

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2010

Literacy Support Team

Book Picks

■ *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*

In Jacqueline

Kelly's book, set in Texas in 1899, Calpurnia is the only girl in a family of seven children. Her mother expects her to learn how to cook and sew. But Calpurnia would rather explore nature with her grandfather and be a scientist someday. Will she be able to follow her dream?



■ *Cosmic*



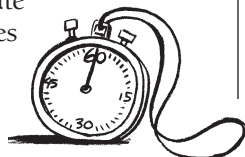
When 12-year-old Liam uses his height to pretend to be an adult on a space trip, he thinks he's in for a great time. But now the rocket is off course, and everyone expects Liam to save the day. A space adventure by Frank Cottrell Boyce. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Umbrella Summer*

Since Annie's older brother died suddenly, she has stopped taking chances—no more bike races and no more hotdogs. Can a new neighbor help her understand that being too careful can keep her from truly living? A book about loss, love, and moving on by Lisa Graff.

■ *The 60-Second Encyclopedia*

Did you know that a rattlesnake can shake its tail 6,000 times in a minute? Michael J. Rosen's book is jam-packed with hundreds of facts about things that can happen in 60 seconds. Also includes one-minute games and activities to try at home.



Reading all summer

Children who read for fun improve reading skills, build bigger vocabularies, and become better writers. Here are tips for making reading an everyday part of your youngster's summer break.

Keep reading materials available

Leave a pile of magazines on the coffee table, keep graphic novels on the nightstand, put the newspaper on the kitchen table, and stash books in the car. Make reading convenient, and your child will be more likely to read for pleasure.

Try a program

Help your youngster check around town for summer reading programs. She can find them at libraries, bookstores, local colleges, or parks and recreation departments. Many programs sponsor reading contests or offer book clubs that your child can join for free. Help her stick with the program by challenging her to set a goal (read a certain number of pages per week or finish a certain number of books per month).

Tie books to activities

Summer outings can be a springboard for reading. After going to a fair, concert,



or carnival, you can visit the library to find related books. A trip to a state fair might encourage your child to check out books about raising rabbits. Watching a fireworks display might lead her to read about the science of colors.

Make it a family affair

Together, decide on a time for your family to read each week, and mark it on your calendar. For example, you might read sections of the newspaper on Sunday mornings or your favorite magazines on Wednesday nights. 📖

Finding books

Is your child looking for a steady supply of great books to read? Try these ideas:

- Suggest that he swap favorite books with a friend. When he reads a book he likes, he can lend it to his friend. Then, his friend can do the same thing.
- Ask your youngster to list two or three books he loves. He can show the list to the librarian and ask her to help him choose similar books.
- Give your child books you loved as a child. You might even reread them so you can discuss them together.

Tip: Remind your youngster that it's okay to set aside a book that doesn't interest him after a few chapters and pick another one to read. 📖



Summer souvenirs

Your child can make a memory book to store summer memories in—and keep his writing skills sharp all summer. Start with a three-ring binder, and consider these suggestions.

Lists. Have your youngster create a separate page for each of his summer activities (camping, baseball, fishing). He can write brief diary entries with the dates and a few sentences describing what happened. *Example:* “June 25th. Camped in the backyard with Dad. I caught 50 fireflies! It was awesome!”



Memorabilia. Let him paste ticket stubs, maps, and brochures from special events into his memory book. He can write captions for each one. (“These tickets are from my first rodeo. We watched the cowboys rope calves. They were so fast!”)

Objects. Have your child fill zipper bags with treasures he finds during the summer, such as seashells, flowers, or pebbles. Suggest that he include an index card describing the items. For instance, he might write, “These are seashells I found at Myrtle Beach while walking with Grandma.” Have him tape the bags to pages in the binder. 📌

Fun with Words

Menu games

Restaurant and take-out menus are chock full of opportunities for your children to practice reading skills. Here are two ideas:

- Send your youngsters on word hunts. Who can find the longest word? The word with the most syllables? You might ask them to find a synonym (a word with the same meaning) for “delicious” (“mouth-watering”). Or see if they can find an antonym (an opposite) for “chilled” (“steaming”).



- Choose a food or an ingredient (zucchini, alfredo sauce, garlic), and have your children find a menu item that contains it. If the menu has photographs, point to a picture of a dish they don’t know, like “chicken Parmesan,” and cover up the name. Let them study the picture and then read through the menu descriptions to find one that matches. 📌

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Other Picks

WEB SITES

■ Read.gov

Children can read classic books, find books based on a topic or theme, and discover more at this site designed to encourage reading. Your youngsters will love hearing authors talk about their writing on the Author Webcasts page. www.read.gov

■ My Wonderful World

This National Geographic Education Foundation site encourages visitors to explore the world. Start with a virtual tour of the continents. After your trip, take quizzes, play games, work cross-word puzzles, and learn foreign languages. www.mywonderfulworld.org



MAGAZINES

■ Storyworks

Read-aloud plays, nonfiction articles, poetry, and fiction fill the pages of *Storyworks*. Readers can also read and write book reviews, submit original writing, and learn new vocabulary words. 800-724-6527, <http://storyworks.scholastic.com>



■ Jack and Jill

Each issue of this magazine contains stories, activities, recipes, and jokes. Regular features like Health Heroes and Jack and Jill’s Deli provide kids with health and fitness tips. 800-829-5579, www.uskidsmags.com/magazines/jackandjill/index.shtml

Writing thank-you notes

The end of the year is the perfect time for your child to show appreciation to coaches and teachers. Help her write a thank-you note with these three steps:

1. She can begin with an explanation of why she’s writing: “Dear Coach Redding, I want to thank you for all the help you gave me this season.”

2. Next, have her write two or more sentences telling why she is

grateful. *Example:* “You taught me that I can learn from my mistakes instead of giving up.”

3. Finally, suggest that she sum up her thanks and wish the person a good summer: “Again, thank you for everything. I hope you have a nice summer.” Have her close with “Gratefully” or “Sincerely,” followed by her signature.

Tip: She can deliver her notes by hand or mail them. 📌

