

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2009

Achieving Success Together

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *I Am an Artist*



Can your child see pictures in raindrops or colors in seashells? Author Pat Lowery Collins's paintings and words will help your youngster notice the beauty in nature—and feel that she can be an artist, too.

■ *Leaves*

When autumn leaves start to fall, a confused little bear tries to put them back on the trees. It doesn't work, and he soon gets sleepy. After hibernating all winter, he wakes to discover that the trees are growing brand-new leaves. A cute look at seasonal changes by David Ezra Stein.



■ *Chrysanthemum*

In this story by Kevin Henkes, Chrysanthemum loves her name—until she starts kindergarten and the other children make fun of it. But the teasing stops when the students learn that their beloved music teacher's first name is Delphinium—and that she plans to name her baby Chrysanthemum. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Hurricane Hunters!*

How do weather forecasters make predictions about hurricanes? Young readers may be surprised to find out that some pilots fly straight into the giant storms. This true story by Chris Demarest describes one hurricane mission and explains how experts gather information that can save lives.



Let's write a story

When your child combines paper, pencil, and imagination, anything can happen! Encourage her to write stories just for fun. It will boost her vocabulary and help her with writing assignments in school. Try these steps.

1. Collect topics. Beginning writers sometimes wonder what stories should be about. Suggest that your youngster start a "writer's notebook." Inside, she can list or draw story ideas. Together, brainstorm a few topics to get her notebook started (new kitten, gymnastics class). Then she can add more as she thinks of them. When she wants to write a story, she'll have plenty of ideas to choose from!

2. Add details. Encourage your child to be specific when she writes. Details will make her story more exciting. She might ask herself questions like "What color is it?" or "What happened next?" Then she can start with one sentence, such as "I have a pet cat," and add, "He is orange



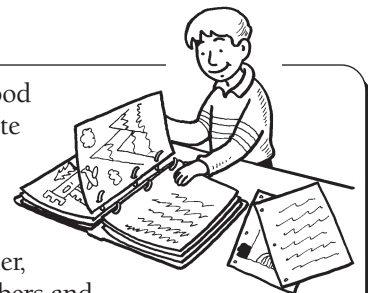
and striped. I gave him a toy mouse." *Tip:* If your child isn't writing on her own yet, have her dictate her story to you.

3. Use dialogue. As your youngster writes more, she'll be ready to add conversations to her stories. Point to quotes in a storybook to show her how authors use quotation marks. Explain that she should "hug" a person's words with quote marks, tell who said the words, and add "said" or "asked." *Example:* "It's time to feed the cat," Mom said. ♥

Sharing stories

"What a great story!" Your youngster will feel good when people enjoy his writing—which can motivate him to write even more. Here are ways he can "publish" and share his stories:

- Have him copy his favorite stories and draw pictures to go with them. Save the stories in a binder, and keep it on a bookshelf or table for family members and guests to read.
- Let your child type and illustrate a story using a Web site like www.tikatok.com or software such as Microsoft Paint or Apple Paintbrush. Help him e-mail his story to friends.
- Suggest that he call a relative and read his writing over the phone. Or he can read his story to you or to a sibling at bedtime. ♥



Nonfiction read-alouds

As your child grows older, he'll need to read textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and Web sites for all kinds of information. Help him enjoy nonfiction with these tips.

Introduce nonfiction books. If your youngster is used to fiction, the idea of a "true" book may be new. Try reading a fiction and nonfiction book about the same topic. Ask him to point out



differences. He might notice that the nonfiction book has photos instead of drawings and names of real people instead of made-up characters.

Use background information.

Before you open a new book, grab your child's attention by discussing the subject. For example, ask, "What do you know about farms?" Try to draw on something that he has experienced: "Remember we visited a farm when we went to Nana's house?" Then, read together to learn more.

Find facts. As you read, help your youngster spot important facts—a skill he'll need when reading textbooks. Explain that main points often contain a bold-faced word or appear in a box, time line, or diagram. For example, say, "*Predator* is in bold type. Let's read this sentence together to see what it means." ♥

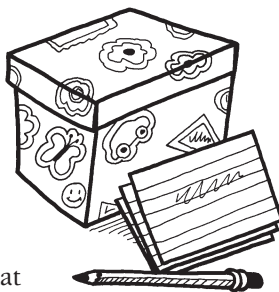
Fun with Words Vocabulary bank

Let your youngster make a special box where she can store interesting words that she discovers. She'll build her vocabulary and practice reading.

First, help your child cover a small box with construction paper. She can label it "My Word Bank" and decorate it with doodles, stickers, and stamps. Next, encourage her to pick a word every day, write it on an index card, and add it to her "bank." Suggest that she look for words she likes

in books and on signs. A word might grab her attention because it's long (stegosaurus) or sounds like what it means (splash).

Help her pronounce the words and use them in a sentence. ("A stegosaurus is a dinosaur." "I splash in the bathtub.") Once a week, let her read the words at dinner and ask everyone to choose a favorite. ♥

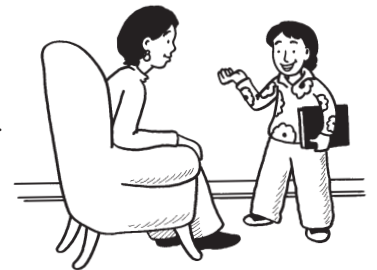


Q&A Language success

Q Our daughter has a language disability that makes it hard for her to express what she's thinking. She often gets frustrated in conversations—how can we help her?

A Talk to her teacher or speech therapist for suggestions. You can find out which skills she is working on in school and practice them at home. For example, if she's learning to repeat spoken sentences, try "echo reading." You read a sentence, and she repeats it after you. In addition to doing this with stories, you can try it with comics or poems.

Most important, encourage your child not to give up when she's trying to get her point across. Instead of completing her sentences when she's having trouble telling you something, give her a head start and let her try to finish: "So you're saying that you lost your jacket and...?" Then, wait patiently as she gets her words out. ♥



Parent to Parent Hand-me-down reading

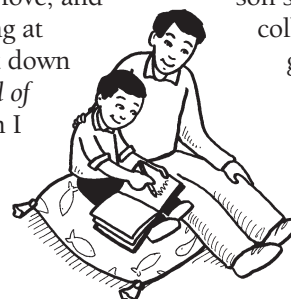
While cleaning our basement last week, I found a box of old books I had read as a child. I took them upstairs to show my boys.

They were excited that I had read some of the same books they love, and they were interested in looking at ones they hadn't seen. We sat down to read *The Monster at the End of This Book* by Jon Stone. When I opened it, we discovered my name written in my child-like handwriting. My youngest son asked if he could write his name below mine.

The boys took turns neatly printing their names, and then I read the story to them.

We added my books to their shelves, and now they often request them at bedtime. They've also started writing their names inside their own books. My oldest son said he's going to share his collection with his kids when he grows up!

I mentioned the idea to my neighbor. She didn't have any old books, so she was going to look at the library for some of her childhood favorites. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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