

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2019

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Creepy Pair of Underwear!*

(Aaron Reynolds)

Jasper chooses a pair of neon green underwear when he goes shopping with his mom. That night, after lights-out, he decides that glow-in-the-dark underwear is scary instead of cool. But when he gets rid of it, he misses his "night-light." What will Jasper do next? (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Hello Ruby: Journey Inside the Computer*

(Linda Liukas)

This book from the Hello Ruby series uses a fictional story to explain how computers work. Follow along with Ruby as she shrinks down and crawls inside her father's broken computer. Includes fun activities that let readers put their new knowledge to work.

■ *Mama's Saris*

(Pooja Makhijani)

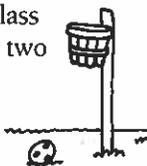
On her seventh birthday, an Indian American girl decides she's old enough to wear a sari. She feels proud and special when her mother lets her wear the traditional garment to her party. This sweet story celebrates family traditions.



■ *Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball*

(John Coy)

In 1891, James Naismith was teaching a gym class full of unruly boys. This nonfiction book tells how Naismith got control of the class by inventing a game with two peach baskets and a soccer ball. Today, we call that sport basketball!



Cozy read-alouds

What's one of the best ways to make your child a better reader? Read to him! Studies show that reading aloud builds youngsters' vocabularies and their reading and writing skills. Snuggle up with your child and a good book, and try these ideas.

Get comfortable

Let your youngster choose a quiet spot, away from distractions like TV or cell phones. Maybe he wants to cuddle under a blanket on the sofa while you read, or perhaps he'd like to pile pillows and stuffed animals on his bed for story time. *Tip:* Hold the book so he can see the words and pictures while you read.

Slow down

Find a time to read when you won't be rushed. Reading at a leisurely pace allows your youngster to absorb the story. Tell him that he's welcome to stop you if he doesn't know what a word means or if he wants more time to look at an illustration.



Asking questions and examining the pictures help him understand and enjoy the book.

Be playful

Use different voices for the characters, or read scary or exciting parts dramatically. For example, use a high, chirpy voice for a parrot or a low, booming voice for a giant. You might even assign him the part of a character. Stop and let him read the dialogue so he practices reading fluently.♥

Build "writing muscles" in the kitchen

Lots of kitchen tasks work the same muscles your child uses for writing. Offer her these jobs.

● **Boost strength.** Let your youngster mash potatoes or stir pancake batter. Or she could decorate cupcakes or cookies. Put frosting in a zipper bag, snip off a corner, and encourage her to squeeze it onto the goodies like a pastry chef!

● **Improve coordination.** Show your child how to roll a ground beef or turkey mixture between her palms to make meatballs. Let her use her fingers to tear lettuce for a salad. Have her hold her wrist steady as she uses a spatula to transfer cookies to a cooling rack.♥



I can read!

New readers are proud of their skills as they go from “reading” pictures to reading words—and then entire stories. Use these tips to support your youngster at each stage.

Pictures. Suggest that your child use the illustrations to tell herself the story. You could point out words she says that appear on the page. For instance,



if she says, “The kids are riding the school bus,” show her the words *school* and *bus*. She’ll begin to connect written words with spoken ones.

Words. If your youngster reads a word incorrectly, help her figure it out. You might say, “Does ‘Everyone got a parking hat’ make sense?” Then, have her reread the sentence—she’ll probably realize that the word is *party*. If not, she could try sounding out the word.

Stories. This is a good stage for getting your child hooked on a series of books. Ask a librarian to recommend one that matches your youngster’s interests. Your child will build confidence as she reads about familiar characters and settings in each new installment.♥

Fun with Words

Why my favorite animal is awesome

With this activity, your child will construct a block tower as he “constructs” an opinion piece. Encourage him to pick a favorite animal and follow these steps.

1. Help your youngster use masking tape and a marker to label five blocks:

“Start,” “1,” “2,” “3,” and “Finish.”



2. Let him place the “Start” block in front of himself and then, on a sheet of paper, write (or dictate to you) an opening sentence. (“My favorite animal is an otter.”)

3. Have your child stack the numbered blocks on top of “Start.” As he adds each one, he could write a reason for his opinion. Examples: “Otters are cute.” “They like to play.” “They are good swimmers.”

4. Now it’s time for him to put the “Finish” block on top and write his conclusion. (“Now you see why I love otters.”)

5. Finally, invite him to read his opinion piece to you.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A

Becoming a good speller

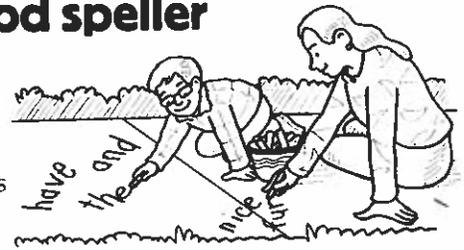
Q My son misspells a lot of words. For example, he’ll write *frnd* for *friend*. Should I be concerned?

A Your son is using the sounds he hears to figure out how words are spelled—an important strategy at this age.

The fact that he knows *friend* starts with the consonant combination *fr* shows that he’s probably on the right track. As he learns vowel patterns like *ie* and *ei*, you’ll notice that he incorporates those into his spelling, too.

Encourage your son to spell common words (*the*, *and*, *have*) correctly. If his teacher sends home weekly spelling lists, he should learn to spell those words the right way, too. You might have him practice by writing the words on a sidewalk, for instance.

Over time, he’ll combine what he knows about letter sounds with spelling rules, and the better his spelling will become.♥



Parent to Parent

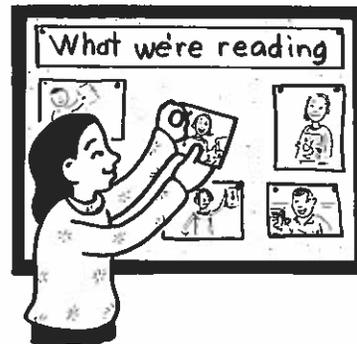
Our family reading board

Recently, my daughter Ella proudly pointed out a photo

of herself on a bulletin board in the school hallway. She was holding her favorite *Curious George* book, and the board was titled “What we’re reading.”

of herself on a bulletin board in the school hallway. She was holding her favorite *Curious George* book, and the board was titled “What we’re reading.”

We decided to make a board like that at home. Now when Ella reads a new book, I take a picture of her with it.



She hangs the photo on the board, and I make sure to ask her what the book is about or what made her decide to read it. She also asks what I’m reading and offers to take my picture. We even have relatives send us “reading selfies.”

Ella enjoys seeing that everyone reads. And the board is getting us to talk about books regularly!♥

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Working Together for Learning Success

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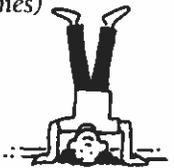
Book Picks

■ *The Jigsaw Jungle* (Kristin Levine)

Claudia's world changes when her father disappears. Desperate to put her family back together, she collects clues to solve the mystery of why he left home. The story is told through Claudia's scrapbook, which includes transcripts of conversations via email, text, and phone.

■ *Beatrice Zinker, Upside Down Thinker* (Shelley Johannes)

Thinking upside down is how Beatrice dreams up fantastic plans to carry out with her best friend, Lenny.



But when Lenny finds a new friend and seems to have forgotten her, Beatrice needs all of her upside-down thinking to get things back on track. Book one in the Beatrice Zinker series.

■ *The Kid Who Invented the Popsicle and Other Extraordinary Stories Behind Everyday Things* (Don L. Wulffson)

This nonfiction book is full of interesting stories about how familiar toys, foods, and gadgets were invented.



Your child will discover that ordinary people tinkered and experimented, leading to carousels, teddy bears, sandwiches, and more.

■ *Astrotwins: Project Blastoff* (Mark Kelly)

How did Mark Kelly and his twin brother Scott become astronauts? Facts about the twins and about space science are woven into the fictional tale of a group of kids who set out to build a rocket. The first book in the Astrotwins series.



Less screen time, more reading time

Amber would rather watch TV than read. Eric used to read at bedtime, but now he asks to play video games instead.

If your child prefers electronic devices to books, you're not alone. Use these ideas to set reasonable limits and motivate her to read more.



Create rules

Your youngster will be more tempted to pick up a book if screen time isn't an option. Decide how much time she's allowed each day—perhaps less on weeknights than on weekends. She could read to settle down at night rather than watch TV or play video games.

Make reading convenient

Think "out of sight, out of mind." Ask your child to put devices away when screen time is over. On the flip side, keep reading material in plain sight.

She might fill a basket with library books and place it in the family room—next to the turned-off TV. And have her leave devices at home and read or listen to audio books in the car or waiting room.

Build on interests

Help your youngster find reading material related to her interests. For example, if her video games feature sports, animals, or outer space, she might enjoy books or magazines on those topics. Also consider having her read books that were made into movies she liked. 📖

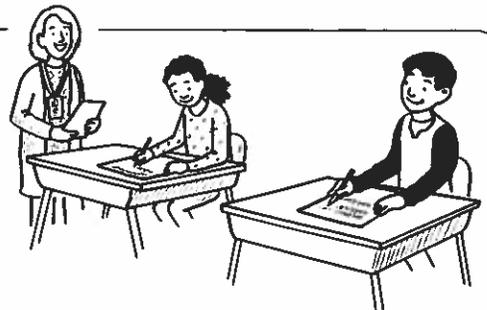
Note-taking 101

Taking good notes and using them will help your youngster learn and remember information. Here are suggestions.

Develop shorthand. He might use abbreviations like *w/* (*with*) or *b4* (*before*). He can make up his own and create a key that tells what they mean.

Double-space. Your child could leave a space between each line and use the blank lines to add details or examples as the lesson goes on.

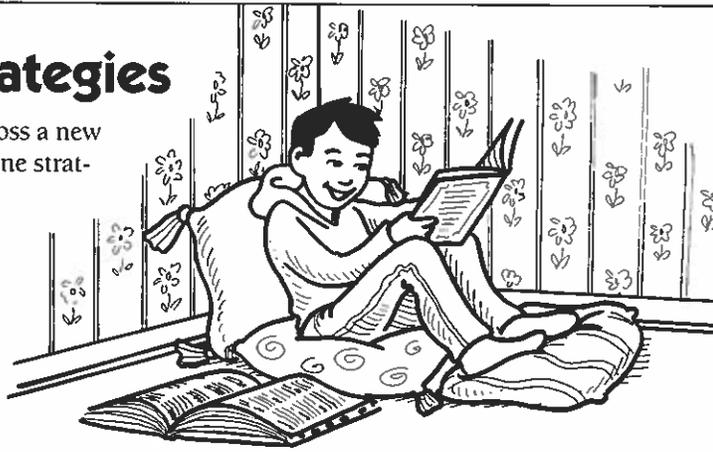
Review. Have your youngster think of notes as a study tool. He might use them to explain the lesson to you or to create a practice quiz for himself. 📖



Sound-it-out strategies

When your youngster comes across a new word in a book, sounding it out is one strategy that can help him keep reading. Share these sound-it-out tips.

● **Find a part you know.** Your child may spot a familiar portion of a word, such as a vowel pattern or a shorter word within a longer one. Say he comes to the unknown word *feign*. He might think, “*Neigh* and *weigh* have *ei*, and that letter combination makes the *long a* sound. I think that word is pronounced *fayn*.”

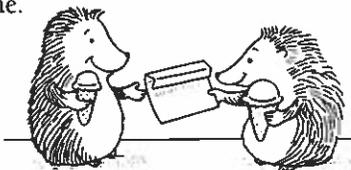


● **Break it into syllables.** Suggest that your youngster say each syllable separately. If he’s not sure how to break up the word, here’s a clue: Every syllable contains at least one vowel. For *emancipation*, he might say “*e-man-ci-pa-tion*” slowly, then read it again smoothly.

Once your child has sounded out a word, it’s important that he reread the entire sentence with the word in it. If he can’t figure out its meaning from the context, he could ask someone for help or look up the word in a dictionary. 📖

Fun with Words Write and pass it on!

Writing a story together will get your child’s creative juices flowing. Try this back-and-forth writing game.



1. At the top of a sheet of paper, your youngster writes the opening line of a story (“There once was a little hedgehog who loved ice cream”) and hands the paper to the person beside her.
2. That player reads the sentence silently, folds the paper to hide it, and writes a sentence that follows logically (“Her favorite flavor was chocolate-chip cookie dough.”)
3. Players continue passing the paper around, folding it so that only the last sentence written is visible.
4. When there’s just enough room for one more sentence, the person with the paper writes an ending for the story.
5. Now let your child read the tale aloud. 📖



Q&A Young adult books?

Q My daughter wants to read books that I think are too mature for her. She says “everyone” reads them. How should I handle this?

A Luckily for both of you, there are plenty of books out there that your daughter will enjoy—and that are appropriate for her. Explain to your child that some stories can be confusing or upsetting. And while her friends might read a particular book, it may not be a good match for her maturity level or your family’s values.

Ask a librarian to help you find books you and your daughter can agree on. She could suggest stories with popular themes (outdoor adventures, friendship) but without subjects that you might consider too mature (romance, horror). 📖



Parent 2 Parent Editing makes writing better

My son Kevin was working on an essay recently. He was supposed to write a rough draft, edit it, and write a final copy. But after he checked the spelling, grammar, and punctuation in his draft, he declared it error-free and said he didn’t need to edit.

I used to work for a publishing company, so I explained to Kevin that there’s more to editing than correcting errors—and that even professional writers edit their work.

Then I had an idea. I suggested that my son pick a paragraph from a favorite book and edit it. He made the writer’s description of a castle more vivid and added a funny line of dialogue for the king.

He was surprised that he preferred his version. But I pointed out that if the writer reread the book, she’d almost certainly find changes she’d like to make, too. This helped Kevin understand that writing can often be improved. 📖



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