

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2006

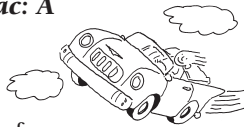
Renton School District

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Sleepy Cadillac: A Bedtime Drive*

Climb aboard an imaginary 1950s convertible for a trip through dreamland. The magical car floats by a child's bedroom window one evening and takes him for a ride, past dolphins in the ocean and stars in the sky. Thacher Hurd's bedtime story will enchant youngsters who love cars.



### ■ *Leaf Man*

Follow the travels of a man made of leaves as he blows across the countryside. He looks down at pumpkins, cows, and chickens—all made of colorful autumn leaves. Author and illustrator Lois Ehlert encourages readers to use their imaginations while they learn about nature.



### ■ *Olivia*

Olivia is a smart little piglet with lots of energy. After trying on 17 outfits, resisting a nap, and scaring her little brother, she manages to wear everyone out—even herself. Author and illustrator Ian Falconer's black-and-white drawings include fun touches of red. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Digging up Dinosaurs*

What happened to the dinosaurs? And how do we know what they looked like? This nonfiction book by Aliki explains how scientists find fossils and put them together. Your youngster will also enjoy learning about different kinds of dinosaurs.



## Writing: Beyond basics

Could your child's writing use some sparkle and flair? Whether your youngster writes on her own or makes up stories to dictate to you or her teacher, she can benefit from these tricks of the trade.

### Open with a bang

Begin with an attention-grabbing statement. Suppose your youngster is writing about losing her first tooth. "When I woke up this morning, there was a shiny new quarter under my pillow" is a more exciting start than "Yesterday I lost a tooth."

*Tip:* After your child finishes her story, ask her to circle her favorite sentence and try moving it to the beginning.

### Paint a picture

Include lots of specific details. For example, instead of simply writing "I ate breakfast," your child might write this mouthwatering sentence: "I ate hot waffles with fresh strawberries for breakfast."

*Tip:* Ask your youngster to use her five senses when she writes. What did she see, hear, taste, smell, and touch?



### Spice things up

Use a variety of words. Have your child replace some words in her story with different, more interesting ones. Rather than writing "I ran," she could say, "I raced," "I sprinted," or "I bolted." Check out a children's thesaurus from the library, or go online to [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com) to help give her ideas.

*Tip:* While reading to your child, point out exciting words. Encourage her to jot them down in a notebook so she can use them the next time she writes a story. ♥

## Words to know

Synonyms...antonyms... homophones. These words make writing more interesting. Share this quick guide with your young writer.

**Synonyms:** words with the same or similar meanings.

*Why they're important:* They can help you avoid using the same word over and over.

*Example:* "We're moving to a new house. Our home will have three bedrooms."

**Antonyms:** words with opposite meanings.

*Why they're important:* You can double your vocabulary by learning the opposite of a word.

*Examples:* fast, slow; light, dark; wet, dry.

**Homophones:** words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings.

*Why they're important:* Knowing homophones can keep you from making spelling mistakes.

*Example:* If you're coming over after school, your mother will have to call mine. ♥



# Small talk

From your child's first coos and babbles to his first words and sentences, you've cheered him on. Now that he's carrying on real conversations, you can have even more fun talking together.

Get the most out of your next chat with these ideas.

● **Talk about anything.** Bring up a movie you saw recently, or how excited you were to meet your new neighbors. Choose a time when you both can really pay attention, instead of when you're paying bills or your child is coloring.

● **Be patient.** After you speak, give your youngster time to respond. It helps to count silently to five. Try not to interrupt, even if it takes him awhile. If he gets frustrated, prompt him: "So, what happened after Daddy changed the tire?"

● **Speak normally.** Don't simplify your speech — you'll help your child learn new words: "We're fortunate to have such good friends."

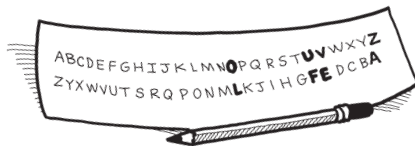
*Tip:* Body language is an important part of conversation. Set an example for your youngster by facing him, making eye contact, and nodding and smiling when he talks. ♥



## Fun with Words Break the code

What does "ovzu" mean? Let your child find out with this fun game that tests his ABC skills.

Write the alphabet across a sheet of paper. Just underneath, write the alphabet again, but backward, so each letter lines up with the one above it. For example, write Z under A, Y under B, and so on.



Use the code to write a word from your youngster's spelling list. Example: "leaf" = "ovzu." Tell him he must use a code to unlock the "secret word."

Then, show your child how to look underneath each letter to find its match and write all the letters down until your word is revealed. Look up the word together in the dictionary. He'll love playing detective, and you'll love how quickly he learns new words! ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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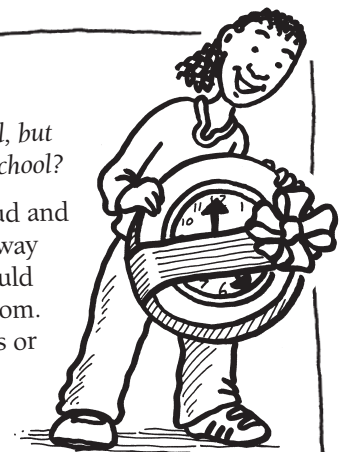
## Q&A The gift of time

**Q** I think it's important for fathers to be involved at school, but I'm so busy at work. How can I help out at my daughter's school?

**A** Any help you can provide will make your child proud and her teacher grateful. Maybe you could drop in on your way to work or during your lunch break. Or perhaps you could take a few hours of vacation time to spend in the classroom.

While there, you could offer to read aloud to the class or listen to children read to you one-on-one. Perhaps you could help students choose books at the library.

If you can't get there during the school day, consider volunteering at night or on weekends. Some teachers need help putting together book-club orders, making flash cards, or maintaining a class Web page. ♥



## Parent to Parent Book lessons

When my son David

had his first cavity, I wanted to prepare him. I remembered when I was little and my mother read aloud *The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. So, I read the book to David, and he said, "I guess I'll be okay like Brother Bear was."

The story worked so well that I started using books at other times too. When I signed David up for swimming lessons,



we read *D.W. All Wet* by Marc Brown about a boy who at first was afraid of the water. And when he had trouble sleeping, *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* by Martin Waddell helped him get over his fear of the dark. In each case, our librarian helped me find the perfect book.

Now I know there's a book for almost every situation — and reading it with my son really helps! ♥