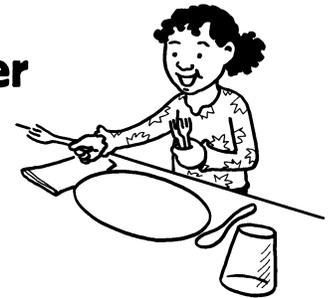
Together, come up with silly ways to weave opposites into your dinner. You could have *sweet* and *sour* chicken or *hot* and *cold* carrots. Or how about burgers with cheese on the *top* and the *bottom*? What other ideas can your child think of?

Set the table

Let your youngster get the table ready and talk about the opposites she’s using. (“I’m turning the cups over so they face *down* instead of *up*. I’ll put forks and napkins on the *right* and spoons on the *left*.”)

Enjoy conversation

Use lots of opposites during your dinner conversation. You could say, “My *night* was *boring*,” and your child can “translate” (“My *day* was *exciting*”). ♥



Parent to Parent

My reading spot

I asked my son Gabriel what he likes best about school so far, and he said the reading corner is “so cool!” As he described it to me, it dawned on me that we could make a reading space at home, too.

First, Gabriel organized his library books and his own books into several shoeboxes. We put the boxes in a corner of his room, along with a beanbag chair,

and plugged in a reading lamp nearby. I added a notebook and a pencil so Gabriel can draw pictures or jot down thoughts about what he reads.

He also included stuffed animals to go with his books, like a rhinoceros and a lion for a story about a zoo.

Now what he likes best about his room is his reading corner. And I love finding him curled up there, snuggling a stuffed animal that matches the book he’s reading. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated

128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5648

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2015

Book Picks

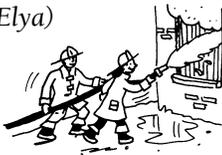


Read-aloud favorites

■ *Fire! Fuego! Brave Bomberos*

(Susan Middleton Elya)

Follow the brave *bomberos* as they race their fire truck, put out a fire, and save a kitty! Learn how the firefighters use the hydrant and hose to battle the flames. This fast-paced rhyming story is told with English and Spanish words and contains a glossary in the back.



■ *The Dark* (Lemony Snicket)

A little boy named Laszlo is afraid of the dark, but the dark lives in the basement and outside at night. One day, the dark visits Laszlo in his room, and they have a talk. Will Laszlo stop being afraid? Find out in this beautifully illustrated tale.



■ *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories*

(Jane Yolen and Heidi E. Y. Stemple) Read the stories behind *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and other famous ballets. Perfect for the young dancer, this book also includes historical information about classical ballet and tells about performances of each tale.

■ *The Great Seal of the United States* (Norman Pearl)

Your child has probably seen the United States seal before—an eagle with a shield—but does he know what it means? Ben Franklin narrates the history of the seal and how the design came to be a symbol of America. Every aspect of the seal is explained with pictures and descriptions.



Play with sounds and syllables

What is a *poploli*? It's a mixed-up version of *lollipop*! Playing with words helps your youngster hear the sounds and syllables within them. Use these clever activities to build his *phonological awareness*—an important predictor of reading success.



Where in the word?

Let your child pick out a stuffed animal. Then, label one sheet of paper “Beginning,” another “Middle,” and a third one “End.” Now, say a three-letter word (*cup*), choose one letter (*u*), and say its sound (*uh*). Does your youngster hear that sound in the beginning, middle, or end of *cup*? He can show you by hopping the stuffed animal to the right paper.

Rhyming riddles

Ask your youngster to name a category like food or games. Think of a word that fits in the category, and make up a riddle for him to guess it—ending with

a made-up word that rhymes with your word. *Example*: “I am green and spicy, and I taste good with chips. I rhyme with *wuacawole*” (*guacamole*).

Scrambled syllables

Take turns secretly picking a word with at least two syllables (*scarecrow*) and saying it with the syllables in the wrong order (*crowscare*). Try to guess each other's word. *Tip*: It doesn't need to be a word your child can spell or read—it could even be *expialisuperfragilisticdocioucali* (*supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*).♥

Writing: Decorate for inspiration

“What should my story be about?” Your child can use these suggestions for dreaming up story topics—and decorating her room.

● **Collect photos.** Encourage your youngster to gather interesting pictures, such as a photo of a stormy night or a camel in a desert. Together, string yarn along a wall and use clothespins to hang the photos from it. Then, she can pick one to write about.

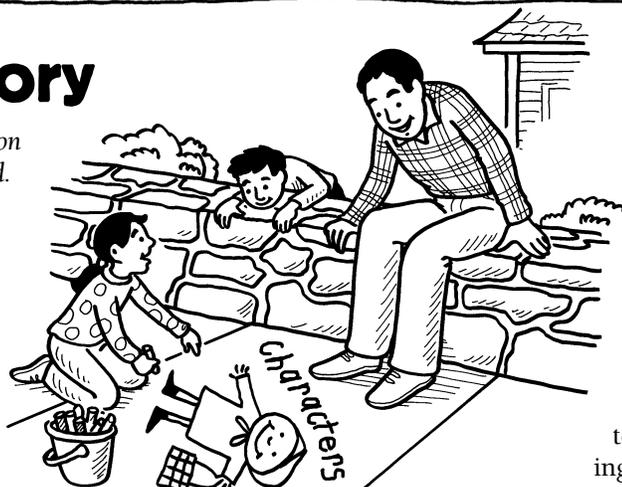


● **Make story sticks.** Help your child write possible story titles on craft sticks. *Examples*: “The Day the Sun Didn't Set,” “The Lonely Polka-Dotted Zebra.” She can decorate a jar, add sand, and insert the sticks. Let her put the jar on her dresser and choose a stick when she's ready to write.♥

Q&A Retell a story

Q This year, my daughter will be tested on how well she can retell books she has read. Why is this, and how can I help her do a good job?

A Retelling a story lets the teacher know how well your daughter understands what she read. During a test, she'll need to identify the characters and setting, and she'll have to describe major plot events in the right order.



Here's a fun idea: Go outside together, and help her write "Characters," "Setting," "Problem," and "Solution" in chalk on separate sidewalk squares or on paper plates scattered in the grass. She can draw a picture for each part, then jump to each square or plate as she retells the story.

If your daughter doesn't seem to know what to say during retellings, talk to the teacher to make sure her reading-comprehension skills are on track. ♥

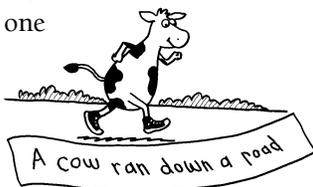
Fun with Words

Super sentence strips

Teachers use sentence strips to help students practice writing good sentences. Together, cut sheets of paper into strips at home, and try these ideas.

Shared sentence

On a strip, one person writes an opening word for a sentence ("I"). The next person reads that word and adds another ("like"). Keep going to fill the entire strip. When you get close to the end, the last person has to think of a way to end the sentence so it makes sense. ("I like to jump in leaves when I rake.")



A listening treasure hunt

If you ask a little one to put on his coat and grab his backpack, he may get the backpack and forget the coat. That's because it's challenging for young children to follow multi-step directions.

This fun treasure hunt can boost your youngster's listening skills and increase the number of steps he can handle at once.

1. Hide a small "treasure," such as a colorful eraser, a spinning top, or a bouncy ball.
2. Give your child directions, one step at a time, to find the treasure. You might say, "Walk to the couch." When he gets there, say, "Look under the middle cushion."
3. After he spots it, hide a new treasure, and give two-step directions this time. ("Open the cabinet door, and look behind the DVDs.")
4. Once your youngster is comfortable with two-step instructions, try directions with three or four steps. ♥



Forbidden vowel

Your youngster can practice choosing words carefully as he writes a sentence. Pick a vowel, and work together to make up a sentence that does not include that letter. For example, if the vowel is *e*, he might use *a* or *an* instead of *the*, or *road* instead of *street*. ("A cow ran down a road.") ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated

128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5648

Parent to Parent

Get hooked on a series

I loved series books when I was little—I could hardly wait to find out what would happen in the next installment. Now that my daughter is reading, I wanted to help her find series books to fall in love with, too.

Our librarian was happy to help. She said kids feel comfortable reading books in a series because the characters become familiar to them. She recommended a new series by

Herman Parish about Amelia Bedelia when she was a little girl. She also suggested Owl Diaries by Rebecca Elliott, and Fly Guy by Tedd Arnold.

Maya started with Owl Diaries. By the time she finished the first book, *Eva's Tree-top Festival*, she felt like Eva the owl was her friend. Now, she wants to read on to see what Eva does next. And when she finishes that series, she has a whole list of new ones to try. ♥



Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2015

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *In the Spin of Things: Poetry of Motion* (Rebecca Kai Dotlich)

Windshield wipers go “squeegy-squish,” pencil sharpeners whittle and whirl, laundry swirls and spins, cereal pieces swim and soak. Your youngster will enjoy hearing you read these poems that describe the motions and sounds of familiar objects.



■ *Night of the Veggie Monster*

(George McClements)

Tuesday is “pea night,” and the boy in this story must eat three peas. He pops one into his mouth, and suddenly his fingers begin to wiggle and his eyes start to water. What will happen when the little “veggie monster” actually swallows the pea?



■ *Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos*

(Stephanie Roth Sisson)

One of the world’s most famous astronomers was once a little boy who loved gazing at the stars. Carl Sagan grew up to make important discoveries about the universe. This biography describes his life—and explains big science concepts for young readers.

■ *Grandfather Counts*

(Andrea Cheng)

Helen can’t wait for her Chinese grandfather to visit, but then she’s disappointed to learn he doesn’t speak English. See how Helen and her grandfather find ways to communicate and bond, beginning by counting together in Chinese. Includes a list of Chinese words with English translations.

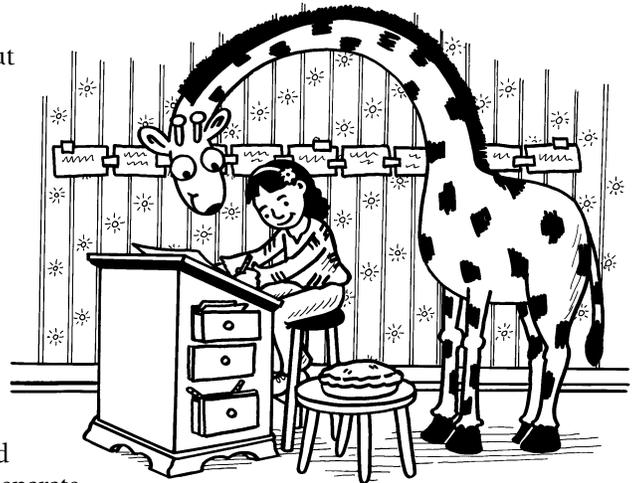


Write in a logical sequence

When little ones begin to write stories, they learn to put events in a logical order and to link each idea to the one before it. Help your child practice sequencing and connecting events with these strategies.

Create a storyboard

Movie directors make storyboards to show what order the scenes will go in. Encourage your youngster to pretend she’s a director and draw pictures for a story on separate sticky notes. Then, she can put the events on paper or poster board in the order they should occur. Let her use this storyboard to tell you her story, and help her write it down.



her time line to write the story of her life, adding a few details about each event.

Link it up

Write two silly or random events on a sheet of paper—one at the top (“I got a pet giraffe”) and one at the bottom (“Mom made an apple pie”). Let your child read the first sentence. Take turns adding a sentence that is logically connected to the one before it. The goal? To write a story that links the two original events! *Example:* “The giraffe loved apples. He was tall enough to knock apples off the tree for us...” ♥

Make a time line

Help your child write 10–12 happenings from her life on separate index cards. *Examples:* “Born.” “Moved to Greenville.” “Started kindergarten.” Shuffle the cards, and ask her to put them in the right order. Then, she could put together a time line by taping the cards together in a row. *Idea:* She can use

Involved in reading

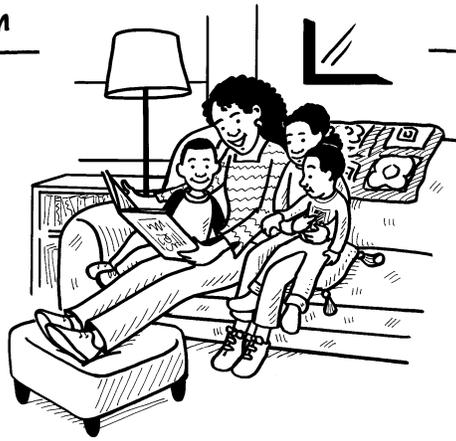
From meeting with the teacher to attending special events, there are many ways for you to be involved at your youngster’s school as he learns to read. Here are three.

1. Attend a parent-teacher conference. You’ll discover how your child is doing in reading (and other subjects). You may get to see books he is reading or samples of his writing.
2. Visit the school book fair. You and your youngster will enjoy browsing new books, and they usually offer discounted prices.
3. Go to a family reading night. You may do activities like reading with your child and playing word games. You might also come away with ideas to try at home. ♥



Story time: 20 minutes of magic

Experts recommend that parents read to their children for at least 20 minutes a day. It's cozy, it's fun—and it teaches your child skills he can use when he reads on his own. Consider these suggestions for fitting a memorable learning experience into just 20 minutes.



Read to everyone. Have more than one child? Read to them all at once! It's a nice way for siblings to bond. Plus, when a little one stops you to ask what a word means, an older sibling can take pride in explaining it. *Tip:* When you have time, try to give each youngster his own read-aloud slot.

Pick the time and place. Try to find times when you can slow down, snuggle up, and read. Choose a place that's free of distractions, especially electronics. You'll show your youngster that reading takes priority over the TV and the phone.

Introduce new books. Start a new tradition in just 20 minutes. Favorite books are often passed down through generations—use story time to share books you loved as a child. Your enjoyment will shine through as you read, which can inspire your youngster to love reading, too.♥

Q&A Awesome alphabet activities

Q My son is learning to write his ABCs. How could we practice at home?

A Hands-on alphabet activities are ideal for little ones. That's because feeling letters' shapes helps youngsters remember how to form them.

Let your son bend flexible household materials (pipe cleaners, jump ropes) to make letters. Then, he could take a photo of each letter. Print and staple them into a booklet so he can trace over the letters with his finger.



At snack time, put cream cheese into a freezer bag, seal, and snip off a corner. Have your child squeeze the cream cheese to form letters on graham crackers. Squeezing the bag will also build small muscles he needs for writing.

Finally, unleash your youngster's creativity. Ask him what else he could use to make letters or write his ABCs on, and watch what he comes up with!♥

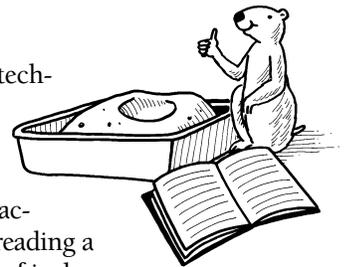


Reading, writing, and STEM

Combine reading and writing with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to give your child a leg up on these important areas. Try these activities.

Design an animal home

Animals are clever engineers! Your youngster can practice reading for detail—and explore engineering—by reading a nonfiction book about an animal and building a model of its home. Have her read closely for details that will help. For instance, she might read, “Prairie dogs make mounds with holes, or craters, to help prevent flooding in their burrows.” Then, she could build a model of a burrow out of clay—complete with a crater.



Program a “robot”

Here's a fun way for your child to write in another “language.” Pretend to be a robot, and let her write a code to “program” you. First, let her list actions and assign a symbol to each. *Example:* “↑ = jump, O = twirl.” Next, she should write a string of symbols and numbers showing you what to do. *Example:* “3↑ O 2↑” means jump three times, twirl, and jump twice. Switch roles—now you're the coder, and she's the robot.♥

Fun with Words Be a spelling family

Learning to spell doesn't end when you finish school. Show your youngster that spelling is a lifelong endeavor with these ideas that will help her study for spelling tests and learn new words:

to stump you. Play double or triple elimination to make your spelling bee last longer.

- Have each person learn to spell at least one new word per week and add it to a list on the refrigerator. Your youngster might add words she likes from books, such as *neon* or *velvet*.

Adults can choose long words like *onomatopoeia* or *lackadaisical*—seeing these on your list will introduce your child to big words that are fun to say.♥



- Hold a family spelling bee. Give your child words from her school spelling list. On your turn to spell, she gets to pick a word from the dictionary to try

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
 540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
 www.rfeonline.com
 ISSN 1540-5648