

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

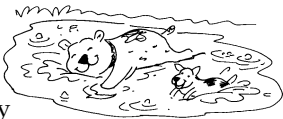
September 2017

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Big Dog and Little Dog Going for a Walk* (Dav Pilkey)

A pair of dog friends loves to take walks—especially if it involves splashing and rolling in mud! Your youngster will laugh as he tags along on this messy journey. (Bilingual version also available, with each page in both English and Spanish.)



■ *A Rock Is Lively*

(Dianna Hutts Aston)

They come in all shapes and sizes, melt if they get hot enough, and sometimes arrive from outer space. What are they? Rocks!



Using poetic language, this nonfiction picture book introduces your child to colorful varieties.

■ *May I Have a Word?* (Caron Levis)

Once upon a refrigerator, the alphabet magnets set out to tell a story. But when C and K begin fighting about who stole whose sound and who is hogging all the good words, it looks like there will be no “happily ever after.” F is for *funny* in this tale about the importance of teamwork.

■ *Clothesline Clues to Jobs People Do*

(Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook)

Your child can use clothes on a clothesline and rhyming clues to match people with their careers, then turn each page to see a worker in action. This simple story brings all the characters together for a party at the end.



Reading at school, reading at home

“How do I help my child learn to read?” That’s a common question for many parents. Ask your youngster about the kinds of reading she does in school, and use what you discover to support her at home. Try these ideas.

In a group

Let your child play “reading group” with her stuffed animals or dolls. Suggest that she give each “student” a book and “teach” reading strategies she’s working on like breaking big words into smaller chunks or using pictures to figure out hard words.

With you

When your youngster brings home books from school, set aside time to snuggle up and listen to her read. You’ll get an idea of the reading level that’s right for her and see what topics she enjoys and is learning about. *Note:* If she has



an at-home reading log, have her fill it out, and sign it if required.

On my own

Your child likely has time in school each day to read all by herself. Her teacher may call it “DEAR” (“Drop everything and read”) or SSR (“Self-selected reading”). Try holding a daily “DEAR” time at home for at least 20 minutes. Each person picks any reading material (book, magazine, newspaper) and reads anywhere—on a couch, on the porch, or stretched out on the floor.♥

A writing nook

A cozy space can inspire your youngster to enjoy writing regularly. Consider these suggestions:

- Help your child find a quiet spot. He might use a chair tucked in a corner of the living room or a lap desk on his bed.
- Let your youngster pick out cool writing supplies at a dollar store like colored pencils, fancy paper, or gel pens. Then, he could arrange them in a box or basket to keep in his nook.
- Look for everyday ways to encourage writing. You might say, “Grandpa’s birthday is next week. Why don’t you make him a card?” Or invite your child to add a few items to your grocery list. Suggest that he write stories, poems, and plays, too!♥



Create a comic strip

With lots of pictures and just a few words, comic strips are easy and fun for beginning writers to make. Here's how.

Change a favorite. Suggest that your youngster write new words for a comic strip he likes. Help him cut one from the newspaper and glue it on a sheet of paper. Cover the words with masking tape. He can add his own words in the bubbles or on the paper around the strip. What will each character say or think in his version?



Start from scratch. Have your child divide a piece of paper into frames. Then, he could invent a character or use one from real life—maybe his comic will be about the funny adventures of his cat. Encourage him to draw a picture in each frame and add speech bubbles to tell the story. To help him along,

ask questions like “What happens first?” and “How does Elvis the Cat’s adventure end?” *Idea:* He might like to create a series of comic strips about his character.♥

Fun with Words

Words all around

Even before youngsters learn to read, they get excited when they recognize words on road signs, stores, and food packages. Encourage your child to collect words to make a book she can read all by herself. She'll begin to connect the letters she sees with the sounds they make.

Find words

Give your youngster a notebook.

When she spots a word she knows, she could write it or cut it out and glue it on a page. For instance, she might clip “Eggs” from an empty carton or the name of a favorite restaurant from a take-out bag.



Read your book

After your child has filled a few pages, let her read her book to you. She'll build confidence in her reading ability because she'll know every word!♥



Q&A Tell me a story

Q My daughter often asks me to tell her stories at bedtime, but it's not always easy to make them up on the spot. Any suggestions?

A Hearing stories develops your daughter's listening and language skills. You may find it easier to tell stories you're familiar with.

Children love stories about people they know—especially themselves and other family members. Flip through photos at bedtime, and have your youngster pick one that she likes. Her newborn picture could lead to a tale about the day she was born. Or a childhood snapshot of you may inspire a story about the games you played or what you learned at school when you were her age.

Another idea is to retell fairy tales or other children's stories that you know. If you're feeling creative, try changing the story as you go. For example, turn *The Three Little Pigs* into *The Three Little Bananas*.♥



Parent to Parent

“I love you” notes

My son Danny has always loved it when I tuck an “I love you”

play after school?” The notes made Danny feel special and gave him extra reading practice.

note into his backpack. When he was learning to read, I asked his teacher for a list of words he was working on. Then, I used those words in the notes.

Sometimes I'd write simple messages like “You are number one!” Other times, I wrote a question, such as “What game should we

Now secret notes are a tradition at our house. Danny's little sister Jamie is starting to read this year, and he writes notes to put in her backpack. And when I opened my suitcase on a business trip recently, I had a big smile when I discovered a note from Danny to me!♥



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Resources for Educators,
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October 2017

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.



Zoey discovers that her scientist mother has been helping

■ *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

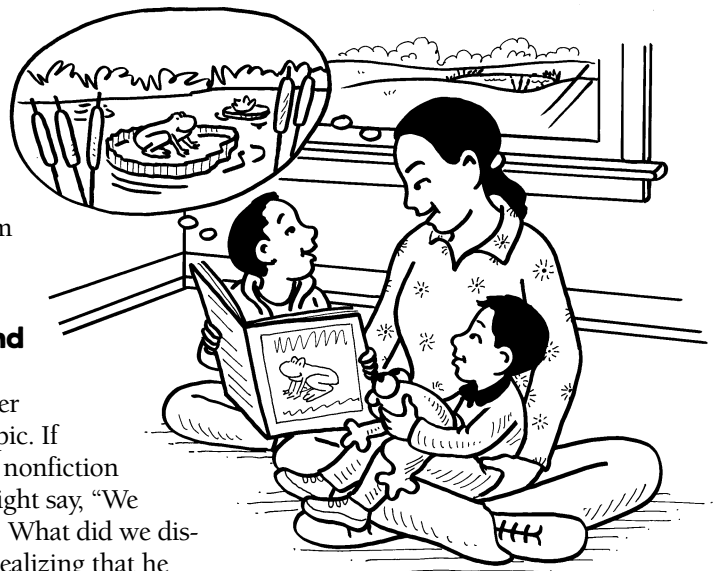
Before your child reads a book, take a few minutes to do a "sneak preview" together. Knowing what to expect will strengthen his comprehension and set him up for success. Try these strategies.

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").

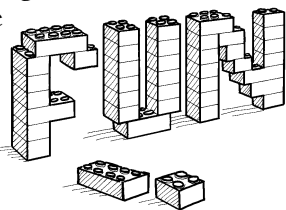
Reminders. Think of helpful signs to post around the house. Your youngster may want to write a reminder that says "Please feed me!" on the hamster cage. Or your family might work together on a sign that lists activities for the upcoming weekend. ("Go apple picking." "Jump in leaves.")♥

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.♥

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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!♥



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November 2017



Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors* (Drew Daywalt)

Rock, Paper, and Scissors are great warriors in their own kingdoms—with one problem. Their opponents aren't challenging enough! This humorous legend tells how they found each other and the game Rock, Paper, Scissors was born.

■ *Look at That Building! A First Book of Structures* (Scot Ritchie)

Tag along with five friends as they set out to build a doghouse for their pet. Blending fiction with nonfiction, this book includes ideas readers can use to build a miniature doghouse of their own.



■ *Andy Shane, Hero at Last*

(Jennifer Richard Jacobson)

Andy isn't sure he can win a bike-decorating contest against his friend Dolores. But as the children ride their bikes in the town parade, Andy has a chance to be a hero and save the day. Part of the Andy Shane series.



■ *National Geographic Readers: Storms* (Miriam Busch Goin)

What causes tornadoes, hurricanes, and other storms? This book about Mother Nature's fiercest weather has the answers. Simple explanations, photographs, and quick facts help readers understand the science behind wind, rain, lightning, and more. (Also available in Spanish.)



For reading out loud!

Reading aloud to your youngster builds listening skills, improves reading comprehension, and encourages her to love books. Try these three strategies for fitting in at least 20 minutes a day of read-aloud time.

Little by little

In a time crunch? That's okay. Even short bursts of reading throughout the day add up. Read a chapter before school—perhaps while your child is getting ready or during breakfast. Squeeze in a few jokes from a joke book or facts from a trivia book before dinner. Then, wrap up the day with a picture book or two at bedtime.



Two for one

Reading doesn't have to be a stand-alone activity. Add a read-aloud to other things you and your youngster are doing. Read a book about different kinds of transportation while riding the subway. Share the directions for a craft project while you work on it together. Weave in a story during bath time.



Family affair

Invite other family members to read to your child—that counts toward the 20 minutes per day, too! Your youngster can connect with them by phone or with a video app (Skype, Facetime). Before Grandma reads over the phone, you could both get the same book from the library. Or during a video chat, remind Uncle Dave to hold up the book and share the pictures with your child.♥

MY TALE

Dreaming up an autumn *rebus* story—a story where pictures replace some words—gives your child a creative way to practice writing.

First, help him choose a fall topic like raking leaves or watching squirrels gather nuts. As he writes, he can substitute a picture for at least one word in each sentence. *Examples:*

“I used a  to make a giant pile of .

“The  ran up the  to get an .

If he repeats a word that he has replaced, he could draw the same picture. When his story is complete, ask him to read it to you. What will his next rebus story be about?♥



A is for ...

Hunting for objects that start with a certain letter lets your youngster explore the alphabet and letter sounds. Here's how.

Collect. Have your youngster label a paper lunch bag with "Aa." Then, he can fill the bag with small objects, pictures cut from magazines, or index cards with words printed on them—all beginning with the letter A.



Share. Invite your child to show you what he gathered. As he names each item, talk about the various sounds the letter makes. For instance, how does a sound in *ape*? What about in *apple* or *art*?

Continue. Tomorrow he can label a bag "Bb" and hunt again. After 26 days, he'll have a complete collection of ABC bags!

Tip: Gently correct him if something doesn't belong. For example, if he collects an elephant on "U" day, sound out the word together. Can he name the correct letter for it now?♥



Story VIPs

It's all in the details!

Boost your child's reading comprehension by helping her pick out the story details that really matter!

Read a book together, and encourage her to identify the VIPs (Very Important Parts). If she's not sure, ask, "If this detail were missing, would the story be the same?" For instance, in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, the detail "She walked into the living room" is nice to know,

but it isn't necessary to the story. But "Goldilocks woke up and saw the three bears" is a VIP. Your child can write each VIP on a star cut from construction paper.

Afterward, let her arrange the stars in order from start to finish and use them to retell the story. As she goes, she could add stars for any important parts she missed or take away ones that aren't necessary for the tale.♥



Sound-alikes

This simple activity teaches your child the meanings of *homophones*—words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.

Materials: paper, pencil, index cards, crayons

Together, list all the homophones you can think of. *Examples:* *blew/blue, toad/towed, pair/pear, hare/hair.*

Now, have your youngster come up with a sentence that uses both words of a pair. For *blew/blue*, she might imagine "A soccer player *blew* a *blue* bubble." She can draw a picture on an index card to illustrate it. Then, help her write the sentence on the back of the card. Encourage her to make a card for each set you thought of.

Idea: Suggest that she use the cards to play a guessing game with friends. They could take turns picking a card and displaying the picture for the other players. Who can name the words that are homophones?♥



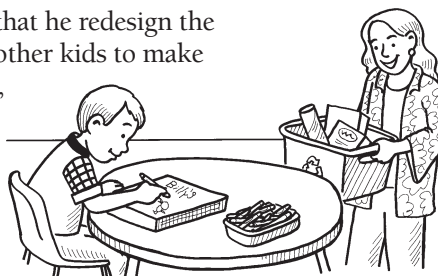
You'll love this cereal!

Recently, my son Billy said he wanted to rename his favorite cereal "Billy's Blueberry Crunchies." That gave me an idea. Why not let him redo the whole box?

I covered an empty cereal box with paper and suggested that he redesign the package to persuade other kids to make it their favorite cereal, too. First, he wrote "Billy's Blueberry Crunchies" on the front in big blue letters. Then, he drew a bluebird as

a mascot and added a slogan, "A berry good way to start your day!" He even printed an ingredient list on one side and wrote a recipe on the back—which were good ways to get in what his teacher calls "informational writing."

Billy had so much fun that we hunted through the recycling bin for other containers he could "make over." I never thought such a simple idea would encourage so much writing!♥



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