

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2010

Literacy Support Team

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *I Want a Hug*

Elvis is a cute little hedgehog who wants someone to hug him. But every animal he asks says no because Elvis is too prickly. Find out what happens when he meets a crocodile who wants a kiss. A sweet story from John Rowe.



■ *My Mama Had a Dancing Heart*

Throughout the year, mother and daughter celebrated each new season by dancing together. They danced in the rain, the sea, the leaves, and even the snow. In this book by Libba Moore Gray, a ballerina's memories of her mother inspire her as she dances.



■ *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday*

Your youngster will see how fast a dollar can disappear in this story by Judith Viorst. Alexander is excited about all that he can buy with the dollar his grandparents gave him—if only he can keep from wasting it. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Trucks: Whizz! Zoom! Rumble!*

Children who love vehicles will enjoy the many kinds of trucks in Patricia Hubbell's nonfiction book. Unusual drivers make this story even more interesting. A snowman drives an ice cream truck, an elephant drives a truck full of peanuts, and a Dalmatian drives a fire truck.



The reading-writing connection

Which comes first—learning to read or learning to write? For most youngsters, they come together!

Many of the skills your child uses for reading, like recognizing and sounding out words, are also used for writing. That means you can use reading activities to help him become a better writer, and vice versa. Here are a few ideas you might try.



Write and read

Ask your youngster to read aloud something that he has written. It can be a story, a thank-you note for a gift, or even words that he added to one of his drawings. Since he wrote it, he'll probably be able to read it with little effort—and that will build his confidence to read more.

is finished, let him read it to you. *Tip:* Remind him not to give away the ending!

Write, ask, and read

Have your youngster write one sentence ("I love stuffed animals") on a piece of paper. Read his sentence and ask him a question ("Which stuffed animal is your favorite?"). Then, he adds a sentence that answers your question ("My blue teddy bear is my favorite"). Once you have at least five sentences, trade roles so that you're writing and he's reading and asking questions. ♥

Read and review

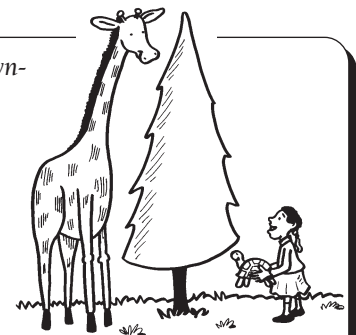
Suggest that your child read a book and write a review. He can name the characters, describe the setting, tell something that happened, and say what he liked or didn't like. When his review

Synonyms and antonyms

These activities will teach your youngster about *synonyms* (words with the same meaning) and *antonyms* (words with opposite meanings):

● Write four words on separate index cards. Three should be synonyms (tall, high, towering), and one an antonym (short). Place the cards faceup on the table and ask your child to pick up the word that's the opposite and doesn't belong. Have her read the words to you.

● Have Opposite Day, and suggest that everyone talk in opposites. For instance, your child might say, "Z is the *first* letter of the alphabet" or "I *hated* the pizza at lunch." She'll laugh at her own jokes—and learn more about antonyms. ♥



Writing lists

Making a list is a fun way for your youngster to practice forming letters and writing words. She will also see how writing is used for practical purposes with these suggestions:

1. Have your child think about different kinds of weather (sunny, cloudy, rainy, windy) and write the words in a list to hang by your calendar. Each day, she can check the weather and copy the correct word onto that day's calendar square.
2. Make a fun to-do list. Ask everyone to think of activities that your family enjoys (fishing, watching movies). Let your



child write the ideas down. When you're looking for something to do, consult her list!

3. List favorite songs. Your youngster might include ones she hears on the radio or childhood favorites such as "The Wheels on the Bus." Carry the list in the car, and take turns picking a song to sing together.

4. Keep track of exercise. When a family member does something active (walks the dog, shovels snow), have your youngster write it down. Let her read the list after a week. Then, see if your family can make it longer next week. ♥

Fun with Words **Dig for words**

Improve your child's spelling and vocabulary skills with this version of a sandbox.

Get a large plastic tub, and fill it with dry beans or rice. Then, write words your child is learning on slips of paper and bury them in the tub. You might include words from his spelling and vocabulary lists or write down words that appear frequently in books (and, the, because).

Add fun tools like scoops, shovels, and cups, and have him dig for words. When he pulls out a slip, he can say the letters aloud and read the word. You can also dig up words, call them out to your child, and have him spell them.



Tip: Add new words to the box on a regular basis to increase his vocabulary. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent

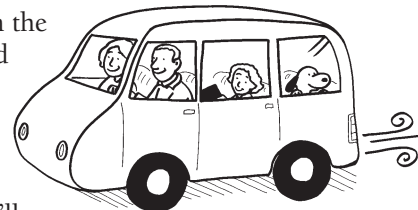
Reading on the go

We spend a lot of time in the car during winter vacation. This year I wanted to think of ways that my daughter Zoe could keep reading while school is out.

First, we plan to keep a box of books in the car. Zoe has already started putting stories from her bookcase in the box, and we'll add library books, too. That way, she can read aloud to her little brother and to us.

Since Zoe loves to listen to books, we're going to check out a few audiobooks from the library. She enjoys reading along with the CD, and sometimes we turn the volume down long enough for her to read one page. When we turn it back up, she likes to see if she's in the same place as the recording.

Zoe is excited about reading in the car—it will help pass the time, and she'll go back to school with new books to talk about. ♥



Q&A

How to pick books

Q My son gets to pick a classroom book to bring home each night. Most of his choices seem too easy. How can I help him read books on his level?

A Many teachers have children take books home to get them in the habit of reading on a regular basis. It's okay if your son sometimes chooses easy books. He'll enjoy reading them, which will encourage him to read even more.

On the other hand, stories with new words and more complicated plots can stretch

your child's reading skills. You might talk to the teacher about how your son can occasionally select tougher books. Perhaps there are numbers or colored

dots on the covers to indicate the level. Encourage your youngster to challenge himself. ("Your teacher and I think you're ready to try some red-dot books!")

By bringing home a mix of lower- and higher-level books, your child will enjoy reading and feel proud that he's becoming a stronger reader. ♥

