

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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Coosa Valley Elementary School
Vicki Freeman, Reading Coach

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Celebrating Chinese New Year*

Colorful photographs and simple sentences tell the story of Chinese New Year. Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith's nonfiction book shows how families celebrate ancestors, make special meals, decorate their homes, and watch a parade.



■ *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch*

Lonely Mr. Hatch doesn't know who sent him a valentine, but its loving message gives him courage. For the first time, he gets to know his neighbors and coworkers. And when the mystery is solved, he discovers how much his new friends care. A nice read-aloud by Eileen Spinelli.



■ *The Alphabet Tree*

In Leo Lionni's clever tale, each letter has its own leaf—until the wind starts to blow. To fight the wind, the letters learn to stick together to make words. What will happen when a caterpillar suggests that the words form sentences?

■ *Big Frank's Fire Truck*

This book by Leslie McGuire shows youngsters how firefighters spend their days. In addition to putting out fires, Frank and his team rush to the scene of an accident, teach fire safety at a school, and do a fire inspection. (Also available in Spanish.)



Keeping a journal

A journal is a place for your child to draw pictures and record his thoughts. It's also a great way to inspire him to write more.

Give your youngster a spiral notebook or lined paper stapled between two pieces of construction paper. Then, share these ideas for filling the pages.

Write about hobbies

Your child will enjoy writing and drawing about something he loves. And basing a journal on a special interest will teach him to stay on topic. He might write about art projects ("Today I made a snowy picture with cotton balls"). Or he could start a baseball journal ("I got a base hit").

Think about animals

Your youngster can learn about point of view (who tells the story) by keeping a journal for a pet or stuffed animal. Have him pretend to be his hamster or his teddy bear when he writes in his journal. What would the animal draw? What might it write about? ("I took a



nap. I drank from my water bottle. I ran on my exercise wheel.")

Tell about books

This journal will encourage your child to read *and* write. When he reads a book, suggest that he draw his favorite part and write a few words or a sentence about it. Or he might write a summary. He can also tell what he liked or didn't like about the story.

Tip: Encourage your youngster to write in his journal a little each day.♥

Newspaper fun

When you read the newspaper, invite your child to join you with activities like these. She'll learn that the paper is filled with information—and she'll get used to a daily reading habit.

● Visit the scene. Read an article aloud about an upcoming local event (Groundhog Day ceremony, craft fair). Then, go to the event so your child can see the connection between what she reads and real life.

● Look at photos. Ask your youngster to describe what's happening ("The skier got a medal"). Let her choose a theme (outer space, sports) and cut out pictures for a week. She can glue them on paper and write captions.

● Do a letter search. Have your child circle one word in the paper that begins with each letter of the alphabet. When she's finished, help her read all 26 words.♥



Reading strategies

“What’s this word?” When your child reads a book, she may come across words that she can’t sound out easily. Show her these three ways to handle tricky words:

1. “Chunk” it. Ask your youngster to find a familiar part of a tough word. In *myself*, for instance, she may recognize *my*. Then, she can sound out the chunk that is left (“I did it *my-self*”).

2. Re-read it. Your child may be able to use the meaning of a sentence to figure out a word. Have her cover the tricky word



with her finger and read the sentence without it. *Example:* “David (*mixed*) red and blue paint to make purple.” Next, she can uncover the word and read the sentence again. She’ll see that the missing word begins with M and can think of the word *mixed*.

3. Picture it. Have your youngster look at the book’s illustrations for clues that will help her read a word. Say there’s a picture of several animals along with the sentence “A tiger lives in the jungle.” She might think, “There’s a tiger in the picture, and that word starts with T. I bet it’s *tiger*.” ♥

Fun with Words Alphabet art

Bring out your youngster’s creative side with these projects that will help him practice his ABCs.

Hidden letters

Ask your child to draw and color a picture that includes hidden letters. For example, he might put an L in the bottom corner of a house, or a C on the edge of a sun. How many letters can he fit in one picture?

Letter creatures

Have your youngster choose a letter. Let him write his letter in the center of a sheet of paper with a marker. Then, give him paint, yarn, and glue to turn the letter into an animal. For example, O could become an octopus. He might paint eyes, a nose, and a mouth and add eight pieces of yarn for the arms. ♥



Q&A Play and write

Q My son needs to work on his handwriting. He does the practice sheets that his teacher sends home. Is there anything else we can do?

A You can fit writing into playtime—your child won’t even know he’s practicing his handwriting!

For example, he can write names, words, and numbers while playing bank or store. Give him an extra checkbook register and old deposit slips, or a store catalog and paper to use for receipts. He and a friend can take turns pretending to be a teller or a store clerk.

You might also put writing materials with your youngster’s toys. Place sticky notes next to his blocks so he can make street signs (Speed Limit, One Way) and label buildings (School, Toy Store). Put a notepad in his pretend kitchen, and let him take your order, serve your meal, and write up your bill. ♥



Parent to Parent Library entertainment

A few months ago, my daughter Mara and I stopped by the public library to check out books. We were surprised to find a puppet show going on.

The librarian explained that the branch hosts special activities based on books. She gave us a schedule, and we’ve been to several events so far. First, we saw a play of the book *Amelia Bedelia and the Baby* by Peggy Parish. After it was over, we looked for other books about

Amelia Bedelia. Another time, the librarian used *Five Little Monkeys Storybook Treasury* by Eileen Christelow to lead a sing-along. Mara was excited when I suggested that she choose a book of songs to take home and learn.

Now Mara can’t wait to visit the library. The activities make it easy to find great books, and she’s enjoying reading more than ever. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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