

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2015

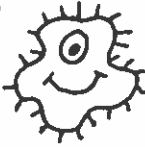
Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes* (Nicola Davies)

Germs make us sick, right? Actually, very few kinds of microbes, tiny organisms like viruses and bacteria, cause illness. Microbes are everywhere, and most of them are helpful. Your child will learn about these microscopic creatures in this fascinating nonfiction book.



■ *The Best Story* (Eileen Spinelli)

A little girl enters a writing contest to win a roller coaster ride with her favorite author. Everyone in her family has advice about what a good story should include, so she writes one with action, humor, and romance. Then, her mom gives her the best advice of all—and she rewrites her story straight from her heart.



■ *Stick and Stone* (Beth Ferry)

Stick knows just what to do when he sees Pinecone bullying Stone—he sticks up for the little rock. That's all it takes for the pair to become loyal friends. Will Pinecone apologize for being a bully and make friends with them, too?

■ *Please, Mr. Panda* (Steve Antony)

An ostrich, a skunk, and all the other black-and-white animals want the same thing: one of Mr. Panda's colorful doughnuts. Unfortunately, they forget to say "please" and "thank you" when they ask for their treats. A cute manners lesson. (Also available in Spanish.)



A reading vacation

Winter break is full of opportunities for your youngster to read—and for your family to spend extra time together. Try these activities that fit right into the season.

Check the mail

Gather in the living room, and let your child read aloud from the greeting cards, postcards, and family newsletters that arrive in your mailbox. He could also read announcements of holiday events—this will give him practice reading dates, times, and addresses, too.



could choose one, practice reading their lines, and perform it for the adults.

Read to relatives

It's fun to snuggle up and read to Grandpa! If you visit with relatives, your youngster could show them how he's learning to read. If you're not seeing extended family in person, suggest that your child read to them long-distance via phone call or video chat. *Idea:* Get a book of plays for children. He and his cousins

Play, build, or cook

Your youngster can practice reading instructions when you play a board game, assemble a train set, or make a holiday casserole. Help him read each step aloud. Diagrams and other graphics often accompany assembly instructions—and when your child uses them, tell him that's "reading," too.♥

Let's write poetry

Is your child a poet who doesn't know it? Suggest that she turn to favorite books or best friends for inspiration. Here's how.

- **From book to poem.** Have your youngster look through a book and pick out words she could rhyme. In a nonfiction book about castles, she might choose *knight* and *bright* or *moat* and *boat*. "In the castle lived a very brave *knight*. His suit of armor was shiny and *bright*."
- **Poems with friends.** Encourage your child to write a poem with a friend. They could take turns adding lines to their verse. Have them agree on a topic (say, recess). Then, your youngster could write, "We love flying high on swings," and her friend might add, "And hanging from bars and rings."♥



At the library

The library is more than a building full of free books to read. It's also a place to make memories and help your youngster develop a love of reading. Consider these ideas.

Read around a theme. Ask your child to pick a theme for your library visit. *Examples:* snow, holidays, foods around the world. Then, go on an adventure to find related material. For snow, your youngster might check out a picture book about a snowman, a non-fiction book about an Olympic skier, and a winter issue of *National Geographic Kids* magazine.



Learn from story time. Library story hours are a great way for your child to discover new books. Attend one, and then let your youngster use it as a jumping-off point. She might look up stories by an author she enjoyed or a graphic novel like the one the librarian read.

Tour your area. If your library system has multiple branches, try visiting a few. The children's sections probably have different types of reading areas, book selections, and activities. Together, you'll become familiar with all that your libraries have to offer.♥



Q&A Young researchers

Q This year in school, my daughter has to do research on an inventor of her choice. That sounds like a big job for a little one! How can I help her?

A You might think of research as something that older kids do. But research is just the process of gathering information.



Your daughter may collect facts about her inventor by reading a biography or visiting a museum website. She could even interview a neighbor or relative who uses one of the person's inventions on the job.

Remind your daughter that she should always double-check facts in case a book or a website is incorrect or outdated. If a book says an inventor had more than 100 patents, she could see if a history or education website states the same number.♥

Parent to Parent

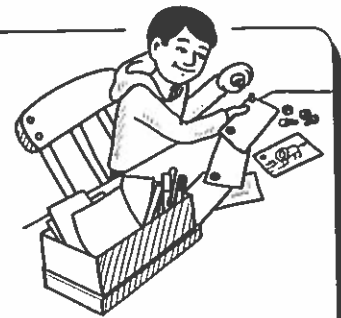
Make a writing kit

My son, Evan, wasn't showing a lot of interest in writing stories. I remembered that our daughter really enjoyed writing with glitter pens and little notepads. That gave me an idea.

I gathered supplies like paper, sticky notes, index cards, colored pens and pencils, blank cards and envelopes, a hole puncher, scissors, and glue. I put everything into a shoe box, labeled it "Evan's Writing Kit," and presented the box to my son.

At first, he just drew pictures, but soon he began leaving notes around the house for us to read. And one day, he showed me a book he wrote about trucks. He had drawn and labeled a different type of vehicle on each index card, hole-punched the cards, and fastened them together with a nut and bolt!

Having his own writing kit with various materials seems to motivate Evan—and the whole family is enjoying his writing.♥



Fun with Words

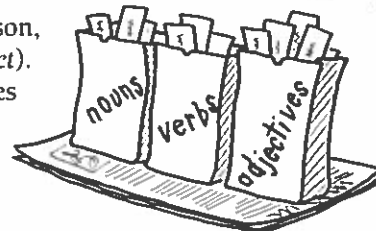
Parts-of-speech bags

Noun, verb, or adjective...this game makes it fun to identify parts of speech.

Materials: 3 paper lunch bags, marker, scissors, old newspapers and magazines

First, help your youngster label each bag with a different part of speech: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Can he tell you what each one does? If he isn't sure, here's a quick guide:

- A noun names a person, place, or thing (*cricket*).
- An adjective describes a noun or pronoun (*loud*).
- A verb shows action (*chirps*).



Then, have your child cut apart headlines into individual words and sort them into the bags. (Set aside any words that don't fit into the categories.)

Finally, he can draw one word from each bag and try to make up a sentence that includes all of them. *Example:* A cricket chirps loudly, but he is not as loud as a cicada.

Note: When he's comfortable identifying those parts of speech, add bags for pronouns and adverbs. A pronoun takes the place of a noun (*he* instead of *cricket*). An adverb describes a verb (*loudly*).♥

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.rfconline.com
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Working Together for Learning Success

December 2015

Keystone Oaks School District



Book Picks

Like Pickle Juice on a Cookie (Julie Sternberg)

Eleanor is sad and grumpy when her long-time babysitter, Bibi, moves away and a new babysitter takes her place. But over time Eleanor realizes that even though Bibi isn't her babysitter anymore, she can still turn to her for help. The first book in the Eleanor series.



Circus Mirandus (Cassie Beasley)

Are Grandpa's stories of a fantastic circus really true? Micah believes they are, especially when he learns that one circus performer owes Grandpa a miracle. Hoping that the miracle will heal his sick grandfather, Micah sets out to find the circus and make the performer keep his promise.

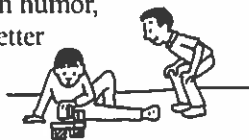


Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives (Elizabeth Rusch)

In 1985, a sleeping volcano in Colombia suddenly woke, killing 23,000 people. Were there clues that could have prevented this tragedy? U.S. Geological Survey scientists work to uncover early warning signs of an eruption in this book from the Scientists in the Field series.

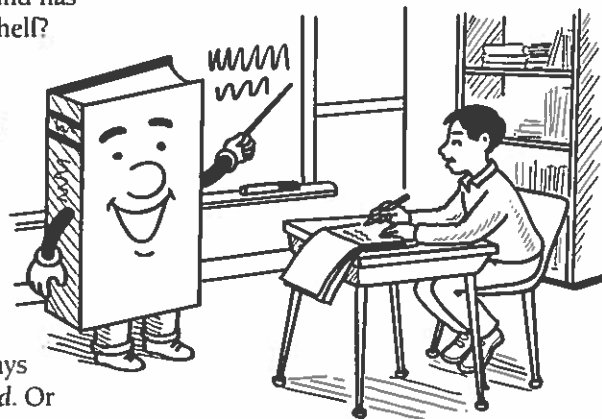
How to Talk to an Autistic Kid (Daniel Stefanski)

Fourteen-year-old Daniel Stefanski is funny, curious, and good at building things. He also has autism, so he may talk too loudly or stand too close to you. This young author's upbeat book uses anecdotes, explanations, and advice, along with humor, to help readers better understand autism.



Learning from authors

Did you know that your child has writing teachers on his bookshelf? The next time he sits down to read, suggest that he keep his eyes open for ideas and inspiration to try in his own writing. Here are areas he can explore.



Choosing words

A precise word has a big impact on what the reader imagines. Maybe the author says a character *tiptoed* or he *stalked*. Or that the lake *glimmered* or was *stagnant*. Each word conjures up a different image. Your youngster could collect vivid words and phrases from books and consult the list when he's writing.

create a handy reminder of different ways to write his own tales.

Deciding on structure

How did the author organize the novel? One book might tell a story through a series of letters or emails. Another may start in the present and flash back to the past. Encourage your child to jot down titles, along with notes about the books' structures. For example, "*The Neverending Story* (Michael Ende): a story within a story." He'll

Selecting point of view

Every person will tell the same story a little differently, depending on his point of view. Shel Silverstein's poem "Point of View" tells what Thanksgiving dinner would look like from a turkey's viewpoint, for instance. Recommend that your youngster examine his own ideas from different angles to decide whose point of view works best. Will his pirate story be more interesting if told by the villain, the hero, or a captive on the ship? 📖

Science fact or science fiction?

Science fiction is full of futuristic technology to spark the imagination. But could it really happen? Send your youngster on an investigation to find out.



1. Help her get a science fiction book she'll enjoy. For example, if she likes history, she may like a story where the character travels back in time.
2. After she finishes reading, she could look for nonfiction books, magazine articles, or websites to investigate the science behind the story. She might follow up a book about life in space by researching space stations and rocket travel.
3. Let her tell you about the science in the story vs. the real-life facts she uncovers. Will time travel be possible in the future? Is the space station in the story realistic? 📖

Understanding cause and effect

The ability to recognize cause and effect will boost your child's reading comprehension whether she's reading fiction or nonfiction. These fun ideas will give her practice.



"Because Mars has no atmosphere, nothing lives there" or "The kids were bored, so Sam played a song." Then, pair each cause with a different effect to make illogical combinations. "Because Mars has no atmosphere, Sam played a song."

Mix and match. Together, write zany sentences involving cause and effect. (*Hint:* Cause and effect sentences use "signal words" like *then, because, if, since, so, consequently, as a result, or the reason for.*) First, brainstorm 10 "real" cause and effect sentences, such as

Show a chain reaction. Suggest that your youngster make a paper trail to track the causes and effects in a story she reads. She could write each cause on one color of paper and each effect on another color. *Cause:* "Hansel and Gretel are left in the woods." *Effect:* "As a result, Hansel and Gretel become lost." *Cause:* "Since they have no food, they are hungry." *Effect:* "They eat the gingerbread house." As your child lays down her paper trail, she will see how cause and effect drive the plot. 📖

Fun with Words Comma quest

Play this game to help your youngster remember the sometimes tricky rules on when and where to use commas.

Materials: index cards, pencil, books, magazines, newspapers

1. On separate index cards, have your child write rules for using commas. He might find rules in a textbook, in class notes, or online.

Examples: Use a comma after introductory phrases ("In the morning, we broke camp"). Use a comma before a conjunction when it joins two independent clauses ("He wanted to read, but he had no books").



2. Shuffle the cards, and spread them out facedown. Take turns flipping one over. Then, race each other to find an example of the rule in a book, magazine, or newspaper.

3. The winner reads the sentence and the rule aloud and claims the card. The person with the most cards at the end is the comma champ! 🏆

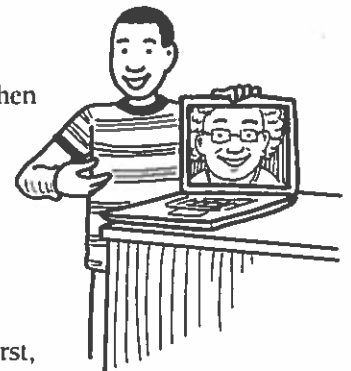


Parent 2 Parent Stellar presentations

Our son Cameron became nervous when he had to make presentations in class. I mentioned this to his teacher, and she recommended having him practice by making presentations for our family.

So when Cameron wanted to do something special for his grandma's birthday, I suggested he make a presentation about fun times they've had together. He decided to do a full-blown multimedia production. First, he wrote a script and recorded himself reading it. Next, he created a slideshow complete with music, sound effects, and photographs.

On the day of the party, Cameron pretended to be a newscaster and gave his birthday presentation. It went so well that his aunt wants him to create one about our family tree for our family reunion this summer! 📺



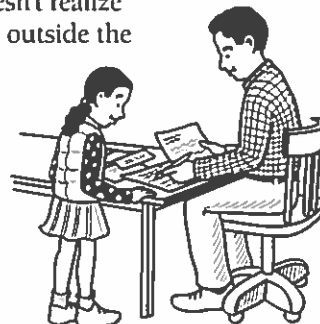
Q&A Real-world writing

Q My daughter thinks writing is just something she does for school. How do I convince her that writing is an everyday thing?

A Your child probably doesn't realize how much writing happens outside the classroom. Give her a look at real-world writing by pointing out the different ways people write every day. For instance, you might show her a letter from your neighborhood association or an email from her soccer coach.

And be sure she sees you writing, too. Point out when you type a new recipe into a computer file so you'll remember how to make it again. Let her see you fill out job applications or update your resume.

Occasionally, read what you've written and ask your youngster for input. You'll reinforce the idea that writing and revising go together—and that you can improve upon what you've written. 📖



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Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
 540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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