Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

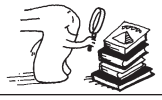
Beginning Edition

January 2010

Literacy Support Team

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

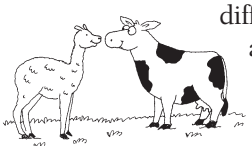


■ ***Ish***

Ramon crumples up his artwork when his brother makes fun of it. Later he discovers that his sister has rescued his pictures and hung them in her room. She loves his "vase-ish" vase—and that's what art is all about! A story about creativity by Peter Reynolds.

■ ***Is Your Mama a Llama?***

Lloyd the llama wants to know which other animals have mother llamas. He asks a cow, a bat, and several others: "Is your mama a llama?" Deborah Guarino's rhyming book features a different mother and baby animal on each page. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ ***Have You Filled a Bucket Today?***

"All day long, everyone in the whole wide world walks around carrying an invisible bucket." So begins Carol McCloud's book about the rewards of kindness. Youngsters will find suggestions for filling others' buckets with happiness, from thanking a teacher to saying "I love you" to a parent.

■ ***Alice the Fairy***

When a little girl puts on her fairy costume, everyday activities become magical. She sprinkles fairy dust (sugar) on oatmeal and flicks a light switch to make herself disappear. She even turns her dad into a horse so she can have a horsey ride. A cute tale by David Shannon.

Learning three ways

How does your youngster learn best? By seeing, hearing, or touching? Use these tips to help discover your child's "learning style," and try activities that are especially suited to her.

Visual. If she notices tiny details in pictures and remembers faces more easily than names, she may be a visual learner. Show her a book of hidden pictures, such as *I Spy School Days* by Jean Marzollo. Help your child read the riddles that tell her what to search for. Can she spot the objects and write them down? She'll build vocabulary as she learns the names of items like a pulley or an abacus.

Auditory. If your youngster has a knack for memorizing song lyrics and following spoken instructions, she might be an auditory learner. Have her write down words to songs as you sing them ("Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Happy Birthday to You"). Help her spell tough words. When she finishes, sing the song together while she points to the words.

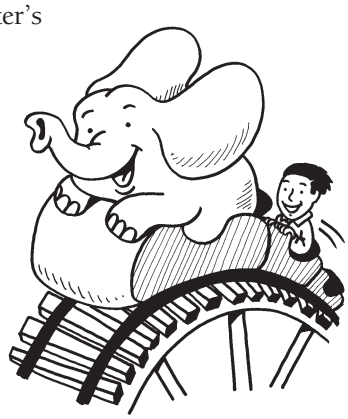
Hands-on. Perhaps your child enjoys moving around while she works or is good at making things with clay. These are clues that she is a hands-on, or *kinesthetic,* learner. Give her things she can touch, such as alphabet tiles, letter dice, or magnetic letters, and have her make words from her weekly spelling list. Then, she can read them to you.♥

Family storytelling games

Anyone can be a storyteller! Spark your youngster's imagination and creativity with these games:

■ Cut a picture from a newspaper or magazine. Make up the first line of a story about it, and pass the picture on to the next person. Each family member adds a line to the story. Keep passing the photo around until your story ends.

■ Together, think of six characters (purple elephant, five-year-old boy) and six places (amusement park, farm). Write each one on an index card. Put the character cards facedown in one pile and the place cards in another. Players draw one from each stack and make up a story.♥



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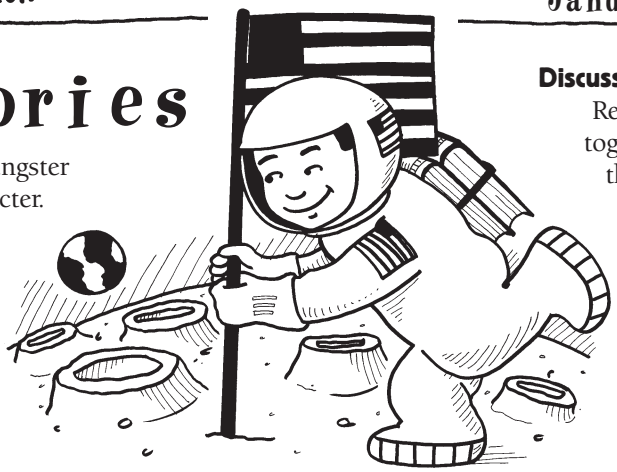
Real-life stories



Books about famous people can teach your youngster about history and inspire him to show good character. Try these ideas for reading and talking about biographies.

Learn history

Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? Your child can find out in *Thomas Jefferson: A Picture Book Biography* by James Cross Giblin. Or he can learn about Neil Armstrong's moon landing in *One Giant Leap* by Robert Burleigh.

After reading, have him pretend he's the famous person described, and "interview" him. *Example:* "What did you do on the moon?" ("I collected rocks and planted an American flag.") He'll see how much he learned from the book.

Discuss character traits

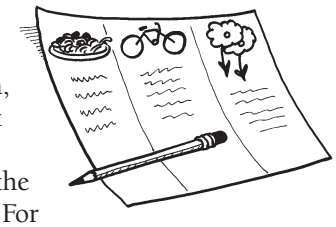
Read a biography together and talk about the person's good qualities. For instance, Martin Luther King Jr. showed bravery as a civil rights leader (*The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Johnny Ray Moore). And Gertrude Ederle never gave up on her goal to swim the English Channel (*America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle* by David Adler).

Ask your youngster to consider his own character traits. What could he be famous for one day? ("I like to help people, so I might discover a cure for a disease.")♥

Fun with Words: Tongue twister time

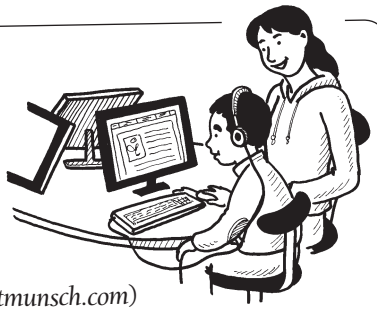
Have your child make up a tongue twister. She'll learn about beginning sounds and practice speaking more clearly.

Explain that a tongue twister has lots of words beginning with the same letter—so your tongue gets "all twisted up" when you try to say them fast! Ask your youngster to think of something to write a tongue twister about (pasta, a bicycle, or flowers). Have her write each word at the top of her paper. Underneath, help her list words that begin with the same letter. For pasta, she might write *papa, package, pepper,* and *pot*.



Finally, she can use her list to make up a tongue twister. She might come up with "Papa put a package of pepper pasta in the pot." Take turns saying her tongue twisters as fast as you can—as many times as possible!♥

Online reading fun



Cuddling up with a book is one way to read together. Using a computer is another. Let your youngster hear favorite authors read aloud, and follow up with fun projects:

- At the library, use a computer to hear Robert Munsch reading *The Paper Bag Princess* (*www.robertmunsch.com*) or Mem Fox reading *Koala Lou* (*www.memfox.net*). Get the books off the shelves, and read them together.
- Find book-related activities on author Web sites. You can make green eggs and ham at home while your youngster reads the recipe from *www.seussville.com*. At *www.janbrett.com*, he can print activities based on Jan Brett stories and play a *Gingerbread Baby* board game or make character masks from *The Hat*.

Note: Look for more author Web sites at *http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/humanities/literature/authors/children_s*. Always supervise your child when he uses the Internet.♥

Q&A: Write to a pen pal

Q *I loved having a pen pal when I was little. How can I help my daughter find one?*

A Having a pen pal is a fun way to practice writing letters. First, help your youngster find someone to exchange letters with. Maybe you know somebody who lives out of town and has a child her age. Or you could ask neighbors, friends, or coworkers if they have nieces or nephews who might be interested.

Then, help her write the first letter. She can use brightly colored pens or special paper. Encourage her to mention what she is learning in school or activities she enjoys, like dancing or soccer. She can also ask questions, such as "What's your favorite color?" or "Do you have a pet?"

Tip: Make it a treat to mail the letters by taking your child to the mailbox or post office and letting her drop them in the slot.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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