

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2006

Renton School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Alphabet Under Construction*

A creative mouse “builds” each letter in this alphabet book by Denise Fleming. Using a variety of tools, he makes his way from A to Z—airbrushing the A, quilting the Q, sawing the S, and finally, zipping the Z.

■ *Zen Shorts*

Three siblings befriend their new neighbor, a wise panda named Stillwater. The panda plays with the children and tells them stories that offer lessons about life, such as how to handle anger and how to forgive.

Includes beautiful watercolor illustrations by author Jon Muth.

■ *Gingerbread Baby*

“You can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread baby!” shouts the character in Jan Brett’s twist on the traditional *Gingerbread Man* story. Matti tries to bake a gingerbread man, but when he pops out of the oven too soon, he’s a baby instead. Youngsters will love Matti’s idea for “catching” the gingerbread baby.

■ *Animals in Winter*

What do animals do when cold weather comes? This story explains how squirrels, bats, insects, and others survive the winter. Henrietta Bancroft also gives suggestions for using a bird feeder and other ways young children can help animals during the winter.

Poetry = reading fun!

Introduce your child to the world of poetry, and you’ll introduce her to a world of fun. Here’s a place where she can eat alligator pie, run the school, or have chocolate cake while her parents are asleep. (See Dennis Lee’s *Alligator Pie*, Bruce Lanksy’s *If Kids Ruled the School*, and Jack Prelutsky’s *My Parents Think I’m Sleeping*.)

And guess what? The rhymes and rhythms in poetry will help teach your youngster phonics, vocabulary, and other reading skills. Try these ideas to help her learn to enjoy poetry.

■ Hold an “open mike night.”

Invite everyone in the family to choose a favorite poem to memorize and recite. Or let each person take turns reading poems from an anthology. Reading or reciting poetry aloud will help your child practice using expression.

■ **Listen for rhymes.** Read a rhyming poem to your youngster, and encourage her to write down the rhyming words she hears and to brainstorm new ones. Being able to see rhymes can expand her sight-word vocabulary. For example, if she can read “fall,” she can also read “ball” and “call.”

■ Build a poetry collection.

When your child finds a poem she likes, have her write it down. Suggest that she collect her favorite poems in a binder so she can read them over

and over again. Copying and rereading poems will help improve her spelling, vocabulary, and handwriting. ♥



Library time

Turn an ordinary trip to the library into something special. Here’s how.

Playdates. Invite one of your youngster’s friends along. They could pick books to read silently or take turns reading quietly to each other.

Themes. Use different themes to help your child choose books. For example, he could seek out books about snow. You might find stories about snowy days and nonfiction books about animals (penguins, polar bears) that live in cold climates.

Special events. Check with your librarian or the library Web site for upcoming events. Look for story times, author visits, puppet shows, or arts and crafts. Many libraries have used-book sales—your child could take home books at very little cost. ♥

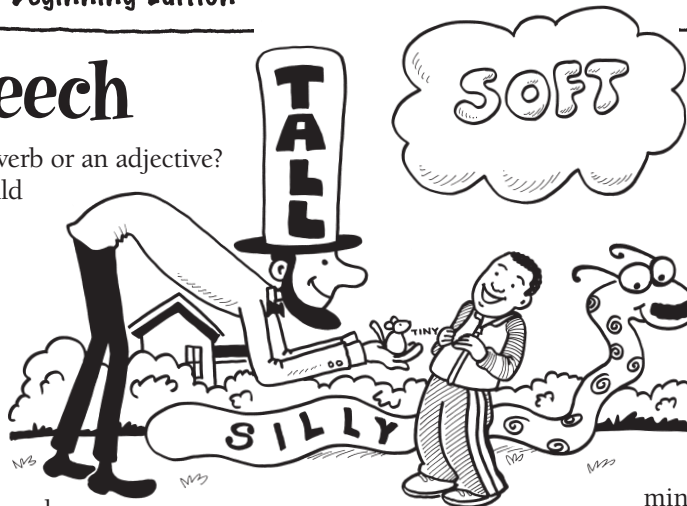


Parts of speech

Is it a noun or a pronoun? A verb or an adjective? Share these tips to help your child learn the parts of speech:

A **noun** is a person, place, or thing. Ask the questions “who,” “what,” or “where,” and the answer is usually a noun. *Example:* My sister got a haircut. (Who got a haircut? What did she get?)

Pronouns replace nouns (I, you, her, him). Read a book to your youngster, substituting the characters’ names for all the pronouns. He’ll soon realize how important pronouns are. *Example:* “Joey cleaned Joey’s room because



Joey’s mom asked Joey to” is a mouthful!

Verbs are action words. You can act out verbs and have your child guess what you are doing. *Examples:* dance, jump, run.

Adjectives describe nouns or pronouns. Your youngster can practice adjectives by “illustrating” them. *Example:* He could write the word “tall” in very tall letters, or “tiny” in miniature ones.

Tip: Look for parts of speech in everyday life. Newspaper headlines are a good place to find nouns and verbs. Restaurant menus use lots of adjectives to make foods tempting. ♥

Fun with Words

Words, words, everywhere!

Help your child be a “word collector” by finding words to read all day long. Here are three places to begin.



Toy box

Have your child turn over a toy car and look for its make and model. Does

he have a pretend kitchen? Ask him to find the words “ketchup,” “syrup,” or “milk” on his play food.

Bathroom

Your youngster can try reading the brand name on a new bar of soap. He’ll also find words on the shampoo bottle, shaving cream, and toothpaste.

Closet

Is there a slogan on your child’s T-shirt or sweatshirt? Maybe his jeans have a brand label on the waistband. Challenge your child to count the number of words he’s wearing. ♥

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 Comfort books

Q Our daughter insists that my husband and I read the same books to her every night. How can we help her branch out a little?

A Reading the same books may be a comforting part of your child’s bedtime routine. Try introducing one new book each night. As long as she still gets to hear her favorites, she probably will be open to something new.

Or you could read her a new book at another time, such as before breakfast or right after school. Your youngster may be more receptive to something unfamiliar at those times.

Choose books that are similar to the ones your child likes. Find stories by the same author or ones written in the same style or about the same topic. For example, if your youngster treasures *Dr. Seuss’s Sleep Book*, read other books about bedtime, such as *I Love You as Much* by Laura Krauss Melmed or *Are You Ready for Bed?* by Jane Johnson. ♥

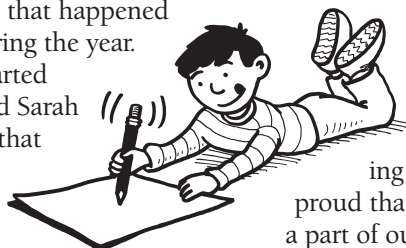


Parent to Parent

Write all about it

Each winter we mail a family newsletter to our relatives. It lets us keep in touch and share news about our lives. This year we decided our children were old enough to help. Boy, did they have fun!

We started by brainstorming a list of important things that happened to our family during the year. James said he started kindergarten, and Sarah wanted to share that the baby had learned to walk.



The list became so long that we decided to write several “articles” on one page instead of one long letter. Sarah wrote her own story. James dictated his and drew a picture of himself riding his tricycle. We even named our newsletter “The Gibson Gazette” after our last name.

With my boss’s permission, I made photocopies at work, and we signed each one personally.

James got to practice writing his name, and he was very proud that he was “big enough” to be a part of our family newsletter! ♥