

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2006

Renton School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Star of the Week

Stanley is excited to be the class “star.” But when he gets up in front of the other students to share his toys and talents, things don’t go as he had planned. Children will enjoy Barney Saltzberg’s story about how Stanley’s friends help him overcome his stage fright.



■ Good Night, Gorilla

The pictures tell most of this story by Peggy Rathmann. As a zookeeper says good night to the animals, a gorilla quietly snatches his keys and unlocks all the cages. Find out what happens when a parade of



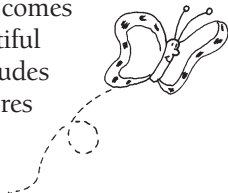
escaped animals follows the zookeeper home. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ The Dot

Vashti thinks she can’t draw, so her teacher encourages her to start by just making a mark on her paper. Her “dot” soon turns into a masterpiece, and she realizes she’s an artist after all. An inspiring story by Peter Reynolds.

■ From Caterpillar to Butterfly

In Deborah Heiligman’s book, the title’s exciting process takes place inside a classroom jar. The children watch as the caterpillar goes into its chrysalis and comes out as a beautiful butterfly. Includes detailed pictures of common butterflies.



I get it!

How to read fluently

When Eric reads, he instantly recognizes most words. He reads sentences smoothly, understands what’s happening in the story, and has good expression.

Eric is a *fluent* reader—his reading sounds like speech. Here are some ways to help your youngster read fluently.

■ **Be a role model.** When you read to your child, have him read along with you. Don’t be surprised if he tries to match his voice to yours. You can also alternate paragraphs or pages, or take turns reading for different characters.

■ **Choose the right book.** Your youngster should recognize most of the words (one to two unfamiliar words per page are okay—that will keep him challenged). If he’s having trouble reading smoothly, try picking an easier book.

■ **Use expression.** Punctuation marks are clues that tell us how to read something. Encourage your child to sound excited when he sees an exclamation point, and make his voice go up for a question mark. Teach him to pause briefly at a comma and slightly longer at a period.

■ **Check for understanding.** If your youngster doesn’t understand the book, he will sound choppy. And if he’s reading one word at a time, he’ll have a tough time following the plot. As he reads, ask him



questions to make sure he understands the story. ♥

Read-aloud enjoyment

Some of the best times with your child may be when you share a story. Get the most out of reading aloud with these three easy tips:

- 1 Hold the book so your youngster can see the words and pictures while you’re reading. Run your finger under the text, or point to interesting things in the illustrations.
- 2 Take your time and don’t rush the story. Your child can tell if you’re in a hurry. Reading slowly will help you read clearly—and give you and your youngster more time together.



- 3 Don’t be afraid to stop reading a book if your child doesn’t seem interested. Have a backup selection ready so read-aloud can continue. ♥

Routines for writing

Want your child to get in the habit of writing? Try making it a regular part of her life. Whether you have a little time or a lot, here are some ways to fit writing into both of your schedules.

Daily

Enjoy on-the-go writing. Carry a small notebook and pencil, and let your child see you use it to make a to-do list: "Mail package to Grandma; pick up dry cleaning." Has your youngster been invited to a birthday party? Suggest that she make a list of gift ideas on the way to the mall. She can draw pictures and write the first letters of the words if she's not spelling yet.

Weekly

Start a family journal. Keep a pad by the telephone or on the kitchen counter. You could write about the weather getting cooler and the leaves changing colors; your child might report (in pictures or words) that the dog learned a new trick. At the end of the week, read aloud from the journal after dinner.



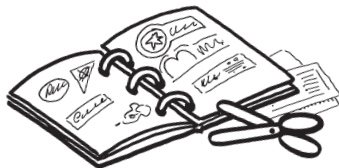
Monthly

Write to a friend or relative who lives out of town. Put writing paper, envelopes, and stamps where your youngster can find them easily. Or help her use e-mail to correspond. If she's a beginning writer, have her dictate to you. She can sign her name and draw a picture to go with her letter. ♥



Logo book

Did you know that the first word a child learns to read is often found on a cereal box or billboard? Take advantage of your youngster's natural interest in labels and signs by making a "logo book."



Cut out words you think your child will recognize, and glue them onto sheets of paper. For example, peel the label off a can of fruit juice, and cut out the juice flavor's name ("apple juice"). Or find an ad, and snip off the name of the store or restaurant. Pictures can be helpful, so if the label or ad includes one, glue that on the paper as well.

Staple the pages together, and ask your child to read to you. He'll be excited to see words he recognizes, and being able to read an entire book without help will build his confidence. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A Word play

Q My child already knows the alphabet. What else can I do to help him get ready for reading?

A One important early reading skill is being able to hear the sounds in words. To do so, your youngster will need to learn how to break words into parts.

Start by playing this rhyming game. Think of a word, and ask your child to change the first letter to make a new word. The new word can be real, but it's more fun if it's made up. For example, if you say "kindergarten," your youngster could say "gindergarten, mindergarten, windergarten."

To help your child hear syllables in words, clap each syllable when you say a word. How many syllables are in his name? (Clap four times for Alexander—Al-ex-an-der.) ♥



Parent to Parent Family stories

Storytelling was a tradition in my family. I remember sitting around the dinner table listening to my father's tales of his childhood. We would usually all end up laughing. My wife and I wanted our kids to have fond memories like that, too. So we've started our own tradition.

At dinner, one of us shares something that happened when we were growing up. Then, we take turns asking our children to tell a story about when they "were little."



We've been surprised by our kids' memories and storytelling skills. Last night, while eating her peas, my daughter volunteered: "I remember when I was a little girl and I hated peas so much that I would feed them to the dog when no one was looking. He ate so many I was afraid he would turn green. So, I started eating some, and guess what? I liked them!" ♥