

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2006

Renton School District

Book Picks

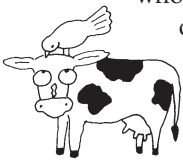
Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Chocolate Touch*

What would life be like if everything you touched turned to chocolate? John is delighted at first with chocolate toothpaste. But he soon discovers that chocolate water doesn't taste very good! A fun read-aloud by Patrick Skene Catling.

■ *Are You My Mother?*

The baby bird in P. D. Eastman's story mistakes everything for his mother: a cow, an airplane, and even a steam shovel. Will he ever discover who his mother is? Find out in this easy-to-read book with predictable text. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*

Visit Chewandswallow, where food falls from the sky like rain and snow. The residents are bombarded with soup, hamburgers, and pancakes. Enjoy the hilarious words and pictures in this story by Judi Barrett.



■ *The Ice Cream Store*

Diversity is the theme of this collection of nonsense poems by Dennis Lee. The watercolor illustrations show children from all over the world. Silly poems include "A Home Like a Hiccup" and "The Pig in Pink Pajamas."



Reading to learn

Could your child use some help tackling tough textbook material? Textbooks often contain big words, abstract concepts, and unfamiliar names and places. Share these strategies your child can try before, during, and after reading.

Before: Together, skim the chapter to get an idea of what it's going to cover. Then, ask your youngster what she already knows about the topic. For example, what does the word "caterpillar" make her think of? A fuzzy insect? A cocoon? If the topic is brand new to your child, you might want to give her some background information. *Example:* "As a caterpillar grows, it goes through many changes."

During: After she finishes a few paragraphs of the chapter, help your child rephrase the information in her own words. She might say, "A caterpillar sheds its skin several times. When it's big enough, it spins a silk covering around its body."

After: Have your youngster use this trick to remember what she has learned. Draw a



circle in the middle of a piece of paper. Add several straight lines branching out from the circle. Then, draw a circle at the end of each line. In the center circle, write the topic ("caterpillar"). Let your child fill the other circles with details ("stays in cocoon for two weeks," "turns into a moth"). ♥

Read Across America

Read Across America, sponsored by the National Education Association, takes place on March 2 in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday. Make this day special for your youngster:

- Surprise him with the gift of a new book, or check one out from the library.
- Bring your child's favorite story to life. For example, if he likes Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham*, you could add green food coloring to his eggs.
- Set aside family reading time in the evening. Encourage everyone to take turns reading aloud.
- Teachers sometimes invite guest readers to class. If you or someone you know is interested, ask your child's teacher if she would welcome such a visit. ♥



Listen carefully

Good listening skills help children follow directions in school. If your youngster's attentiveness could use some sharpening, consider these ideas you can do at home:

▲ Make sounds using household items, and ask your child to guess what each one is. *Examples:* Flush a toilet, ring the doorbell, crumple some paper, run the vacuum, turn on the water, honk a car horn. If he's stumped, give him a clue. *Example:* "You hear this sound when I clean the carpet."

▲ While reading a familiar book aloud, keep your child on his toes by changing key words: "The cat [instead of cow] jumped over the moon." Do this several times, and see if he is able to catch you. Or read the first part of a sentence, and pause to see if your youngster can finish it.

▲ Play the "forbidden word" game. Take turns choosing a common word (such as "want," "can," or "give") or a family



member's name. For one hour, no one is allowed to say that word. If someone catches a person using the word, he gets to pick the next forbidden word. ♥



Fun with Words Grocery bingo

The next time you go shopping, keep your child busy—and give her some reading practice—by creating a grocery bingo game.

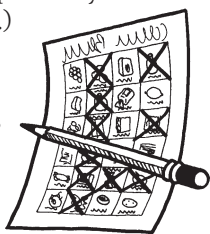
Make a grid on a piece of paper by drawing a box with 6 rows and 4 columns to make 24 equal-sized squares. (Make fewer squares if you have fewer items to buy.)

In each box, write one item from your list.

Examples: cheese, sugar, rice. As you pick up each product, show it to your youngster, and ask her to find it on the card.

Say the name of the item out loud, clearly pronouncing the sounds in the word if she needs help.

Have your child use a pencil to cross off each item that she finds. How many times can she get bingo (crossing off an entire row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally) before you reach the checkout? ♥



Parent to Parent

Touchy-feely ABCs

My daughter was having trouble learning the alphabet. Abby knew the ABC song and could write some letters, but she couldn't recognize them when she saw them. I had tried flash cards but with little success.

Abby's teacher suggested that she might be a tactile learner, which means she learns best by touching things. So I had an idea. I cut out uppercase letters of the alphabet from pieces of felt and lowercase letters from lightweight sandpaper.

I put the first few letters in order and asked Abby to feel the shape of each one and say its name. After she could identify all the letters in order, I mixed them up. Before long, Abby could recognize all the letters—even with her eyes closed! ♥



Q&A Story starters

Q My child is asked to write in his classroom journal each evening for homework. But he often says he doesn't know what to write about. How can I help him?

A Sometimes the first sentence is the hardest one to write. Try giving your youngster "story starters" like these:

- ◆ When I woke up this morning, I saw...
- ◆ If I could be any animal I would be a...
- ◆ If candy grew on trees...
- ◆ Five things I would take on a trip to the moon are...



Another idea is to have your child look at a picture for inspiration, such as a family snapshot or a magazine photo. He can use his imagination to create a story about the people, animals, objects, or events he sees in the photo. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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