

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2005

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Kissing Hand*

Little Raccoon's mother gives him a special gift so he won't feel alone at school. To her surprise, he has something for her, too. This feel-good story by Audrey Penn is perfect for parents and children to share.



■ *Apples*

Gail Gibbons's book is jam-packed with apple facts. Also included are recipes and activities such as bobbing for apples. With simple



diagrams and few words per page, *Apples* is an easy introduction to nonfiction.

■ *A Is for America: An American Alphabet*

Poems for each letter of the alphabet describe items from American history and culture, like "Kellogg's Rice Krispies squares" for "k."

Beautiful pictures and fact-filled sidebars complete this great read-aloud by Devin Scillian.



■ *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*

Wilfrid's unusually long name helps him bond with his elderly neighbor, Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper. When he learns she has lost her memory, he decides to help her find it—even though he doesn't know what a "memory" is. A tale by Mem Fox. (Also available in Spanish.)

Making connections

Most readers enjoy stories more when they can relate to what the characters are saying and doing. Your child probably does, too. Connecting with what she reads also improves her understanding.

Here are three kinds of connections to help your youngster get the most out of reading. Show her how to connect with...

Everyday life

Encourage your child to make connections by offering books related to her personal experiences. For example, if your child has a pet, she'll understand characters who love animals. Read stories such as *Henry and Mudge: The First Book* by Cynthia Rylant.



Tip: Ask your child specific questions, such as "What part of the story made you think of that?" ♥

Other reading

Sometimes your child will read a book that reminds him of another. *Yoko* by Rosemary Wells and *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley are similar books about foods eaten in other countries. You can help your youngster make this kind of connection by talking with him about how the stories are both the same and different.

Prior knowledge

Your child may read a story that reminds her of something she has learned. If she's reading a book that takes place in the Arctic, such as *Whale Snow* by Debby Dahl Edwardson, she might tell you she learned in school that no two snowflakes are the same.

Fun with Words

Flap book

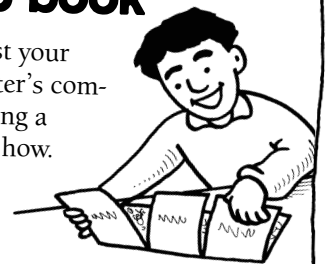
Boost your youngster's comprehension by making a "flap book." Here's how.

Together, read a simple story.

Then, fold a sheet

of paper in half lengthwise. Open it and make three equal-sized flaps by cutting two slits from the long side to the crease. Refold and lay the paper with the flap side facing you and the openings at the bottom. Label the flaps "beginning," "middle," and "end."

Have your child write a sentence or draw a picture that tells what happens in each part of the story. The beginning of a story introduces the characters and setting (where the story takes place), the middle poses a problem, and in the end, the problem is solved. ♥



Reading stumbles

When your child reads aloud, it can be tempting to correct his mistakes. But learning to fix them on his own is an important step in becoming an independent reader. Try these prompts:

- Point out what your child did right, and help him correct the part that's wrong. If he says "clap" for "click," say, "That word starts like 'clap,' but what sound do you hear at the end?"
- Your youngster might say the wrong word and not realize it. For example, if she reads, "I saw a little caterpillar lying on a



lake" (instead of "leaf"), wait until she reaches the end of the sentence or page and ask, "Did 'lake' really make sense? Let's try that sentence again." *Note:*

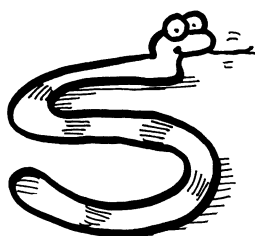
If her mistake doesn't affect the meaning ("house" instead of "home"), you could allow her to continue reading.

- If your child asks for help with a word without trying to figure it out, ask

questions to help him get started. "Can you sound it out?" "What word might make sense in that sentence?" "Does the picture give you a clue?" ♥

Practice makes perfect

Handwriting takes time to master. Children must develop the muscles in their



hands and use their eyes and brains. And learning to write letters means first seeing them, remembering what they look like, and then creating them. Share these activities to help your youngster as she learns to write:

- Practice without paper first. Have your child stand up with her arm straight out in front of her. She can trace a giant letter in the air with her finger. Then, have her sit down and write the letter on paper.
- Encourage your youngster to "talk out" the strokes. For the letter "A," he could say, "Down, down, across." Or for "s," he could make a "sss" sound while pretending to draw a snake or ski down a hill. ♥

Q&A Parent volunteer

Q I'd like to help in my child's classroom this year. But I can't always go in during the day because I work. Any ideas?

A Most teachers are happy to have help, no matter when. Check with your child's teacher to find out what she needs. Let her know when you're available, and tell her what your strengths are.

The kinds of help teachers may need include collating worksheets, making homemade books, or recording stories on cassettes to use in the classroom or library. Volunteering at an evening book fair is another way busy parents can help.

If you have a day when you can visit the classroom, you could read to students or listen to them read to you. You might also offer to write down stories that students dictate to you. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent "Big" words

My child loves to write stories, but she gets frustrated trying to spell "big" words. After spelling "Tyranosaurus rex" for her for the tenth time, I decided to do something different.

The next time she sat down to write, we brainstormed a list of words she might need for her story. Together, we looked up the names of several dinosaurs, as well as words like "gigantic,"

"extinct," and "carnivore," in the dictionary. Then, I wrote the words down on a piece of paper for her to refer to.

The word list helps remind my daughter of the ideas she wants to include in her story. She's also learning how to use a dictionary. And since she doesn't have to worry about spelling the "big" words, her stories have a lot more details. ♥

