

Reading Connection

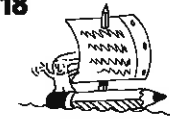
Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2018

A+ Arts Academy
Dr. Renene Craft - District Principal

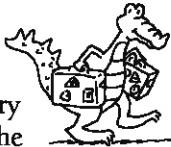
Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *There Is No Dragon in This Story* (Lou Carter)

Dragon really wants to be a hero. He travels from fairy tale to fairy tale offering to rescue the characters, but everyone sends him away. Then, a giant's sneeze blows out the sun, and Dragon finally gets his chance. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Keena Ford and the Second-Grade Mix-Up* (Melissa Thomson)

Keena Ford's new teacher makes a special cake for each student's birthday. When Keena's birthday gets marked on the wrong date, will she tell the truth or celebrate anyway to get the cake? The first book in the Keena Ford series.



■ *The House That Jane Built* (Tanya Lee Stone)

In the 1800s, a woman named Jane Addams was determined to make life better for those in need. This biography tells how she founded Hull House, a community center in Chicago, and helped people find housing and jobs. Addams then went on to become the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

■ *The Wing Wing Brothers Math Spectacular!* (Ethan Long)

Humor + math = learning fun in this comic book-style story. Five duck brothers put on a comedy show. As they juggle pies and spin plates, readers can compare amounts, learn math facts, and more. Part of the Wing Wing Brothers series.

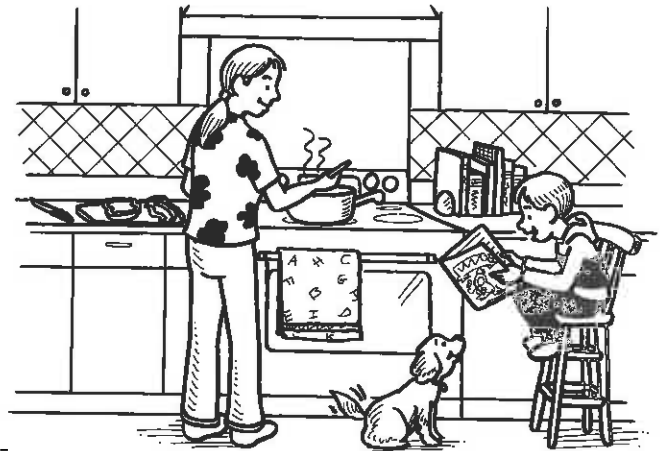


Family reading routines

Reading with your child each day helps him grow as a reader. And just a few minutes here and there really add up. Consider these suggestions for fitting more reading into busy days.

Mealtime practice

Serve up a side of reading! During breakfast, keep the cereal box on the table. You can help your child read the name of the cereal, the slogan, and any riddles or activities. While you make dinner, invite him to read a familiar storybook aloud, or let him browse through a cookbook for words he recognizes (*milk, pizza*).



highlight upcoming events like back-to-school night or picture day.

A reading surprise

Like a tooth fairy who leaves money, be a reading fairy who leaves reading material for your child. Tape comic strips to the bathroom mirror for him to read while he brushes his teeth. Place a poem on his pillow so he can enjoy it before bed. And stash a few books or magazines near his seat in the car. ♥

School days

Together, read the papers your youngster brings home from school, perhaps a story he wrote in class or an announcement about a field trip. Also, post the school calendar on the refrigerator. Read it regularly with your child, and have him

Things I can write about

Your youngster's life is full of creative writing material, whether she's picking apples or riding her bike. Encourage her to collect story ideas with these steps.

1. Let your child decorate a box. She might cover it with stickers or wrap it with construction paper and draw pictures.
2. Together, brainstorm topics she could write about, like becoming a big sister or visiting a new playground. She can write or draw each idea on a slip of colored paper and store it in her box.
3. Have her pull out a slip for inspiration when she wants to write a story, or before school if she knows she'll get to write on a topic of her choice that day. ♥



Stand up and write!

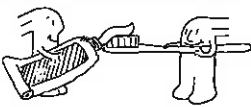
Writing on a vertical surface strengthens your child's arm and wrist muscles and improves the coordination she needs for handwriting. Plus, it's fun. Try these tips.

Windows. Have your youngster use dry-erase markers to draw and color shapes on a window, turning it into "stained glass." Be sure to take a photo of her work before she cleans the window!



Walls. Hang poster board on her bedroom wall, and let your child design a sign using crayons. She might write her name and draw a border of flowers, for example. Also, consider getting a small dry-erase board from the dollar store. Use it to play hangman or to leave messages for each other.

Outdoors. Encourage your youngster to make a crayon rubbing on a tree. She can hold paper against the bark and rub it with the side of an unwrapped crayon to see the pattern. If you have a wooden fence, suggest that she decorate it with sidewalk chalk. She can hose it off when she's done. ♥

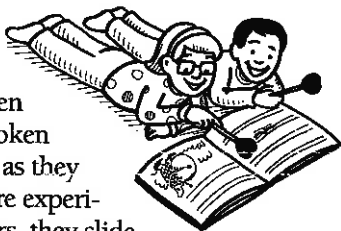


Parent to Parent My magic reading wand

My daughter Brianna came home excited about the special pointers her teacher lets students use while they read.

I asked the teacher about this. She explained that children enjoy touching the pointers to each word as they say it aloud—

and this helps them match written words to spoken ones. Then, as they become more experienced readers, they slide the pointer under the words (rather than tapping each one) so they read smoothly.



I suggested to Brianna that we find pointers to use at home. We filled a plastic jar with items like a bubble wand, a chopstick, a paintbrush, and a pencil with a heart-shaped eraser.

Brianna is always on the lookout for more "magic reading wands." When she finds one, she can't wait to try it out. I love that such a simple thing is boosting her reading skills. ♥

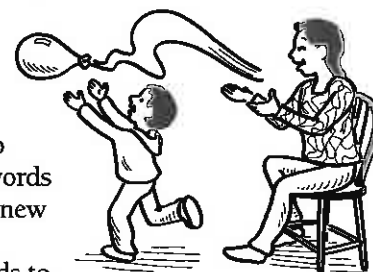
Q&A Vocabulary-boosting conversations

Q I've heard that kids with bigger vocabularies have an easier time learning to read and write. How can I help my son learn more words?

A You're right—a good vocabulary does help with reading and writing. Kids absorb many words just by hearing them regularly, so try weaving new words into everyday conversations.

When you talk to your son, use bigger words to expand on what he says. For instance, in response to "That siren is loud!" you could say, "You're right. It's *earsplitting*." Or if he says, "I let the air out of the balloon," you might reply, "It *deflated* really quickly."

Then, encourage him to use the new word often to help it stick in his mind. "What else can you think of that makes an *earsplitting* noise?" To jog his memory you might say, "Remember that jackhammer? That was *earsplitting*, too." ♥



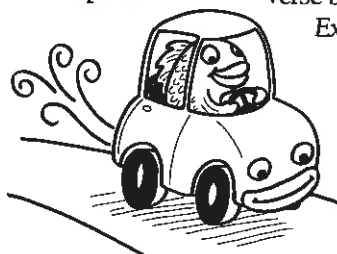
Fun with Words Nursery rhyme phonics

Playing with letter sounds prepares your youngster to decode new words. Read this nursery rhyme together, and do the activities that follow.

*Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.*

Rhyming words

Have your child tell you which words rhyme (*diddle* and *fiddle*, *moon* and *spoon*). He could circle the letters they have in common (*iddle*, *oon*).



Letter sounds

Ask him to listen for specific sounds. Can he tell you which words have a C sound (*cat*, *cow*) or a D sound (*diddle*, *fiddle*, *jumped*, *dog*, *laughed*, *dish*)? Where in the word does he hear the sound—beginning, middle, or end?

Silly swaps

Let your youngster make up his own verse by changing some of the words.

Example: "The horse jumped over the star. . . . And the fish ran away with the car."

Note: Try these ideas with other nursery rhymes from library books or websites. ♥

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

■ Grand Canyon (Jason Chin)

Follow a father and daughter as they hike the Grand Canyon. This illustrated story presents facts about the spectacular landform's geology, plant and animal life, and more. A detailed map shows an overhead view of the canyon.



■ Taking Sides (Gary Soto)

Lincoln Mendoza loves playing on his school basketball team with his best friends. But when his family moves to the suburbs, he has to change teams. Can Lincoln compete against his old team without losing friends? (Also available in Spanish.)



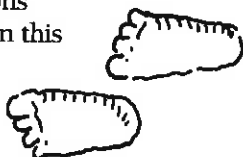
■ Out of Wonder

(Kwame Alexander with Chris Colderley and Marjory Wentworth)

In this poetry collection, three poets come together to celebrate their favorite poets. They pay homage to those who inspired them to begin writing poetry—Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, and Gwendolyn Brooks, to name a few.

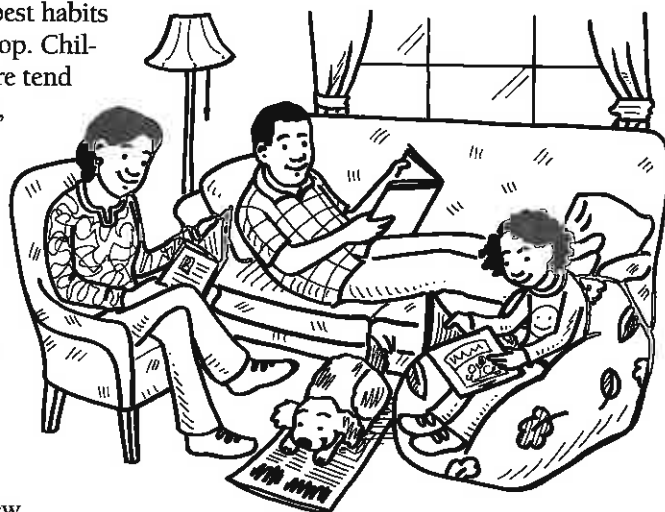
■ Lemons (Melissa Savage)

Lemonade Liberty Witt's life is turned upside down when she has to move in with her grandpa. Her new town is the Bigfoot Capital of the World, and Lem befriends Tobin Sky, who is obsessed with finding Bigfoot. Find out how Lem turns lemons into lemonade in this story about overcoming struggles.



A love of reading

Reading is one of the best habits your youngster can develop. Children who read for pleasure tend to have higher test scores, bigger vocabularies, and better reading comprehension. Steer your child toward a lifetime of reading with these ideas.



Choose books wisely

Suggest that your youngster find books that will hold her interest. Have her read the back cover and the first few pages to see if the book grabs her. It often helps if she has something in common with a story's main character. For instance, a child fascinated by machines may enjoy Roz the robot in *The Wild Robot* (Peter Brown).

Make time for reading

Between homework, friends, and activities, it's not always easy to fit in reading. Try setting aside a time when the entire family reads (after dinner, before bed). Also, encourage your

youngster to put books in the car so she can read during errands or while waiting in a dentist's office.

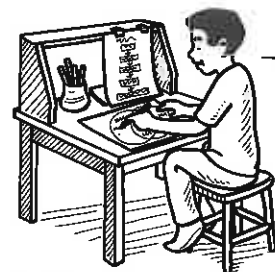
Meet other readers

Reading is contagious! If your child finds friends who like to read, they may share books and enjoy discussing them. Perhaps she'll notice kids who read after they finish a class assignment, or she could pay attention to which books her classmates choose in the library. She can strike up a conversation later: "Do you have a series to recommend?"

A prewriting toolbox

Before writing a report or an essay, your child needs to organize his information. A graphic organizer is just the ticket! Consider these formats.

- **Flowcharts** work well for book reports or history essays where one event follows another. Encourage your youngster to write each event in a separate box ("found stray dog," "made flyers") and draw an arrow from one box to the next.
- **Venn diagrams** compare and contrast two things. Say your child's report is about things that fly. He would first draw two overlapping circles. Then, he could list facts specific to hot-air balloons ("carry people") in the outer part of one circle. Facts exclusive to kites ("steered by string") go in the other circle's outer section. And shared traits ("made of nylon") belong in the overlapping space.



Beginnings and endings

The way your child starts and ends a writing assignment can make a big difference in his finished product. Help him create a good first—and last—impression with these suggestions.



● **Set a scene.** “A line of camels marches across the desert. The air is dry and hot, and there’s no water in sight.”

Memorable conclusions

The ending should wrap things up in a way the reader will remember. A good conclusion shows how all the information in a paper fits together. Here are some possibilities:

Attention-grabbing introductions

A powerful beginning pulls the reader in. Your youngster might:

- **Kick off with a question.** “Did you ever wonder why camels have humps?”
- **Use an interesting fact.** “Camels have three eyelids and two rows of eyelashes per eye.”

● **Summarize the main points.** “Its large hump, unusual eyes, and big feet make the camel the best form of transportation in the desert.”

● **Echo the introduction.** “A camel isn’t just interesting to look at. Its unique features help people travel in a hot, dry climate.”

● **Close with instructions.** “If you visit the desert, take a ride on a camel. His hump, eyes, and feet will get you where you need to go.”



What doesn't belong?

Hammock, swimming, hammer, aluminum, summer... which word doesn't belong? (*Aluminum*, because it's the only one without a double *m* in the middle.)

Play this game with your child to help her look closely at words and learn their spellings or parts of speech.



1. Ask her to bring home a list of vocabulary or spelling words. Or she could make a list of words from the dictionary.
2. Choose three or more of the words that have something in common (vowel sound, prefix, suffix, part of speech, number of syllables).
3. Write the words down, along with a word from your youngster's list that doesn't fit your sorting rule. Then, she tries to name your rule.
4. Trade roles, and let her give you a set of words to figure out.



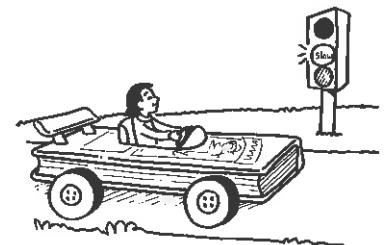
Slow down

Q My daughter reads so fast that she sometimes misses important facts. How can I help her slow down?

A Start by showing your child that reading too fast causes her to skip information. Try having her read a section, and then you read it aloud to her. Ask your youngster to hold up a finger each time she hears something that she doesn't remember reading.

Next, help your child find a way to focus while she's reading. When she has a textbook assignment, encourage her to break it up. If she has three science chapters to read in a week, she might read one a night for three nights instead of doing them all in one evening. She will slow down and concentrate better if she doesn't feel overwhelmed.

Finally, suggest that your youngster skim the text once and then carefully read it a second time. The second reading will help her catch things she missed the first time and let her see how reading more slowly helps.



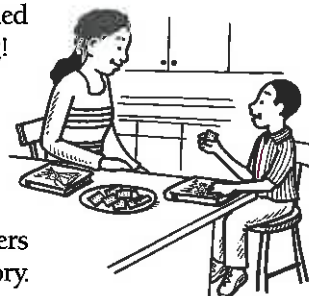
Speaking of reading

Last year my son started reading more advanced books in school. I recognized some of the titles from when I was a child, and others were new to me. I leafed through one that he was finished with. I got hooked and ended up reading the whole thing!

What I didn't realize was that reading the same book as Jonas did would give us something new to talk about. We discussed our favorite characters and the best parts of the story.

Now we try to read a book together about once a month. We take turns picking a title, and then we check out two copies from the library.

When we've both finished, we sit at the kitchen table with a snack and talk about the story. Sometimes we find discussion questions online, usually on the book publisher's website. Since we started this tradition, we're both enjoying reading new books—and talking about them together!



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