

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2005

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Officer Buckle and Gloria*

Officer Buckle's safety assemblies are pretty boring—until one day when his dog Gloria steals the show. The students sit up and take notice, and suddenly the school is a much safer place. Peggy Rathmann's story will make readers laugh while teaching them safety rules.



■ *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*

Can you make something from nothing? Joseph certainly tries, in Simms Taback's award-winning book about a man and his coat. The tattered coat goes from jacket to vest to scarf, until there's nothing left. What will Joseph make next?

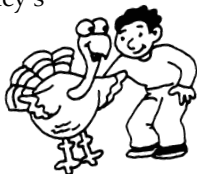
■ *There's No Place Like Space*

In Tish Rabe's nonfiction book about space, Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat is the main character. The cat takes readers on a trip through the solar system, with a rhyming verse that teaches facts about planets and stars.



■ *Gracias, the Thanksgiving Turkey*

Miguel gets attached to his family's turkey. He even gives him a name. But can he save his pet from the Thanksgiving dinner table? Read Joy Cowley's book to find out. (Also available in Spanish.)



Teaming up for writing

Do you have a reluctant writer? Sometimes children are full of great ideas, but they struggle to put them down on paper. You can help by writing stories with your child at home. Here's how.

Choose an idea. Your youngster may not think of her life as filled with interesting events that can become stories. Try talking with her about things that have happened recently, such as a field trip or a new child in her class. Don't be surprised if she has a lot to tell you!

Take turns writing. Have your child write one sentence at a time: "On Monday, we went on a field trip." Then, have him write down the letters and words he knows. For example, he may be able to spell "we," "went," "on," and "a." For other words, ask him to at least write the first letter. If he asks for help, fill in the next letter or letters for him.



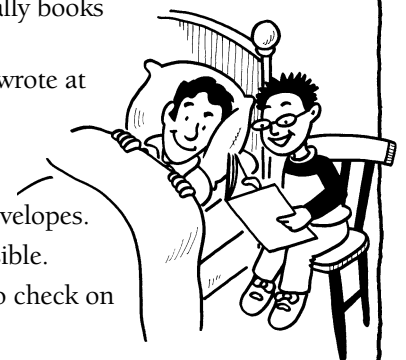
Ask questions. To encourage your youngster to add more details to her story, prompt her with questions about the topic. "What happened after you got off the bus?" Help her turn her answers into sentences you can write together.

Tip: Let your child think of most of the ideas, but the actual writing can be a joint effort. That way, he can let his creativity flow. ♥

Literacy at home

Parent involvement is an important part of a youngster's success in reading. Here are some things you can do at home to support reading and writing at school:

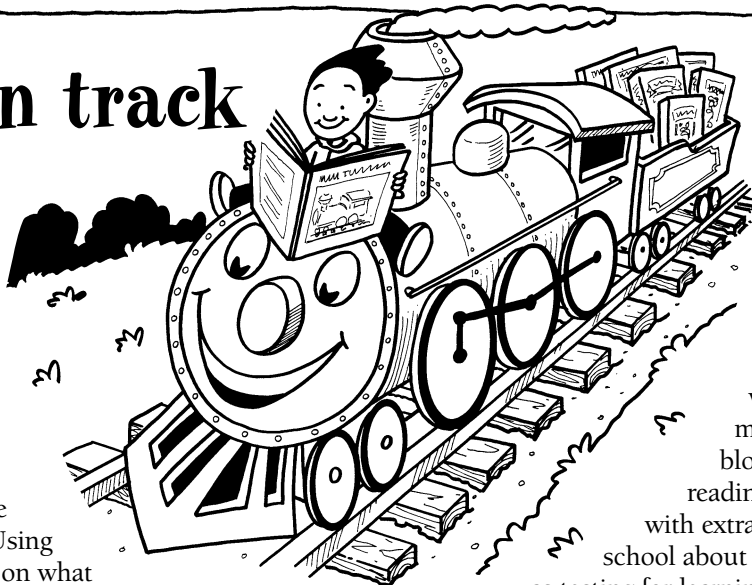
- Read to and with your child every day (especially books sent home from school).
- Ask your youngster to read you the stories he wrote at school.
- Make reading and writing materials available at home for practice. Offer books, magazines, newspapers, pencils, colorful pens, paper, and envelopes.
- Let your child see you reading as often as possible.
- Keep in touch with your youngster's teacher to check on her progress. ♥



Q&A Staying on track

Q I've noticed that my son's friends can read more advanced books than he can. I'm afraid he may be falling behind or even have a learning disability. What can I do?

A There are several reasons that a child might not read as well as others his age. The first thing you should do is ask your youngster's teacher if she's concerned about his progress. If so, find out what part of reading is hard for your child. Is he having trouble memorizing sight words? Using phonics skills to sound out words? Based on what the teacher says, you can work with your youngster at home. For example, you could quiz him on sight words or read



together and encourage him to practice sounding out words.

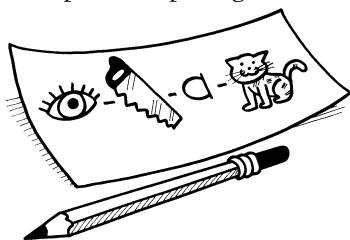
Also ask if there are resources at school, such as tutors, who can work one-on-one with your son. He may simply be a late bloomer, but if his reading doesn't improve with extra help, talk with the school about other options, such as testing for learning disabilities.

When a child has a reading problem, it's important to discover it early so he doesn't fall further behind. ♥



Fun with Words Rebus writing

Does your child enjoy solving puzzles? Show her how to write a letter puzzle—rebus style. A rebus is a puzzle in which pictures or symbols are substituted for some of the words or syllables. Writing a rebus letter will give your child the opportunity to learn new words and practice spelling.



Start by helping your child brainstorm words that could be pictures. For "I saw a cat," she might draw an eye in place of "I," a saw to replace the word "saw," and a cat for "cat."

Note: Remind your youngster to include a list of all the pictures and what they stand for. ♥

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 1-2-3 game

My children sometimes have trouble following directions with more than one or two steps. But they're pretty good at playing games. So when I need them to do several tasks, I tell them we're going to play the "1-2-3 game."

If we're trying to leave the house in a hurry, I say, "You need to do three things. Number one, comb your hair. Number two, put on your shoes. Number three, grab your backpack." When we get in the car, they can ask me to do three things, too, such as "turn on the radio." This works great because they remember exactly how many tasks they need to complete before it's their turn.

Our game has helped my kids with homework as well. I ask them to figure out how many steps are in the assignment instructions. When I check their work, I rarely find that they've missed a step! ♥



Math + reading = fun!

You can squeeze in some math practice while your child gets reading practice at the same time. Try reading these books together:

▲ Marilyn Burns's *The Greedy Triangle* shows that shapes are found in unusual places: triangles appear when you put your hands on your hips, and soccer balls are covered with pentagons. Ask your child to find shapes around your house.



▲ In *The Doorbell Rang*, by Pat Hutchins, two children divide up a dozen cookies to share with friends. Cut a dozen circles out of brown paper, and use them to act out the story.

▲ The inchworm in Leo Lionni's *Inch by Inch* measures things for the birds with his body. Make a foot-long ruler out of green paper. Draw 12 inchworms along the strip, and use it to measure household items. ♥

