

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2015

Indian Valley Local Schools

Talia St. Clair, Title 1 Coordinator

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Fire! Fuego! Brave Bomberos*

(Susan Middleton Elya)

Follow the brave bomberos as they race their fire truck, put out a fire, and save a kitty! Learn how the firefighters use the hydrant and hose to battle the flames. This fast-paced rhyming story is told with English and Spanish words and contains a glossary in the back.



■ *The Dark* (Lemony Snicket)

A little boy named Laszlo is afraid of the dark, but the dark lives in the basement and outside at night. One

day, the dark visits Laszlo in his room, and they have a talk. Will Laszlo stop being afraid? Find out in this beautifully illustrated tale.



■ *The Barefoot Book of Ballet Stories*

(Jane Yolen and Heidi E. Y. Stemple)

Read the stories behind *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and other famous ballets. Perfect for the young dancer, this book also includes historical information about classical ballet and tells about performances of each tale.

■ *The Great Seal of the United States* (Norman Pearl)

Your child has probably seen the United States seal before—an eagle with a shield—but does he know what it means? Ben Franklin narrates the history of the seal and how the design came to be a symbol of America. Every aspect of the seal is explained with pictures and descriptions.



Play with sounds and syllables

What is a *poploli*? It's a mixed-up version of *lollipop*! Playing with words helps your youngster hear the sounds and syllables within them. Use these clever activities to build his *phonological awareness*—an important predictor of reading success.



Where in the word?

Let your child pick out a stuffed animal. Then, label one sheet of paper "Beginning," another "Middle," and a third one "End." Now, say a three-letter word (*cup*), choose one letter (*u*), and say its sound (*uh*). Does your youngster hear that sound in the beginning, middle, or end of *cup*? He can show you by hopping the stuffed animal to the right paper.

a made-up word that rhymes with your word. *Example*: "I am green and spicy, and I taste good with chips. I rhyme with *wuacawole*" (*guacamole*).

Scrambled syllables

Take turns secretly picking a word with at least two syllables (*scarecrow*) and saying it with the syllables in the wrong order (*crowscare*). Try to guess each other's word. *Tip*: It doesn't need to be a word your child can spell or read—it could even be *expialisuperfragilisticdocioucali* (*supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*).♥

Rhyming riddles

Ask your youngster to name a category like food or games. Think of a word that fits in the category, and make up a riddle for him to guess it—ending with

Writing: Decorate for inspiration

"What should my story be about?" Your child can use these suggestions for dreaming up story topics—and decorating her room.

● **Collect photos.** Encourage your youngster to gather interesting pictures, such as a photo of a stormy night or a camel in a desert. Together, string yarn along a wall and use clothespins to hang the photos from it. Then, she can pick one to write about.

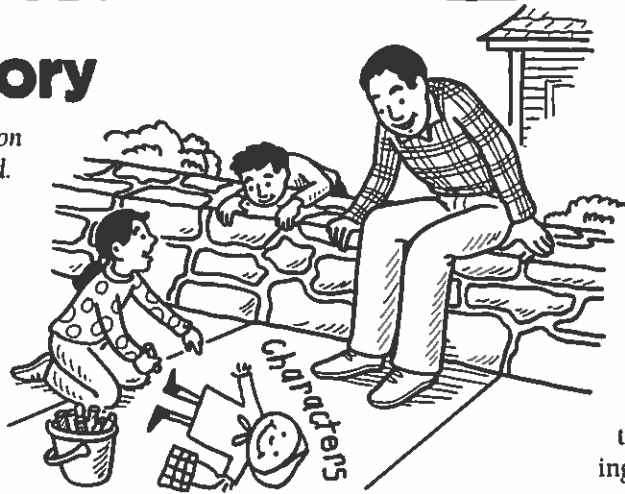


● **Make story sticks.** Help your child write possible story titles on craft sticks. *Examples*: "The Day the Sun Didn't Set," "The Lonely Polka-Dotted Zebra." She can decorate a jar, add sand, and insert the sticks. Let her put the jar on her dresser and choose a stick when she's ready to write.♥

Q&A Retell a story

Q This year, my daughter will be tested on how well she can retell books she has read. Why is this, and how can I help her do a good job?

A Retelling a story lets the teacher know how well your daughter understands what she read. During a test, she'll need to identify the characters and setting, and she'll have to describe major plot events in the right order.



Here's a fun idea: Go outside together, and help her write "Characters," "Setting," "Problem," and "Solution" in chalk on separate sidewalk squares or on paper plates scattered in the grass. She can draw a picture for each part, then jump to each square or plate as she retells the story.

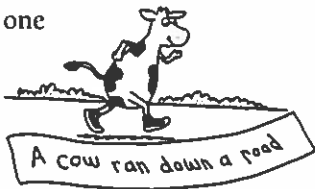
If your daughter doesn't seem to know what to say during retellings, talk to the teacher to make sure her reading-comprehension skills are on track.♥

Fun with Words Super sentence strips

Teachers use sentence strips to help students practice writing good sentences. Together, cut sheets of paper into strips at home, and try these ideas.

Shared sentence

On a strip, one person writes an opening word for a sentence ("I"). The next person reads that word and adds another ("like"). Keep going to fill the entire strip. When you get close to the end, the last person has to think of a way to end the sentence so it makes sense. ("I like to jump in leaves when I rake.")



Forbidden vowel

Your youngster can practice choosing words carefully as he writes a sentence. Pick a vowel, and work together to make up a sentence that does not include that letter. For example, if the vowel is e, he might use a or an instead of the, or road instead of street. ("A cow ran down a road.")♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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A listening treasure hunt

If you ask a little one to put on his coat and grab his backpack, he may get the backpack and forget the coat. That's because it's challenging for young children to follow multi-step directions.

This fun treasure hunt can boost your youngster's listening skills and increase the number of steps he can handle at once.

1. Hide a small "treasure," such as a colorful eraser, a spinning top, or a bouncy ball.
2. Give your child directions, one step at a time, to find the treasure. You might say, "Walk to the couch." When he gets there, say, "Look under the middle cushion."
3. After he spots it, hide a new treasure, and give two-step directions this time. ("Open the cabinet door, and look behind the DVDs.")
4. Once your youngster is comfortable with two-step instructions, try directions with three or four steps.♥



Parent to Parent

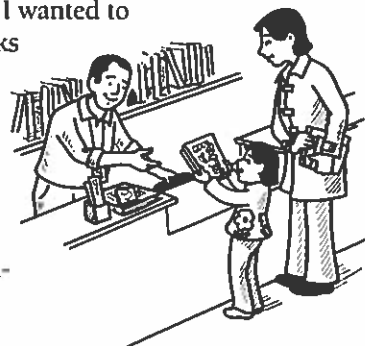
Get hooked on a series

I loved series books when I was little—I could hardly wait to find out what would happen in the next installment. Now that my daughter is reading, I wanted to help her find series books to fall in love with, too.

Our librarian was happy to help. She said kids feel comfortable reading books in a series because the characters become familiar to them. She recommended a new series by

Herman Parish about Amelia Bedelia when she was a little girl. She also suggested Owl Diaries by Rebecca Elliott, and Fly Guy by Tedd Arnold.

Maya started with Owl Diaries. By the time she finished the first book, Eva's Tree-top Festival, she felt like Eva the owl was her friend. Now, she wants to read on to see what Eva does next. And when she finishes that series, she has a whole list of new ones to try.♥



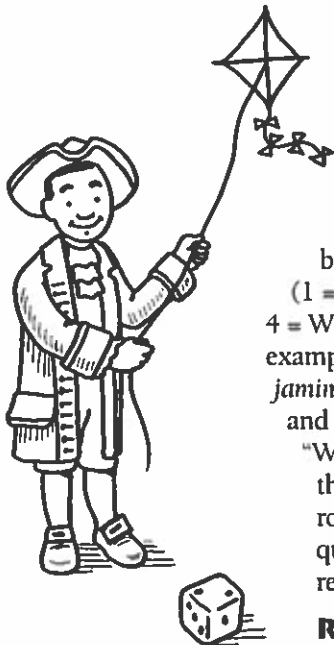


PUT THE STORY IN SEQUENCE

Strong reading comprehension skills can help your youngster put story events in a logical order. Have her practice by reading a book and then writing or drawing five events on separate index cards. For example, if she read *Caps for Sale* (Esphyr Slobodkina), her cards might include the peddler walking with the caps on his head, the peddler stopping to take a nap, and the peddler waking up to find that the monkeys had stolen his caps. Mix up the index cards, and have your child put them back in the right order.

USE QUESTIONS

Asking and answering questions while reading is a great way for your youngster to think carefully about the material. When you read a story together, stop at the end of each page or chapter, and have your child roll a die. Ask him a specific type of question based on the number he rolls. (1 = Who? 2 = What? 3 = Where? 4 = Why? 5 = When? 6 = How?) For example, if you read *The Story of Benjamin Franklin* (Patricia A. Pingry) and he rolls a 2, you might ask, "What did Franklin invent?" After the next page or chapter, you can roll the die and let him ask you a question. Take turns rolling and reading until you finish the book.



RETELL A STORY

Retelling a story can help your youngster decide which details matter most. Use stuffed animals to encourage him to practice retelling his favorite tales.

First, read a book together. Afterward, let him tell the story in his own words by making his animals act out the characters' roles. If you read *Tawny Scrawny Lion* (Kathryn Jackson), he could make a stuffed lion chase his other stuffed animals.

CAN YOU IMAGINE?

A good reader uses her imagination to picture characters and story events in her mind. Here are fun ways for your child to practice visualizing as she reads.

USE YOUR SENSES

Encourage your youngster to use all her senses with this activity. Read a storybook aloud, and ask her to describe what she sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels. For example, if you read *Fritz and the Beautiful Horses* (Jan Brett), she might describe how

she "sees" the horses' shiny coats, "hears" the "clomp clomp" of their hooves, and "feels" the softness of Fritz's mane.



IMAGINE WITH ADJECTIVES

Your child can use adjectives, or descriptive words, to help him visualize details. Together, find words in a story that describe people, places, or things. Say you're reading *The Very Best Pumpkin* (Mark Kimball Moulton)—he might spot "juicy," "crisp," and "plump." Have him choose one of the words to print at the top of a sheet of paper. He can fill the page with pictures cut from old magazines or catalogs that go with the word. For example, if he picks "juicy," he might include photos of strawberries and peaches.

DESIGN A COVER

Read a story to your youngster without showing her the cover. Then, have her pretend to be the illustrator and draw a cover that captures the main idea of the story. For example, if you read *The 100th Day of School* (Angela Shelf Medearis), she might draw a classroom with a calendar on the wall and write "100" on one of the squares. Then, show her the real cover and have her compare it with her creation.

Vocabulary and Word Games



What do words and toys have in common? They're both fun to play with! Wordplay builds children's vocabulary and helps them learn to read, write, and spell. See how with these fun activities.

Word bank

A homemade piggy bank is a fun place for your youngster to save words from his favorite books. Have him make the bank by decorating an empty tissue box. Then, let him cut four "coins" from gray or brown paper. Now it's time to collect words. Before you read aloud to him, ask him to choose a type of word (five-letter words, words that start with his favorite letter). As

you read, he can pick out words from the book that fit his criteria and write each one on a coin. Then, help him read each word aloud as he "feeds" it to his bank. He can cut out more coins and give the pig new words each time you read together. When his bank is full, let him dump it out—how many words can he read all by himself?

Letter escape

Can your youngster figure out which letter has escaped? This multiple-choice activity will help her become a better speller. Ask her to cover her eyes while you spell a word with Scrabble tiles. Leave one letter out and set it aside with two other letters. For example, you might spell *g_ing* and lay out *p*, *t*, and *o* as possible missing letters. When your child

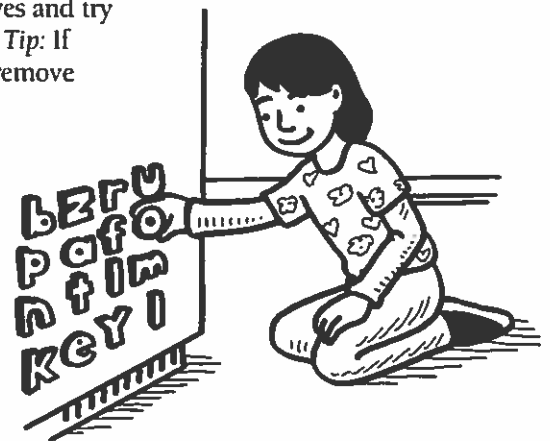
uncovers her eyes, it's her job to look at the word and choose the escaped letter from the options on the table. Help her sound out each choice. ("Gping?" "Gting?" "Going!")

Word switcheroo

Your youngster can play with word families to learn the sounds that letters make. A word family includes words that share the same ending sound (*hug*, *mug*, *rug*). Together, choose a word (*bit*), and write it down. Ask him to replace the first letter and say the new word he has made (*sit*). Take turns changing the first letter until neither of you can make another word. Then, choose a different word family to play with. A few to try include *-an*, *-ing*, *-ill*, and *-ake*.

Refrigerator word search

This hands-on word search can increase the number of words your youngster recognizes. Have her close her eyes while you use magnets to spell a three- or four-letter word (*key*, *ball*) on the refrigerator. The word can be vertical or horizontal. Surround it with random letters so that your word is hidden. Then, have your child open her eyes and try to find the word. *Tip:* If she's struggling, remove one letter at a time from the refrigerator—she may be able to spot the word with fewer letters around it. After she finds it, let her hide one for you.



continued

Alphabet actions

Try this silly way to pass time in a waiting room while boosting your child's knowledge of verbs, or action words. He can start by saying, "I _____ a worm," filling in the blank with a verb that begins with a (ate, attacked, answered).

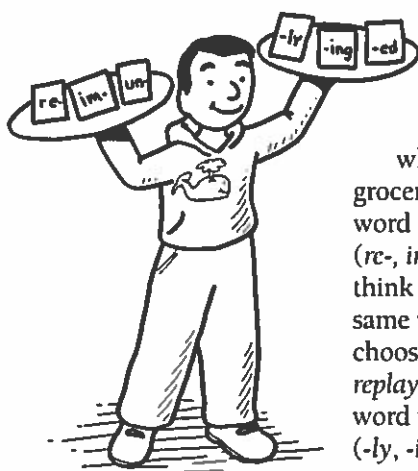
You repeat his sentence, but replace the verb with one that starts with b ("I battled a worm"). Keep working through the alphabet to see how many words you can come up with. If either of you is stumped, brainstorm a verb together.



coming up with funny things that household items might say. Start by having her choose an object and brainstorm a list of three words that are related to it. For a refrigerator, she might write *cold, food, and freezer*. Then, help her use one or more of the words to write dialogue for the fridge. ("Don't worry. I'll keep your food cold for you.") *Idea:* She can write the phrase in a word balloon on a sticky note and put it on the item.

Vowel pictures

A mnemonic is a device that can help your child remember something more easily. Here's one that she can use to learn vowel sounds. First, help her think of a word for each vowel (a, e, i, o, and u). Then, have her illustrate the word, making sure to include the actual letter somewhere in her drawing. She might draw a cat with a's in place of its ears and nose and an umbrella with a giant u in the curved handle. When she's sounding out a word while reading, she can remember her drawings. ("The letter u makes the uh sound, like in umbrella!")



Beginnings and endings

Your youngster can explore prefixes and suffixes while waiting in line at the grocery store or bank. Pick a word with a common prefix (re-, im-, un-), and ask him to think of words that begin the same way. For example, if you choose *rewind*, he might say *replay* and *redo*. Next, pick a word with a common suffix (-ly, -ing, -ed), and have him come up with three words

that end the same way. For *quickly*, he could say *quietly, carefully, and slowly*.

Talking objects

If your refrigerator could talk, what would it say? Your youngster can build her vocabulary and practice writing by

Made-up definitions

Your youngster can practice reading and writing definitions while building his vocabulary. Pick three words from the same category (baby animals). Write a simple definition for each word—but make one of the definitions false. *Examples:* "A fawn is a baby deer." "A calf is a baby horse." "A chick is a baby bird." Help your child read each sentence aloud, and ask him to figure out which one is fake (a calf is a cow, not a horse). Then, let him pick words from a new category (planets, colors) and make up three definitions for you. He can write them down or dictate them to you, and you point to the false one.

Syllable snakes

Here's a colorful way for your child to practice breaking words into syllables—a skill that can help her sound out long words. First, have her cut circles from several different colors of paper. (*Tip:* She can trace around a soup can to make circles.) Look in a magazine for a word with several syllables (*television*). Read the word to her, and then say it together slowly, clapping once for each syllable (te-le-vi-sion). Help her print the syllables on individual circles and glue them on paper to make a "snake." Encourage her to find more words and make other snakes.



Books Kids Love



Reading with your child is one of the most important things you can do to help her succeed in school. This collection of books is full of laughs, information, and tender moments. Find a comfortable chair, snuggle up, and enjoy them together.

Tacky the Penguin by Helen Lester

Tacky is an odd bird. He wears Hawaiian shirts, has trouble walking in a line, and sings songs like “How Many Toes Does a Fish Have?” However, as his companions Goodly, Angel, Neatly, and Perfect learn, when the penguin hunters come, Tacky’s differences make him a good bird to have around. (Available in Spanish.)

The Patchwork Quilt

by Valerie Flourney

Tanya’s grandmother starts making a quilt using old clothing, Halloween costumes, and snips of fabric from special outfits the family has outgrown.

When Grandma gets sick, Tanya asks her family to help finish the masterpiece. A touching story of family and traditions.



Our Earth by Anne Rockwell

From deserts, oceans, and rain forests to volcanoes, glaciers, and caves, this simple book introduces children to geography and geology. The illustrations will prompt youngsters to ask questions about the planet Earth.

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch

“I’ll love you forever/I’ll like you for always/As long as I’m living/My baby you’ll be.” A mother sings this song to her son—when he’s a baby, a toddler, and a teenager, and when he grows up and moves away from home. (Available in Spanish.)

Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa by Erica Silverman

This is the first book in a series about Kate and her horse, Cocoa. As the two work on a ranch together, their friendship grows. Kate fluffs up Cocoa’s straw and gives him carrots and water at bedtime. And Cocoa helps Kate count cattle and sings her a lullaby when she can’t sleep.

A Very Important Day by Maggie Rugg Herold

Families from Mexico, Russia, Vietnam, India, and other countries are busy preparing for an important day—becoming American citizens. In spite of a heavy snowfall that morning, everyone makes it to the courthouse and takes the oath of citizenship. Beautiful watercolors portray different cultures.

Puff, the Magic Dragon by Peter Yarrow and Lenny Lipton

Little Jackie Paper and Puff embark on a magical trip in the land of Honalee, sailing on a boat and meeting royalty and pirates along the way. Children and parents will love this book that’s based on the popular song by Peter (the book’s author), Paul, and Mary.

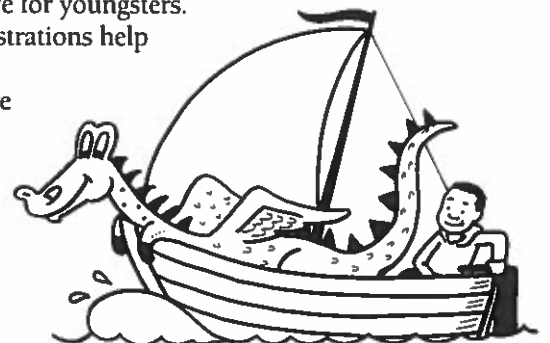
It’s Spring!/It’s Summer!/It’s Fall!/It’s Winter!

by Linda Glaser

Pussywillows, rainbows, colorful leaves, snow angels ... these four books in the Celebrate the Season series make the seasons come alive for youngsters.

Cut-paper illustrations help tell the stories.

Includes nature activities such as creating a seed mosaic and looking for four-leaf clovers.



Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells
 Nora, the middle child in a family of mice, is tired of waiting for her time with Mom and Dad. No matter how much noise she makes, she can't get their attention. But when the clatter stops, the rest of the family wonders what happened to Nora. (Available in Spanish.)

Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein
 These hilarious poems have delighted youngsters for years. Read about a little boy who uses a toilet plunger for a hat, and learn how to give an armadillo a bath. Black-and-white drawings add to the book's appeal.

Trout Are Made of Trees by April Pulley Sayre
 In this introduction to the food chain, a father and his two children explore a stream together. Beginning with a leaf falling into the water, simple words and collage-like illustrations follow the life cycle of a trout.



Tom by Tomie dePaola
 Tommy is named after his grandfather, Tom. The two read, sing, and make up stories together, and Tommy helps his granddad in his butcher shop. Your youngster will enjoy laughing at their antics.

Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks
 Monsters eat trees, cars, sharks, stop signs, and even rocket ships. But "Fum, foe, fie, fee, monsters don't eat broccoli." Could the trees they love to eat really be broccoli? A fun story with a lesson in nutrition.

Lost in the Woods by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick
 When a baby deer roams around alone, the other animals assume he's lost and take turns watching him until his mother comes back. The book is filled with striking photographs of a tree frog, a red-winged blackbird, and other animals. Children will enjoy the animal-hunt activity at the end.



Johnny Appleseed by Stephen Kellogg
 This book tells the story of Johnny Appleseed, combining facts from his real life with legends told about him. Life on the frontier is depicted through beautiful paintings of Native Americans, pioneers, and animals. A map helps children "see" his journey scattering apple seeds throughout the land.

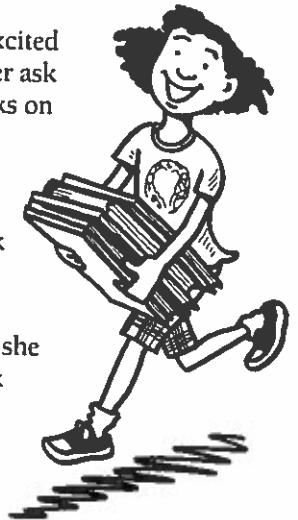
Morris Goes to School by B. Wiseman
 This I Can Read book will have your little one rolling with laughter when Morris the Moose starts first grade. Morris has a little trouble at first, but with the help of his teacher and classmates, he learns to read and count.

Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose by Leo and Diane Dillon
 The nursery rhymes in this collection all contain numbers, including the well-known "1, 2, Buckle My Shoe" and the less familiar "Gregory Griggs Has 27 Wigs." Your child can practice rhyming while he counts people, animals, wigs, and more.

"What should I read?"

Children who know how to select good books are on their way to becoming lifelong readers. Help your youngster learn how with these ideas:

- When picking books, suggest that she look at the cover and read the description on the back. This will give her an idea of what the book's about. Then, she can flip through the pages and look at the illustrations. Does she think she would enjoy it?
- Tap into her interests. If she's excited about rocks or car racing, have her ask the librarian for help finding books on those subjects.
- Together, think of books your youngster has enjoyed, and make a list of the authors. Help her look for more of their stories at the library or a used bookstore.
- Encourage her to discuss books she likes with her friends—and to ask them what books they like. She'll get suggestions for new books or might even trade favorites with her friends.



Reading Connection Beginning Edition

The Write Stuff



Why is it important to encourage children to write? Writing allows youngsters to explore their creativity and share events, ideas, and thoughts with others. Writing also develops reading skills—along with self-confidence.

You can bring out the writer in your child with these simple low- or no-cost activities that will make writing practice fun!

Time Travel Journal

Take off on a writing adventure with your young traveler.

Materials: paper, pencil

Ask your child to pretend she has been given a ticket to travel in time. Will she travel back to the pioneer days of the 1800s? Or forward to the year 3000? To use her ticket, she'll need to describe her adventures.

Have your youngster write a journal entry about her trip. She can describe the clothing she wore, what she ate, or an exciting event. *Example:* "March 15, 3000—Today I rode a spaceship to the moon. When I got there, hundreds of people were waiting to see me!"

Mouthwatering Menus

Your child can practice creative writing with this scrumptious family menu.

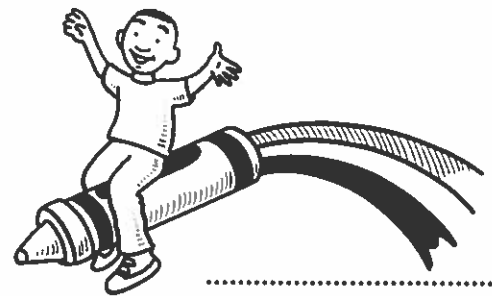
Materials: cookbooks, magazines, paper, pencil, crayons or markers

Help your youngster create a menu for your family's "restaurant." Start by looking through cookbooks and magazines for tasty



dishes. Have him choose foods your family might like for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Fold one or two pieces of paper in half. Let your child decorate the outside. On the inside, have him write tempting descriptions of the menu items. *Example:* "These golden pancakes are so fluffy, they might float up to the ceiling."



Rainbow Writing

Help your youngster make writing a colorful experience.

Materials: crayons, two sheets of paper, paper clips, ballpoint pen

Have your child use crayons to heavily color a blank sheet of paper. (*Hint:* Use several different colors.) Place the crayoned side of the paper on top of a blank sheet of paper. Use paper clips to hold the two sheets together.

Let your youngster write anything she'd like on the clean side of the crayon paper. *Ideas:* spelling words, the alphabet, a short story. Tell her to press firmly with a ballpoint pen. When she's finished, separate the sheets. The blank sheet will be covered with her writing—in rainbow colors!



It's Story Time

With this game, story writing is in the bag!

Materials: small plastic or paper bags, magazines, scissors, pencils, paper

Give each player a bag. Then, ask them to cut five pictures of people, places, and things from magazines.

Have each person write a short story using as many of the pictures as possible. *Example:* "The COW ran across the FIELD. The FARMER tried to stop the cow, but his TRACTOR got stuck in the mud!" Suggest they make up different styles of stories—funny, scary, or adventurous. *Hint:* Younger children can tell their stories instead of writing them.

Give one point for every picture used. The player who uses the most pictures to tell a story wins. Then, trade bags, and play another round.

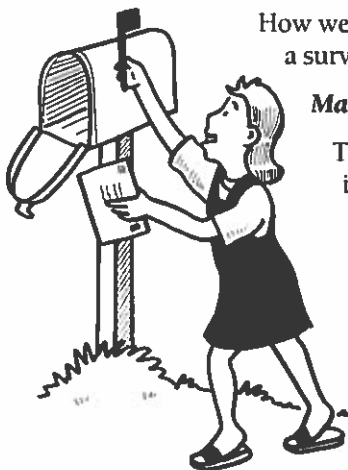
Letters, Letters—Everywhere!

Here are three letter-writing activities for your child to try.

Materials: paper, pencil, envelopes, stamps

1. Does your youngster ever ask you questions, such as how the mail is delivered or how bagels are made? Suggest that she write a letter to the post office or bakery and ask for a tour.

2. Help your child write to a favorite author, sports figure, community leader, or teacher. In the letter, he can explain how the person has influenced him. And it gives him a chance to say thanks to someone special.

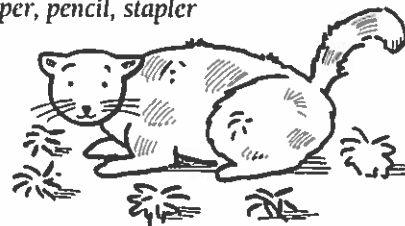


3. Have your youngster send a question to a friend or relative. *Example:* "How will you spend your summer vacation?" At the bottom of the note, add the names and addresses of several other friends. Then, add your child's address to the end of the list. Ask the recipient to write his answer on the note and send it to the next person on the list.

What Should I Do?

Almost everyone likes to give advice. With this activity, your youngster can create her own advice column.

Materials: paper, pencil, stapler



Think of several problems for your child to solve. Have each one end with the question, "What should I do?" *Example:* "My cat is shedding. What should I do?" Ask your youngster to write down the answers on sheets of paper. Encourage funny responses, such as "You could gather the fur and make a pillow!"

Collect the papers, and staple them together into a book. Then, when you need a laugh, read a few of the questions aloud together.

Variation: Younger children can answer the questions aloud, and you can write down their answers.

Super Survey

How well does your child know her family? She can take a survey to find out!

Materials: paper, pencil

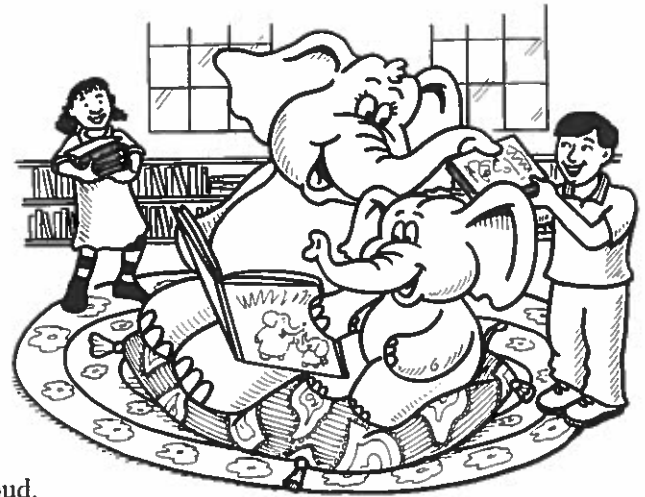
Together, make a list of questions. *Examples:* "What is your favorite food?" "Which animal is the perfect pet?" Help a young child make a list of yes-or-no questions, such as "Do you like french fries?"

Help her set up a "survey booth" at the kitchen table. Invite each family member to the booth to answer the survey. Your youngster can write their answers under each question. After everyone has answered, let them guess each person's likes and dislikes—the results might surprise them!

Read Aloud!

It's a gift every parent can give: reading aloud to a child before he can read on his own. And once a youngster can read alone, continuing to read aloud can build his vocabulary and keep him excited about books.

Here are ideas for helping your child get the most from story time. We've also included titles that are especially good for reading out loud.



Three parts of reading aloud

From choosing a book to talking about what you've read, you can fit learning and fun into every minute of story time.

1. Before. Let your youngster pick a story, even if she always reaches for the same one. Familiar stories are comforting, and she'll recognize more words each time she hears a story. To introduce her to new titles, you can choose the next story.



Read the title and author before you open a book. Look at the cover picture, and predict what the story might be about. ("This is *Corduroy*, by Don Freeman. Look—that bear is missing a button. I wonder what happened to it.")

2. During. Allow your child to set the tone. She may want to point out rhyming words, ask questions, tell you something the story reminds her of, or turn

back to an earlier page to look at a picture again. This lets her participate in reading aloud.

You can draw her attention to pictures of objects by pointing out things mentioned in the story: "See—he thinks that's his button on the bed." Talking about a book builds comprehension and makes reading aloud more fun. *Tip:* Relax while you're reading. Laugh and let your child see how much you enjoy books.

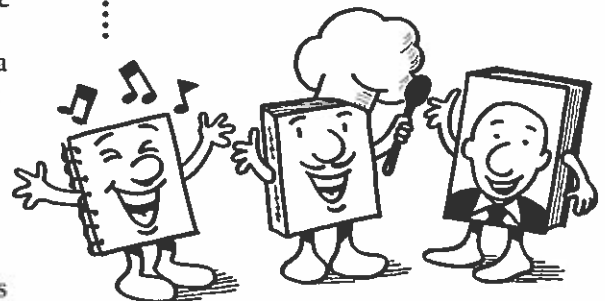
3. After. Have your youngster show you her favorite page and explain why she likes it. Compare the book with another story you have read to help her make connections between books. ("*Corduroy* reminds me of *Home for a Bunny* because they both have a character that needs a home.") Ask your child questions about the characters' feelings so she can learn to read between the lines. ("How do you think *Corduroy* felt when the girl came back?")

You might also help her start a read-aloud journal. Your youngster can draw a picture of her favorite part, write words describing how it made her feel, or write sentences telling the plot. She'll pay closer attention as you read when she knows she'll be drawing and writing in her journal.

Books and more

Use read-aloud time to introduce your child to a wide variety of book types. For example, he can learn about a person, a place, or an animal when you read biographies or nonfiction books. Or read a choose-your-own-adventure story and take turns picking paths for the characters to follow.

Think outside the book, too. Ask your child to read a recipe as you cook or to read directions for playing a board game or putting a toy together. Poems, song lyrics, and plays are fun to read out loud and are great for showing expression. You can also read stories that your youngster has written!



continued

Read everywhere

Experts recommend that you read to your youngster for at least 20 minutes each day. Many parents do this at bedtime, but you can also surprise your child with books at unexpected times and places.

For example, pack books and a picnic lunch, and head to a park or out to the backyard. On a hike, take a break to read a chapter while sitting under a tree together. Carry along a magazine to the swimming pool and read articles or jokes aloud. If you're going out to eat, tuck a book into your bag and pull it out while you wait for your food. Reading aloud is also a good way to pass time on an airplane, a bus, or a train.

Sharing read-alouds

Build a bridge to independent reading by asking your youngster to help you read. You might have her read the words along with you, or you can take turns reading every other page. Try passing a story around the table and having each family member read one page.

It's also fun to read with a friend. Suggest that your child invite a friend to bring a book over. They can read aloud



to each other. Or they might arrange to meet at the library, where they can select books to share.

Guest readers

Hearing other adults read aloud exposes your child to various reading styles and many new books. Attend story hours at libraries and bookstores. Leave books for babysitters and ask them to read to your youngster. See if relatives will call your child for long-distance read-alouds.

You can be a guest reader, too. Ask your youngster's teacher if you can read to the whole class, a small group, or individual children. In addition to helping out the teacher, you'll help your youngster make the connection between reading at school and reading at home.

Recorded books

Any time is story time with a book on tape, a CD, or an MP3 player. By listening to a recording and following along in a book, your youngster will learn to read new words and practice reading at a good pace.

You can borrow audiobooks from the library or find low-cost options in book club catalogs sent home from school. Or download audiobooks from an online bookstore.

Another great option is to record yourself reading your child's favorite books—she will love hearing your voice! Use a tape recorder, or put a recordable CD in your computer and read a story aloud into the microphone. Label the recordings, and store them with your youngster's book collection.



Book Picks

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

If cows could communicate, what would they ask for? The ones in Doreen Cronin's story can type, and



they leave Farmer Brown a note requesting electric blankets. When he doesn't bring any, they go on strike! (Available in Spanish.)

Koala Lou Everyone loves adorable Koala Lou, especially her mother. But when her siblings are born, she's no longer the center of attention. Of course, the little koala soon discovers she's loved, no matter what. A sweet story by Mem Fox.

A Seed Is Sleepy This nonfiction book explains how seeds turn into plants. Dianna Hutts Aston uses science vocabulary in simple rhymes that encourage children to listen. The illustrations identify seeds, and charts show the steps they go through to become plants.

Honey, I Love Eloise Greenfield's poems are about things the little girl narrator loves, like riding down a

country road with her family or jumping into a swimming pool. A lively look at family life.

Humphrey the Lost Whale This true story by Wendy Tokuda and Richard Hall tells of a humpback whale that accidentally ended up in the Sacramento River. Humphrey was lost for nearly a month before he was rescued and led back to the Pacific Ocean.

The Teddy Bears' Picnic In Jimmy Kennedy's picture-book version of this classic song, teddy bears plan a special picnic in the woods. There are games, balloons—and honey. The story's rhythm and repeated lines make it a nice read-aloud.