

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2019

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ **My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks: And Other Funny Family Portraits** (Hanoch Piven)

A little girl decides that the portrait she drew in school doesn't show how special her family is, so she gets creative. See how she shows her dad is "as fun as a party favor" and her baby brother is "as sweet as candy."



■ **About Birds: A Guide for Children/ Sobre los pájaros: Una guía para niños** (Cathryn Sill)

Most birds fly, but others swim or run. This nonfiction picture book, with both English and Spanish text, lets readers discover the lives of different birds. It's also a handy field guide for identifying birds.



■ **Pedro, First-Grade Hero** (Fran Manushkin)

First grade is full of fun for Pedro. These four short stories describe Pedro's exploits as he collects bugs for science, competes to become a soccer goalie, starts a mystery club, and runs for class president. The first book in the Pedro series.

■ **Me Counting Time: From Seconds to Centuries** (Joan Sweeney)

In one second, your child could blink her eyes. And in one minute, she might be able to write a party invitation. This book presents examples that tie measurements of time to concepts that young readers will understand. Your youngster can follow along as the narrator describes ways she measures time.



A love of nonfiction!

Where can your child explore favorite topics like animals and outer space, find fascinating facts, and learn new vocabulary? In the pages of nonfiction books! Try these ideas.

Compare fiction and nonfiction

Together, read a nonfiction book about a storybook character your youngster loves (say, a sloth). Then, ask her which parts of the story are realistic or unrealistic, based on what she learned from the nonfiction book. She might say that real sloths do look like they're smiling, but she couldn't actually have one as a pet like the girl in the story does.

Collect facts

"A day on Venus is longer than a year on Venus!" Suggest that your child fill a special binder with interesting facts like this from nonfiction books. She could label

each page with a topic ("Outer space," "Sports"). As she reads more nonfiction, she'll add more and more facts.

Discover new words

As you read nonfiction with your youngster, she'll find words that are fun to say—and build background knowledge in history, science, and other subjects. Point out unfamiliar words like *galaxy*, *pueblo*, or *vertex*, and encourage her to say them aloud and try to figure out what they mean.♥



Pasta punctuation

A macaroni noodle makes a cute comma, and a penne noodle plus a wagon wheel is a good exclamation point! Use this pasta-licious activity to help your youngster practice using punctuation correctly.

On a big strip of paper, write a sentence for your child in giant letters, leaving out the punctuation (I love macaroni and cheese said Sam). Now have him glue uncooked noodles where the punctuation marks should go. He could use one macaroni noodle for the comma after "cheese," two pairs of ziti noodles for the quotation marks before "I" and after "cheese," and a wagon wheel for the period following "Sam."♥



Write stories together

When you and your child write stories together, that's called *interactive writing*. It's also called fun! Try these two suggestions. They'll help him write more complex stories and use bigger words than he might by himself.

1. Create a board game. Ask your youngster to call out random events (meet a robot, find a treasure, visit a farm). Write each one on a separate sticky note, and let him arrange the notes to make a game board path. Take turns rolling a die and moving a token along the path—using the events you land on to write a story. (“Once upon a time, Kevin met a tall green robot.” “The robot led him to a secret



treasure.”) Have your child write down the story as you go and then read it to you!

2. Hang a story string. Help your youngster cut a dozen photos from magazines, catalogs, and advertising circulars. Hang a piece of string along a wall, and have him tape the pictures to it. Now make up a story based on the photos. If the first photo shows a toy pirate ship, your child could write, “Nate the pirate set sail with his purple parrot.” If the next picture is of a lemon, you might add, “They landed on a beautiful island with lemon trees.” Finish the story using the last picture.♥

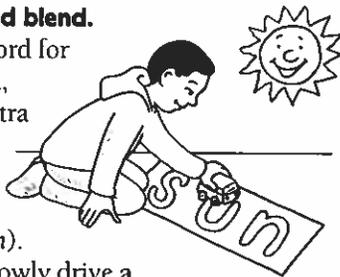


What's that word?

Breaking words into sounds and putting them back together is one strategy your youngster can use to decode words. Help him practice with these tips.

• Drive and blend.

Write a word for your child, leaving extra space between the letters (s u n). Let him slowly drive a toy car across the word, stopping on each letter to say its sound (“s-uh-n”). Next, have him race the car across the word, blending the sounds as he goes (“sun”).



• Listen and write. Say each individual letter sound in a word. For flag, you would say “fl,” “a,” and “g.” Your youngster can write each letter as he hears its sound. Can he blend the sounds of the letters he has written and figure out your word? Now swap roles.♥

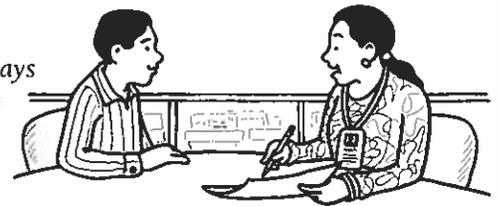
Q&A Is it dyslexia?

Q My kindergartner often says animal instead of animal, or pasghetti for spaghetti. My friend says that's a symptom of dyslexia. What should I do?

A Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that leads to reading difficulties. Struggling with spoken language, such as mixing up syllables in longer words, can be an early symptom of dyslexia that shows up before a child learns to read. But it could also be a normal part of your child's language development.

Tell her teacher what you've noticed, and ask whether your youngster has other symptoms of dyslexia. These include difficulty with rhyming, learning the alphabet, and making the connection between letters and sounds.

Also let the teacher know if you have a family history of dyslexia, since the condition is sometimes inherited. If the teacher is concerned, she will refer your child to the school's speech-language pathologist or another appropriate specialist on the staff.♥



Fun with Words Over, under, and through

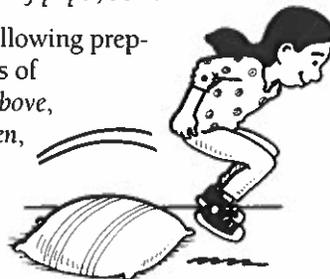
Play this game of Simon Says to help your child understand common prepositions like *over*, *under*, and *through*.

Materials: pencil, slips of paper, bowl

Together, write the following prepositions on separate slips of paper: *around*, *against*, *above*, *behind*, *on*, *beside*, *between*, *over*, *under*, *inside*, *outside*, *with*, *up*, *down*, and *through*. Mix up the slips in a bowl.

Pull slips from the bowl, one at a time, and use them to tell your youngster how to move. Say “Simon says” before some instructions. *Examples:* “Simon says, ‘Hold your right knee with your left hand’” or “Simon says, ‘Jump over the pillow.’”

The round ends when you run out of slips or your child does something Simon didn't say to do (“Put your hands between your knees”). Then, return the slips to the bowl, and let her be Simon.♥



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Working Together for Learning Success

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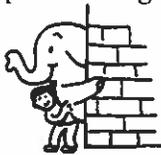
Keystone Oaks School District



Book Picks

■ *The Magician's Elephant* (Kate DiCamillo)

Peter is an orphan looking for answers about his missing sister. He turns to a fortune-teller, who proclaims that an elephant will help Peter, setting off a chain of events that the boy never could have imagined. But will it lead him to his sister—or to more questions? (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Dewey the Library Cat: A True Story* (Vicki Myron and Bret Witter)

On a cold morning, librarian Vicki Myron discovers a freezing kitten in the book drop. This is her true story of Dewey, who found a home at the library. He attended story hours, napped among the stacks, and eventually became famous around the world.



■ *Young, Gifted and Black* (Jamia Wilson)

These 52 short biographies introduce your child to important people in black culture. She will learn about the childhoods, struggles, and accomplishments of historical figures as well as present-day people. Features civil rights leaders, athletes, musicians, and others.

■ *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* (Monica Brown)

Lola accidentally hurts a classmate during a soccer game, and the other kids start to call her "Mean Lola Levine." Lola feels terrible and wants to show everyone she's not mean! She turns to her best friend, her family, and her passion for writing for help. The first book in the Lola Levine series.



Understanding fiction

Charles is a strong reader. He follows complicated plots, and he gets to know story-book characters so well that he often correctly predicts what they'll do next. Help your child be a strong reader, too, with these fun ways to boost reading comprehension.

Basic facts	Traits	Actions
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	~~~~~ ~~~~~	
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~		



Create a storyboard

Filmmakers use a series of drawings called a "storyboard" to write movies. Let your youngster try this idea to visualize a book's plot. Have him divide a sheet of paper into eighths and sketch simple pictures (one per box) as he reads. *Tip:* Drawing arrows from box to box will show the sequence. With the storyboard, he can retell the story or write a summary.

into three columns: one for basic facts (name, age), one for traits (shy, brave), and one for actions (goes to the beach, makes the softball team).

Predict the future

To forecast what will happen in a book, your child has to think about what has taken place so far. Ask him to make predictions as he reads and jot down his ideas (best friend will move away, dad will recover). Suggest that he write his own ending about two-thirds of the way through. He'll enjoy seeing how it compares with the real one!

Map the characters

Understanding a book's characters will help your youngster grasp the story. Encourage him to make a character chart while reading. He could divide it

Replace it

"The party was really fun! We played fun games." Your child will write fresher, more original stories if she finds alternatives for words she uses often, such as *fun*, *went*, and *good*.

Have each family member flip through books and copy a few sentences to jazz up or make more precise. Pick one, and circle the word to avoid. ("Wayside is a small village.")

Set a timer for three minutes. Everyone writes as many alternatives as possible—replacing just one word or maybe changing the whole sentence. ("Wayside is a tiny village" or "If you weren't paying attention, you could travel through the village of Wayside without noticing it.") Now when your youngster catches herself using a word too many times in a story, she'll remember this game.

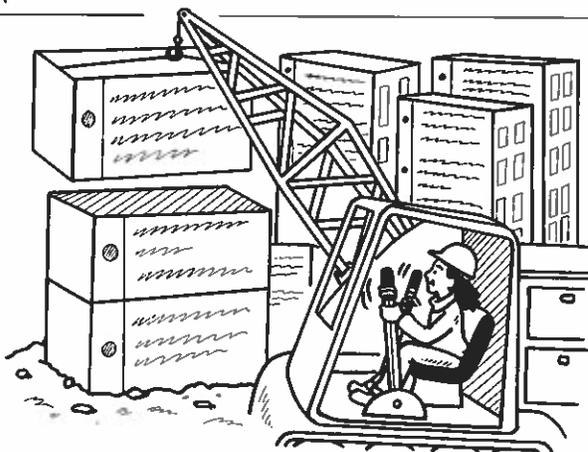


Build stronger essays

Encourage your child to approach her next essay as if she's building a tower. Here's how she can succeed from the first "brick" to the last.

1. Lay the foundation. A strong essay begins with a solid introduction. Your youngster should think about what her essay aims to accomplish and state her main idea. For example, will she inform readers about childhood in Colonial America? Or will she try to persuade readers to follow recycling rules?

2. Construct the framework. Have her think of each paragraph as a floor of her building. She might include one



paragraph about school in the Colonies, another on chores, and a third on play. Under each heading, she could write supporting facts and details. ("Education was considered more important for boys than for girls.")

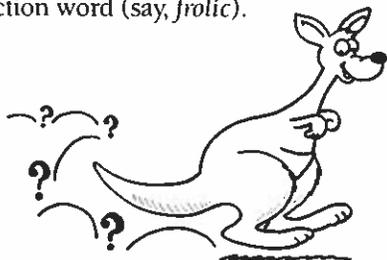
3. Top it off. A building isn't finished until it has a roof. Similarly, a strong conclusion finishes off an essay. Maybe your child will refer back to her introduction. ("Following the rules for what and how to recycle makes our planet a cleaner place to live.") Or perhaps she'll ask a question. ("What changes will you make to the way you recycle?")

Fun with Words

Name the mystery word

This word game helps to strengthen your youngster's vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

First, make one person the "word master." His job is to think of a mystery action word (say, *frolic*).



Then, players take turns asking questions to figure out the word—substituting the word *book* for the mystery word. The word master answers "Yes" or "No" and adds a clue to lead players to his word.

If someone asks, "Have you *booked* today?" the word master could reply, "Yes, I *booked* at recess." Another person may say, "Did you *book* down the slide?" ("No, I *booked* on the grass.") If a player asks, "Do animals *book*?" his reply might be "Yes, rabbits and kangaroos do."

The first person to identify the mystery word gets to pick the next one.

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Q&A

Are comic books "real reading"?

Q My son reads mostly comic books. Is this okay?

A It's wonderful that your son enjoys reading. And comic books often have complex storylines and well-developed characters, which strengthen reading skills.

Let your child explore a variety of comic books so he encounters new vocabulary and plots. He might choose a historical fiction series or a comic book retelling of classic children's literature. Also, many comic book fans like graphic novels, such as the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series (Jeff Kinney) or the *Dog Man* series (Dav Pilkey).

Finally, since your son will be expected to read a variety of books in school, consider helping him branch out. Suggest that he set a goal to read one new type of book each month. Perhaps he'll try a biography in February, a science fiction novel in March, and a mystery in April.



Parent 2 Parent

An audiobook station

My daughter Jackie loves the listening center in school, where students listen to audiobooks. So she asked if we could set one up at home.

We went to the library, and Jackie checked out a few books on CDs along with the print versions. At home, she put the CDs and books into a basket beside an old CD player I found in the basement.

Now Jackie enjoys listening to at least a chapter a day while she follows along in the book. It's great because she can hear the pronunciations of harder words while she sees them in print.

I told my sister-in-law about our listening station. Now she and her son are going to set one up using their smart speaker!

