

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2020

Keystone Oaks School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *Doggy Defenders: Willow the Therapy Dog* (Lisa M. Gerry)

Some dogs have incredible jobs helping people, and Willow is one of them. This nonfiction



book follows a therapy dog named Willow through her day at work. She spreads cheer in a hospital and a retired veterans' home, and she even "reads" with children at a library. Part of the Doggy Defenders series.

■ *Hair Like Mine*

(LaTashia M. Perry)

A little girl thinks her hair is too curly and frizzy, and she struggles to find someone with hair like hers. With guidance from her mother, who insists that no two people have the same hair, face, or toes, the girl learns about the value of differences.

■ *The One Day House*

(Julia Durango)

This is the heart-warming story of a young boy named Wilson and his older neighbor, Gigi. When Gigi's house desperately needs repairs, Wilson wants to make it nicer for her. Thanks to caring friends and neighbors, he gets his wish faster than he imagined. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Ronan the Librarian*

(Tara Luebbe and Becky Cattie)

No legendary barbarian wants to read a book ... right? That's what Ronan the Barbarian thinks until he finds a book in his raided treasure. He loves the book so much that he teaches his fellow barbarians to enjoy reading, too.



Make time for reading

Any time is a great time for your child to read! Here's how to fit more reading into busy days.

Check the weather

Invite your youngster to be the family weather reporter. Each evening, she can read tomorrow's forecast in the newspaper or on your phone's weather app. Encourage her to use weather symbols, such as raindrops or suns, if she needs a little help figuring out the words. Soon she'll recognize words like *rainy* and *sunny* right away.



math practice, she could read the numbers and fractions in the recipe, too.

Explore recipes

When you cook, let your child read the recipe with you. Make it easier by having her get out the ingredients. Hearing you say potatoes or cheese, finding the item, and maybe seeing the word on the package will help her as she sounds out the words in the recipe. *Tip:* For

Listen to audiobooks

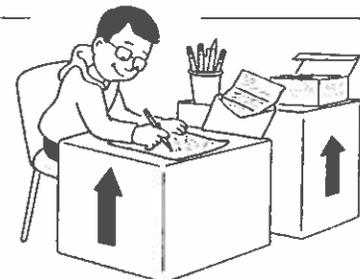
While you're working from home or running errands, your youngster can enjoy books independently. Download audiobooks and check out print versions of the same books from the library. She can follow along with the story as she turns the pages and perhaps learn to recognize new words.♥

Write to keep in touch

"Will you be my pen pal?" With this idea, your youngster can write friendly letters and stay close to loved ones.

Together, ask a relative to be your child's pen pal. Explain that your youngster is learning to write—and they can help! Then, let your child pick out stationery or search online for "free stationery printables kids."

Now help your youngster write a greeting ("Dear Aunt Lori"). Underneath, he could write about or draw pictures of activities he's been doing, like roller skating or caring for his new kitten. He should also ask his pen pal questions. ("How is your job?") When your relative writes back, you and your child can read the letter—and write a reply.♥



What sounds do you hear?

Sounds and syllables are like the nuts and bolts of words. Call your youngster's attention to word parts with these activities that will help him grow into a strong reader.

Swap the sound. With your youngster, think of a word family, or a group of words with the same "last name" (for example, *-all*). Now take turns saying a word with that ending (*fall, wall*). If you say a nonsense word (*zall*), ask your child to make up a silly definition. "Zall: A black-and-white striped ball that zebras play with!"



Blend the consonants. Have your youngster put these letter tiles or magnetic letters into a bag: B, C, F, G, H, L, P, R, S, T, and W. He can pull out two letters (perhaps S and P), then help him try to blend them and say a word that includes the blended sound (*spider*). If the sounds can't be blended, like B and T, he should put them back and pull out new letters.

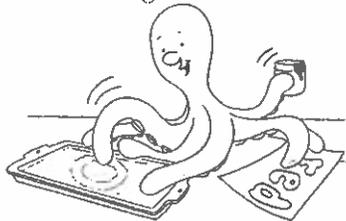
Subtract a syllable. Say a familiar word that has more than one syllable, such as *pumpkin* or *television*. Now encourage your youngster to take away one or more of the syllables: "If you take *pump* out of *pumpkin*, what do you have left?" (Answer: *kin*.) What happens if he "subtracts" *vision* from *television*? (He'll have *tele*.)♥

Fun with Words Sensational writing tools

Put down your pencils! Your child can practice forming letters and words with these fun-to-touch materials.

Sugar

Let your youngster spread a thin layer of sugar on a baking sheet. Then, she could write each letter of the alphabet with her finger.



Paint

Have your child dip her finger in paint and write on construction paper. She might write the color word that matches each color of paint she uses, like yellow for yellow paint.

Soil

Your youngster will get fresh air and enjoy nature by writing outside. Help her find a stick and a patch of soil. She could etch words in the dirt, perhaps to list things she sees outdoors (*birds, clouds*).♥

Q&A Don't forget the spaces!

Q When my daughter writes, a whole sentence sometimes looks like one long word. How can I get her to put spaces between words?

A Ask her to read her writing out loud so she can "hear" the spaces. As she reads, have her draw a vertical line where she thinks each space should be.

You can also show her spaces in books. Pick a sentence, and ask her to count the words. She'll need to pay attention to the spaces to figure out how many words there are.

Finally, encourage her to use her finger as a "space bar" by laying it on her paper after she writes each word. It will show her how much space to leave before she begins the next word. Or let her decorate a craft stick with stickers and use that as a space bar.♥



Parent to Parent Play library—at home

My son Elijah and I missed our weekly visits when the pandemic closed down our library. So he came up with the idea to play library at home, which has given us a nice way to talk about books.

First, Elijah made library cards for all of us. To play, we place books around our living room and use the coffee table as the checkout counter. Sometimes Elijah is the librarian. He recommends

books for me, "scans" them at the checkout, and leads story hour. Other times, we trade roles. After we finish playing, we put the books back on the shelf in alphabetical order, just like real librarians do.

We're enjoying library time even when we're not at the actual library, and Elijah is learning to think critically about books to give good recommendations.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ *Joey Fly Private Eye in Creepy Crawly Crime* (Aaron Reynolds)

In the first book of the Joey Fly Private Eye series, this graphic novel mystery stars an all-bug cast. Joey Fly is a detective who wants to protect Bug City. His latest case: Find Delilah the butterfly's missing diamond pencil case.

■ *The Thrifty Guide to Ancient Rome* (Jonathan W. Stokes)

Your child will become a "time traveler" in this guidebook that transports readers to Ancient Rome. A humorous book from the Thrifty Guide series, it weaves in historical information and introduces young readers to an important period in history. Includes maps and illustrations, and advises travelers on where to stay, what to wear, and more.



■ *Sarai and the Meaning of Awesome (Sarai #1)*

(Sarai Gonzalez and Monica Brown)

Sarai has always lived close to her cousins and grandparents. When their rented home goes up for sale, her mission is to raise money so they don't have to move. She sells cupcakes and lemonade, and even enters a dance contest. Book 1 in the Sarai series. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *10 Plants that Shook the World* (Gillian Richardson)

How much trouble can a simple plant cause? Plenty! This book gets to the roots of 10 plants that started wars, helped medicine, and altered history. Fun facts, history, and anecdotes show how something as small as a plant can change the world.



Fall for nonfiction

Reading about the real world is fascinating! Whether your child is already a nonfiction reader or is new to these books, you can help him fall in love with "reality reading." Try these tips.

Discover interesting people

Biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and diaries are often popular with youngsters. Encourage your child to find books about athletes, inventors, or presidents. Just one good story can get him hooked on nonfiction.

Use fiction as inspiration

Sometimes the setting or subject of a novel can lead to new nonfiction reading. Talk to your youngster about fiction he reads, and suggest topics he might look into. Was he fascinated by New York City or the Roaring Twenties in a recent story? He could ask a librarian to recommend nonfiction books that give him the real scoop.

Keep up with the news

The newspaper is a regular source of nonfiction. Hand your child a section,



and invite him to read alongside you. He can try different parts to find a favorite—and to discover various kinds of nonfiction. For instance, he could read factual accounts in the news section and persuasive pieces on the opinion page. *Tip:* Share news websites, too.

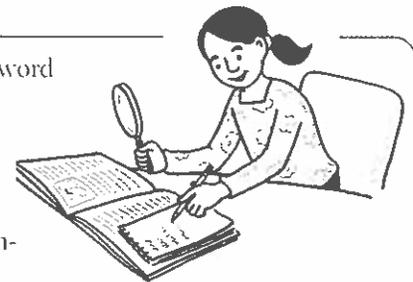
Explore a school subject

Perhaps your youngster is studying the solar system in science class or Greek mythology in social studies. Have him type that topic into the library database and look for nonfiction books. They can deepen his knowledge and offer new insights that will help him in school. ▮

Unraveling words

Your youngster is reading and comes to a word she doesn't know the meaning of. What does she do? These strategies can help her figure it out:

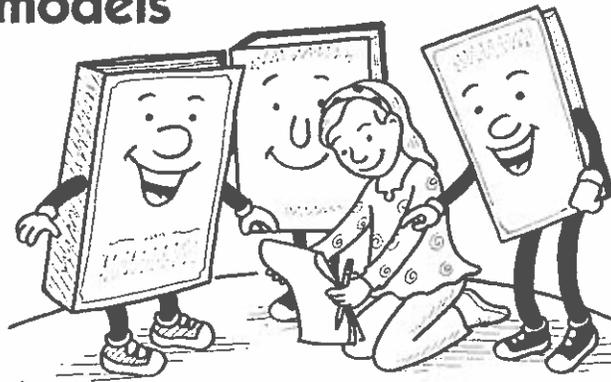
- Reread the sentence, and try to substitute a different word that would make sense. The context might make the unfamiliar word clear.
- Study the word for clues. Does she recognize any part of the word, such as a prefix (beginning), suffix (ending), or root (base word)?
- Write down the word. Then, look up its meaning and synonyms in a dictionary or a thesaurus. Seeing synonyms for the word can help her remember its definition in the future. ▮



Authors as role models

The pages of your child's favorite book hold more than a good tale. They contain examples of writing techniques she can use in her own stories. Encourage her to watch for these.

Transitions. Good writing flows smoothly from one event to another, and transition words and phrases make that happen. Suggest that your youngster look closely at how an author switches the action to a different place ("Meanwhile, back at the villain's lair ...") or time ("Later, while Mom fixed dinner ..."). Ask her why clear transitions are important (they lead the reader through the story).



When she writes a story, suggest that she circle places where the action changes. Then she can come up with interesting transitions.

Tense. An author may choose to write in the past or present tense. Have your child look for books with examples of each and try reading a sentence or two in the opposite tense. *Example:* "The leaves are falling from the tree" (present) vs. "The leaves fell from the tree" (past). Which does she prefer? What effect does each have? The present tense may make her feel like the story is happening right now, for instance. Encourage her to experiment with each technique in her own stories. 📖

Make reading fun(ny)

Psst! Want your youngster to spend more time reading? Tickle her funny bone! Consider these three hints.

1. Keep joke books and volumes of silly poems on the coffee table, in the bathroom, and in the car for quick reading any time.
2. Help your child find humorous stories at the library. She could ask her teacher, the librarian, or cousins and friends for funny authors they like. (Two to try: Tom Angleberger and Jeff Kinney.)



3. Look up comic books at the library. Also, when you read a funny comic strip or cartoon in the newspaper, cut it out to share with her, or email your youngster ones that you find online. 📧

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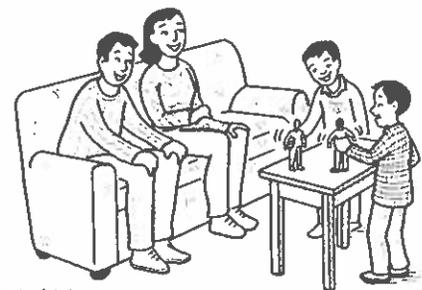
To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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Parent 2 Parent

Act it out

When my son Steven had trouble following story plots, the reading specialist suggested that we take advantage of the fact that he likes to perform in school plays. She said they were acting out reading material during resource sessions at school, and she thought this approach would work at home, too.



The funny thing is, it has turned out to be a great activity for our entire family. To "see" the action in the novel he was reading for class, we used his little brother's action figures as characters from the story.

While I read, Steven and Timmy moved the figures around on the table according to the description from the book. Then, the two boys acted out the chapter themselves. As Steven made up the dialogue, I could tell that he understood what had happened in the story. Now reading time has turned into acting time! 🎭

Fun with Words

What's in a contraction?

Contractions such as *it's*, *she'll*, and *wouldn't* add variety to our language and help to make writing flow smoothly. These activities will show your youngster how language sounds without contractions and help him learn to spell them.

"I'll have some peas." Everyone must listen closely to see if anyone uses a contraction. Who can go the longest without saying one?

Read and write

Ask your youngster to read a short newspaper article out loud, replacing each contraction with the two words that form it. For example, if he sees *you're*, he would say *you are*. Then, have him write each contraction on one side of an index card and the two words that form it on the other side. This will help him remember the correct spelling. 📖

Talk and listen

Announce that no contractions are allowed at dinner! During conversations, your child will need to choose his words carefully. He might say, "I will have some peas" instead of

