

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2017

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ **Zoey and Sassafras: Dragons and Marshmallows** (Asia Citro)



Zoey discovers that her scientist mother has been helping

injured magical creatures since she was a little girl. Now Zoey (with her cat, Sassafras) is following in her mom's footsteps by using science to care for a sick dragon. The first book in the Zoey and Sassafras series.

■ **The Hole Story of the Doughnut** (Pat Miller)

The true story of how doughnuts got their holes



starts in 1847 aboard a ship where teenager Hanson Gregory was working as a cook. Your youngster will love hearing how Gregory turned the breakfast cakes he fed the ship's crew into the popular treat.

■ **Whoever You Are** (Mem Fox)

Children around the world might speak different languages and live in different kinds of houses, but they can have the same feelings. That's the message in this colorful book that shows little ones hugging their moms, laughing with friends, and crying over scraped knees. (Also available in Spanish.)

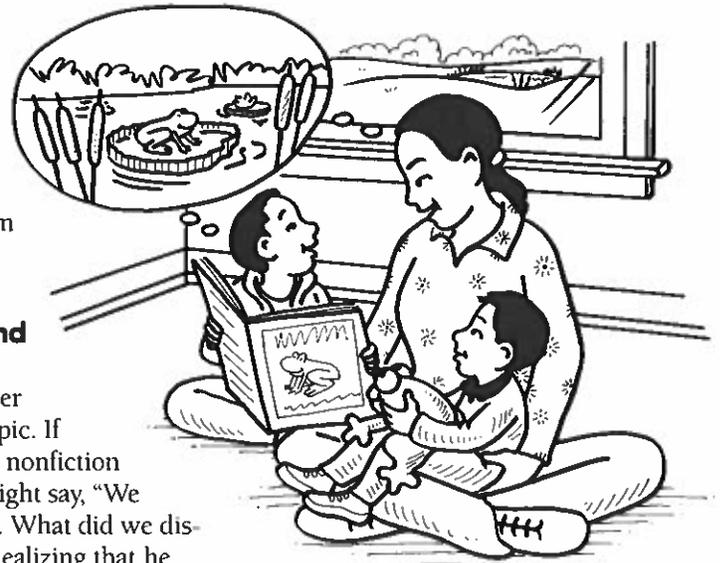
■ **Bee: A Peek-Through Picture Book** (Britta Teckentrup)

Readers learn the meaning of "busy as a bee" in this nonfiction book about pollination. Peek-a-boo holes let youngsters zero in on the bee in each bright illustration, while short, simple text explains what the bee is doing.



Begin with a book preview

Before your child reads a book, take a few minutes to do a "sneak preview" together. Knowing what to expect will strengthen his comprehension and set him up for success. Try these strategies.



Bring up background knowledge

Help your youngster relate to the book's topic. If you're going to read a nonfiction book on frogs, you might say, "We saw frogs at the pond. What did we discover about them?" Realizing that he already knows something about the subject will get him ready to learn new facts.

Tour the scenery

Illustrations offer your child clues to what might happen on each page. Let him flip through the pictures and tell you what he sees. Encourage him to make predictions by asking questions like "What do you think will happen to the fly that's buzzing around the frog?"

Take a "word walk"

Ask your youngster to point out familiar words. He'll be excited to show you what he knows. Then, call his attention to words he may not know. ("A tadpole is a baby frog. Can you find the word tadpole?") He'll be better able to recognize words and read with confidence.♥

Strengthen writing muscles

Playing with art supplies builds your youngster's hand muscles and improves fine motor skills that she uses for writing. Consider these activities:

- Have your child roll play dough into a flat sheet and press a winding maze into it with her fingertips. Then, let her push a marble through the dough.
- Arrange small stickers on construction paper. Suggest that your youngster connect them all by drawing a line from one sticker to the next.
- Use a marker or highlighter to draw a simple picture (heart, star, smiley face) on white paper. Ask your child to trace over your drawing with a different-color highlighter. She can watch the ink blend to make a brand-new color!♥



Family signs

Whether you're celebrating a special occasion or writing a quick reminder, displaying messages around the house is a nice way for your youngster to practice writing. Here are ideas.

Banners. Add homemade decorations to celebrations. Together, come up with a greeting, and let your youngster write each word on a separate sheet of paper. For her little brother's birthday, she might write "Look who's turning 2! Happy birthday, Joey!" Then, use tape to attach the pages to a piece of yarn, and string them up clothesline-style.



Posters. Write each person's name on a slip of paper, and take turns drawing one from a basket. Next, each family member creates a poster to hang on the door of the person whose name she chose. Your child might draw a portrait of the person and add a few facts ("Mom likes to play tennis").

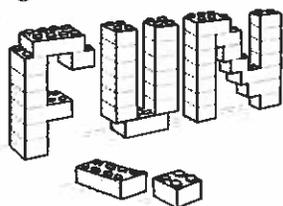
Reminders. Think of helpful signs to post around the house. Your youngster may want to write a reminder that says "Please feed me!" on the hamster cage. Or your family might work together on a sign that lists activities for the upcoming weekend. ("Go apple picking." "Jump in leaves.")♥

Fun with Words

Build-a-word workshop

Spelling practice gets a hands-on twist when your child uses Legos or other connecting bricks.

First, invite your youngster to build each word on his spelling list. He'll use thinking and problem-solving skills as he decides how to construct each letter.



Then, let him use the letters for spelling study: You could take turns scrambling letters for each other to put back in the correct order. Or he might display a word on a bookshelf—looking at it whenever he walks by will help him remember how it's spelled. Another idea is to take a photo of each word, print out the photos, and staple them together for a colorful study guide.♥

Parent to Parent

Bag o' nonfiction

My son Paul had a fun show-and-tell assignment recently. He had to share at least five nonfiction items to read that weren't books. The teacher said they could be anything from a parent's business card to a grocery circular.

So while we were running errands, I handed Paul a tote bag and suggested that we collect free things to read. By the time we finished, he had a takeout menu, an office supply catalog, a schedule of fitness classes, a recipe card, and an instruction sheet from the craft store.

At home, Paul spread out his items, and I helped him read a few. He was surprised by how many different kinds of nonfiction there are, and he was excited to share his finds with his classmates.

Now Paul wants to collect reading material every time we go out. His tote bag is getting pretty full, but I'm happy that he's getting reading practice.♥



Q&A Musical reading

Q I've heard that music helps children learn to read. How can I use music at home to help my daughter?

A That's true! Music offers a fun way to call your child's attention to the sounds in words, which will help her figure out new words when she reads.

Try singing familiar songs in silly ways. For instance, swap the beginning sounds in some words (change "Row, row, row your boat" to "Bow,

bow, bow your roat"). Have your daughter tell what sounds you switched (B and R). Then, encourage her to come up with a swap of her own.

Or replace a word with one that rhymes with it. Ask your youngster what rhymes with *boat*, and use the word she gives you to sing the new verse together, such as "Row, row, row your *coat*." She'll enjoy deciding how the song will change if you're rowing a coat—or a goat!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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INTERMEDIATE EDITION Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ **Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on Museum Mile** (Marcia Wells)

Sixth-grader Eddie Red has a photographic memory and a talent for drawing. Will that be enough to outsmart art thieves in New York City? The first book in the Eddie Red series.



■ **Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert** (Marc Aronson)

This true story describes the plight of copper miners trapped for 69 days in 2010. As the miners slowly ran out of food, water, and fresh air, rescuers from all over the world worked to save their lives.

■ **The Lemonade War** (Jacqueline Davies)

Sibling rivalry and lemonade take center stage in this opening book of the Lemonade War series. The friendship between a sister and brother is put to the test when she skips a grade and winds up in his fourth-grade class. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ **How Cities Work**

(James Gulliver Hancock)
Readers watch a city grow from a tiny village to an enormous metropolis in this nonfiction book. Each page is filled with detailed drawings and simple explanations about the buildings and people it takes to make a city thrive.



Keys to nonfiction reading

As your child gets older, he will do more reading in subjects like science, social studies, and math. Here are strategies for helping him use clues in textbooks and other nonfiction to understand what he reads.

Remember the three "Bs"

Encourage your youngster to scan for information in boldface, boxes, and bullet points. In a science chapter on weather, he might see the word *storm chasers*, a box on how rain forms, and a list of the world's windiest cities. Previewing these parts will alert him to what the chapter covers (storms, rain, wind)—and what to look for as he reads.

Examine an image

This activity can help your child observe details in pictures. Let him select any photo, illustration, or diagram in a textbook. Together, gaze at it for 30 seconds. Close the book, and write as many facts about the picture as you each can. For a diagram of the earth, he could write, "The earth has four layers" and "The core is the innermost layer." Take



turns reading your facts aloud, and check the picture to verify them.

Guess the graphic

The secret to grasping charts, graphs, and tables is to read the words *and* the numbers. Even the design may offer hints. Choose a graphic, and cover the heading. Can your youngster figure out its purpose? Perhaps you selected a pie chart that looks like an apple pie, its slices labeled with state names and percentages. He might deduce that it shows top apple-growing states. Now let him pick a graphic for you. ▣

Fun with Words

Picture that word

This activity makes vocabulary building fun! Have your youngster create her own deck of vocabulary cards that show definitions at a glance.

Together, brainstorm playful ways to write words so their meanings are illustrated. For example, she might write *backward* as *drawkcab* or print *twins* twice. Or perhaps she'll stack the letters in *vertical* or write *diagonal* at a slant. What could she do with *staircase*, *bubbly*, or *symmetry*?

Suggest that your child write each word on an index card with brightly colored markers or pens. Encourage her to add words from her vocabulary lists and textbook chapters, too. Studying will be easier with visual cues like these. ▣



Persuade me!

Next time your youngster asks for a pet hamster or a bigger allowance, suggest that she put her request in writing. She'll practice persuasive writing and give you time to think about your answer. Share these steps for writing a convincing case.

1. State your case. A good argument is specific and clear. Ways to start may include "I believe" or "In my opinion." ("I believe having a pet makes a kid more responsible.")



Tip: Let your youngster know you'll consider her position and get back to her! 📌

2. Provide reasons. Explain that your child's reasons should appeal to her audience—in this case, you! That means putting herself in your shoes: "I know you're worried I won't clean the cage. I'll write out my cleaning schedule and post it so I won't forget and you will know what to expect."

3. Add supporting facts. These could include a quote from an expert or information from a website or a magazine article. Or she might mention survey results about pet ownership and responsibility.

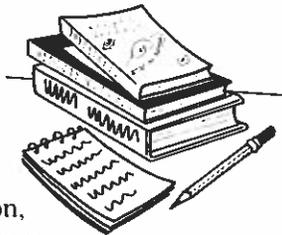


Author habits to follow

It takes hard work to become a published author. You can guide the budding author in your household with these real-life habits of successful writers.

Read a lot

Encourage your child to read often and to read a wide variety of material—fiction, biographies, science fiction, graphic novels, and newspapers. He'll pick up ideas for his own writing.



Keep tools handy

Suggest that your youngster always keep a small notebook nearby (even in his pocket). He can jot notes or begin a story whenever inspiration strikes.

Create a goal

Authors often set targets for themselves, perhaps writing for a certain number of hours a day, or writing a set number of words or pages. Ask your child to pick his own daily goal (write for 20 minutes, write five sentences or until he fills a page). 📌

Parent ² Parent Partner with the reading specialist

My son Simon was recently diagnosed with dyslexia. I had a good meeting with the reading specialist at school, and she said the best way to support Simon is to read aloud every day. Fortunately, that's something Simon and I have always enjoyed together.

The reading specialist gave me titles that are a little more challenging than Simon can read by himself. Reading harder books, she said, will help Simon stretch his comprehension skills.

She also asked that I listen to Simon read the books she sends home each week—but not to correct him immediately if he struggles. Instead, I should suggest he try strategies he's learning like using context clues or breaking words into "chunks." So far it's going well. Simon likes following along as I read aloud to him, and he's excited to show me how he can read the books he brings home. 📌



Q&A Get comfortable with public speaking

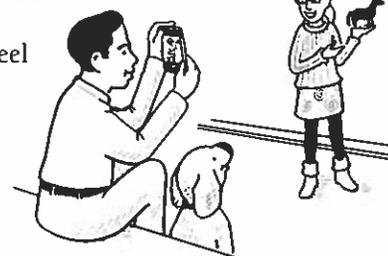
Q My daughter's first class presentation of the year is next month. She's a little nervous—how can I help her prepare?

A Encourage your daughter to practice, practice, practice! If she feels confident about what she's going to say and how she'll say it, she will feel more comfortable.

One way to prepare is by observing good public speakers in action, such as her principal

leading an assembly or game show hosts on TV. What does she notice? She may see that they look at the audience, smile, speak clearly, and avoid glancing at their notes too often. Then, she can keep these tips in mind during her own presentation.

Finally, your daughter will feel more confident if she knows what she sounds and looks like as she presents. Offer to videotape her—she can practice and play it back until she feels ready. 📌



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