

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

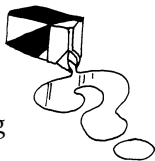
December 2005

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*

Have you and your child ever tried to find shapes in the clouds? The shape in Charles G. Shaw's book changes on each page, until you discover its true identity in the end. The patterned verse is perfect for beginning readers.



■ *The Biggest Frog in Australia*

When a giant frog drinks all the water in Australia, the other animals try to trick him into opening his mouth so they can have some. Enjoy discovering the Australian animals in Susan Roth's version of this original tall tale.



■ *Thomas' Snowsuit*

Thomas' mother, teacher, and principal all struggle to get him into his new snowsuit. In the process, his teacher ends up in her underwear, and the principal retires to Arizona! A hilarious story by Robert Munsch. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*

What would you do if you wanted to make a pie but the store was closed? The baker in Marjorie Priceman's story travels around the world to gather ingredients. Learn where foods come from—and how to bake a pie!



From ABCs to stories

Once your child learns the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent, he's on his way to reading success. Here are some tips about how written language works. Share them with your child as he practices reading.

Letters make words

By putting letters together, writers create words that we can read. The words are the same ones we speak to tell stories, ask questions, give directions, and communicate with each other—our language.

Tip: Point out the individual letters in familiar words, such as your youngster's name, or words on street or business signs that he recognizes.

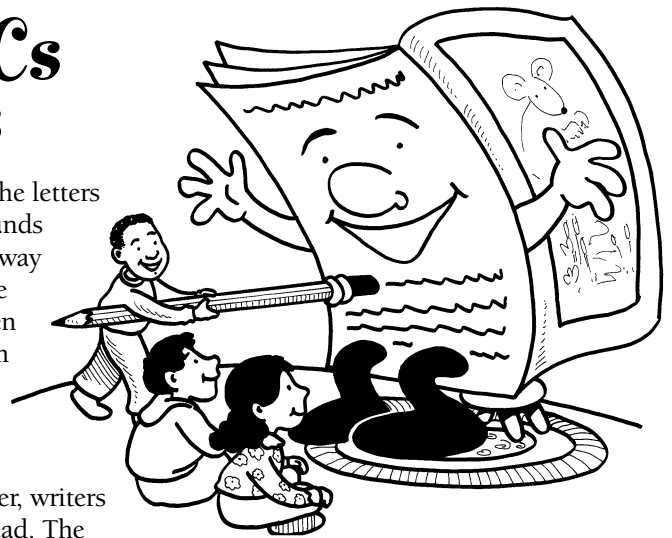
Words make sentences

A sentence is made up of words with spaces between them. When a child starts to notice words rather than looking at a sentence as a string of letters, reading becomes easier.

Tip: Point to each word as you read, and encourage your youngster to do the same until he becomes more fluent. Give him a pointer to use, such as a pencil with a colorful eraser stuck on the end.

Sentences tell stories

Developing readers need to learn to read words and sentences instead of depending on pictures. Pre-readers often make up stories by looking at pictures, and early readers use them as clues to what stories



are about. But as time goes on, readers should rely more on the text and less on the illustrations.

Tip: If you think your child isn't looking at the words, but you're sure he knows them, cover up the picture with your hand and ask him to try reading the sentence. ♥

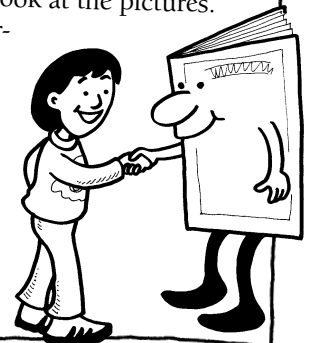
Introducing books

Want to help your child read more confidently and smoothly? When she gets a new book, encourage her to browse through it before she starts reading. Try these ideas for introducing your youngster to her next book:

■ Together, look at the cover and read the title. Ask your child what she thinks the book is about.

■ Turn the pages and look at the pictures. Ask: "Who are the characters? What do they seem to be doing?"

■ Find a few difficult words in the book. Help your youngster sound them out ahead of time. If necessary, explain their meanings. ♥



Tales from around the world



Classic stories, such as fairy tales, have been adapted by people around the world. Read the stories below with your child, along with their traditional counterparts. Then, talk about how they are alike and different. You'll improve her comprehension and teach her about people from other cultures and times.

● *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* by Ed Young. Three little girls outsmart a wolf by tempting him with Chinese ginkgo nuts.

● *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe. This Cinderella story is set in Africa where two sisters, one kind and one selfish, compete to marry the Great King.

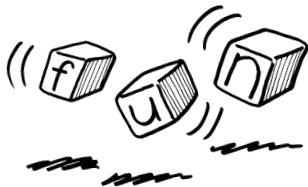
● *The Gingerbread Boy* by Richard Egielski. In this modern version of *The Gingerbread Man*, the cookie escapes to the city streets where New Yorkers chase him and he meets a fox.

● *The Princess and the Pizza* by Mary Jane and Herm Auch. In today's *Princess and the Pea*, in addition to discovering a pea under her mattress, the princess must win a cooking contest in order to marry the prince. ♥

Fun with Words Toss the dice

Your children can learn to spell new words or practice old ones with this fun activity.

Collect six dice from old board games, or purchase new dice. Cover the dots on each side with squares of masking tape.



Using a permanent marker, write one letter on each side of each die. (There are 36 sides altogether.) One die should have only vowels ("a," "e," "i," "o," and "u") and "y." On the rest of the dice, write two each of "c," "d," "h," "l," "m," "n," "p," "r," "s," and "t," and one each of the 10 less commonly used letters ("b," "f," "g," "j," "k," "q," "v," "w," "x," and "z").

Take turns tossing the dice and forming words from the letters that come up. Keep a list of your kids' words, and see if they can turn them into sentences. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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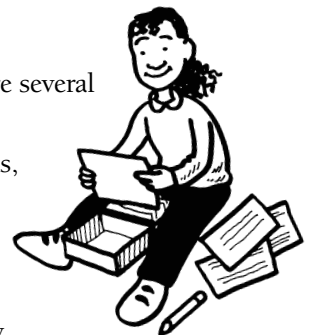
Read, write – and play!

Did you know that children learn through play? Here are several ways to use playtime to teach reading and writing:

▲ Give your child some cookbooks, a notepad, index cards, and pencils. Suggest that she read and write recipes, menus, or grocery lists. Or offer her empty food boxes and cartons so she can practice reading while she "shops" for groceries.

▲ Let your youngster play office with message pads, sticky notes, and envelopes. You might also give her old calendars, greeting cards, and phone books. She can pretend to take telephone messages or mail letters.

▲ A chalkboard or dry-erase board with colorful chalk or markers will work for many kinds of play. For example, your child could "teach" school or make a sign for a pretend lemonade stand. ♥



Parent to Parent Homework harmony

When my son began having homework, our busy evenings became even busier. So my husband and I set up a few rules.

As soon as Jason gets home from school, he relaxes for a few minutes and has a snack. Then, he does his homework. He has the rest of the evening to play, and homework isn't left until bedtime when he's tired.



We also help Jason divide his assignments into those he can do himself and those he needs help with. He might write in his journal or read aloud a chapter in a book, and then one of us calls out his vocabulary words for him.

Finally, we set up a study area in the kitchen, away from TV and other distractions. Now, Jason gets his work done faster and with less frustration.

Homework time is going pretty smoothly—and Jason is a lot more responsible! ♥