

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2015

Title I / Learning Assistance Programs

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Blue-Ribbon Dad

(Beth Raisner Glass)

A little squirrel loves his dad so much that he makes him an award. After all, his dad packs his favorite lunch, taught him to tie his shoes, and reads with him. The son can hardly wait for his dad to get home from work and receive his ribbon.



■ Exclamation Mark!

(Amy Krouse Rosenthal)



An exclamation point feels self-conscious because he stands out everywhere he appears. Eventually, he discovers his (important!) purpose. Your child will enjoy this fun grammar

lesson that's also about celebrating differences.

■ The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes

(Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein)

No one's perfect, right? In this story, nine-year-old Beatrice Bottomwell is always super careful to get the right answers and to never lose at anything. What will happen when she makes her first mistake? A story about overcoming perfectionism.

■ Marisol McDonald and the Clash Bash/Marisol McDonald y la fiesta sin igual

(Monica Brown)

From pirates to princesses, Marisol manages to combine all of her interests for an awesome, mismatched party in this bilingual picture book. And thanks to a computer, she gets a surprise "visit" from her grandmother in Peru.



Comprehension checkup

Good readers know when things make sense, and they know when they're confused. To boost your child's reading comprehension, encourage him to ask himself questions like these as he reads or listens to stories.

"Did I read that right?"

Get your youngster thinking about whether the words he reads make sense. Read aloud, and tell him you're going to change a word to make it funny. *Example:* "Clouds gathered, and *reindeer* fell from the sky" (instead of *rain*). Ask, "Did that make sense?" After he shakes his head "no," he can suggest a better word. Then, show him the actual word.

"Do I understand what I just read?"

Your child may know every word and still not comprehend the story. As he reads (or listens), stop occasionally so he can describe the action. If he's reading a picture book, he might pause after every few pages to say what's happening. For a



chapter book, he could summarize after each chapter.

"How can I figure this out?"

What can your youngster do when he's stuck on a word? Suggest the clapping strategy: Read the sentence out loud, but clap instead of saying the hard word. By the end of the sentence, the word might pop into his head. Or if he's confused about the plot, rereading the last few paragraphs or pages can help—if it doesn't, he might ask you or his teacher for clues.♥

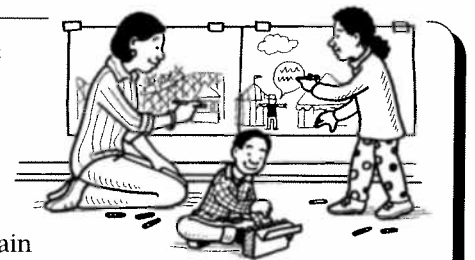
Create a family mural

Use this family mural project to increase the number of words your youngster can write—and read.

First, cut paper grocery bags into flat panels, and hang them side by side on a hallway wall (blank sides out). Next, agree on a theme. Will your mural be a colorful rain forest or maybe an amusement park?

Your child could use crayons to draw a roller coaster, while you color a Ferris wheel. Encourage her to add words or sentences ("Cotton candy" for a new writer or "Get your cotton candy right here!" for a more experienced one).

Tip: Leave the mural up so your youngster can practice reading as she passes it.♥



Reading and writing field trips

When you and your youngster go on outings, take reading and writing along! She'll make connections between books and real life, and she'll find interesting topics to write about. Try these steps.

1. Visit a setting. After reading a story set in the mountains, hike a mountain trail at a national or state park. If your child reads a book on the history of railroads, go to a railroad museum or a train station. Or read a story about cupcakes, and ask a local bakery for a behind-the-scenes tour.



2. Talk about it. How is the real-life setting similar to or different from the place in the book? On your hike, your youngster might see tree-covered peaks while the book had snowcapped mountaintops.

3. Write about it. Have your child carry a notebook.

Take a break, and help her write about what she sees. She can jot down facts from signs ("There are 30,000 miles of railroad track in our state") or write her impressions ("The frosting comes in pretty colors").♥

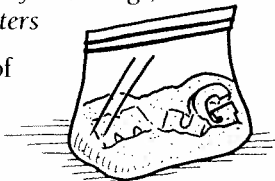


A sweet spelling challenge

A bag full of sugar can help your child's spelling skills. How? Do this activity to find out.

Materials: small freezer bags, sugar, magnetic letters

Secretly think of a short word (*pet*, *mug*). Fill a bag halfway with sugar, add the magnetic letters that spell the word, and shake.



Then, let your youngster squish the bag gently to move the letters around and unscramble the word. Feeling their shapes can make the word "stick" in his brain so he'll remember it later. Can he create more than one word from the same letters? (*Example: mug, gum.*) Have him say each word he spells.

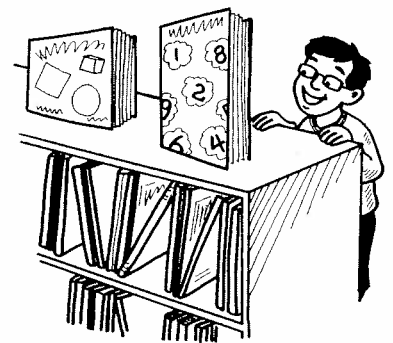
Remove the letters, and ask your child to create a spelling bag for you. Picking out the letters that make up a word is another great way for him to practice spelling.♥

Q&A Math stories

Q My son loves reading, but he isn't as excited about math. How can I use reading to help him enjoy math more?

A You could start with a trip to the library. Authors like Stuart Murphy, Marilyn Burns, and Loreen Leedy have written many fun picture books on numbers, measurement, graphs, money, and other math topics. Read the books aloud, and try math activities from the story. Your child might count cereal pieces, measure household items, or graph family members' favorite colors, for instance.

Also, encourage him to read other materials that include both words and numbers, such as recipes, coupons, and sports articles. Use them to make up word problems together. *Example:* "Our team scored 3 goals, and the other team scored 2. How many goals were scored in the game?" (*Answer:* 5.) Or when your son brings story problems home from school, let him read them to you and then retell them in his own words before solving them.♥



Wiggle while you read

Our daughter Leyna is a wiggler.

She's happiest and concentrates best when her body is moving. Sitting still at a desk or table is hard for her, so my wife and I made a few changes to her homework space at home.

Instead of a chair, we gave her a big rubber ball to sit on, which lets her rock, bounce, jiggle, and roll while she reads.

If she gets tired of sitting or just wants to stand, she uses the secondhand drafting table we found at a garage sale. The table adjusts in height and also tilts, so we can set it to just the right angle for reading.

Leyna is happy with the new furniture because it helps her concentrate—while working the wiggles out!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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