

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2012

Cuyahoga Falls Elementary Schools

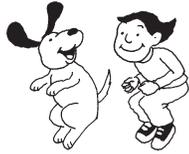
Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *My Friends/Mis Amigos*

In this easy-to-read story by Taro Gomi, a little girl names things she has learned from friends. For instance, a dog taught her to jump, her teachers taught her to study, and a butterfly taught her to smell flowers. Includes English and Spanish text.



■ *Just a Dream*

Walter thinks nothing of throwing trash in the grass or teasing his neighbor for planting a tree.

Then one night, he dreams of a future world covered with trash and tree stumps. Suddenly, he stops littering and starts taking care of the earth. A story about being environmentally friendly by Chris Van Allsburg.

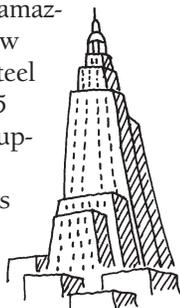


■ *Pippi Longstocking*

Astrid Lindgren's classic tale is retold in simple language for beginning readers. It's about a spunky little girl named Pippi who wears striped stockings, lives with her pet monkey, and is always getting into trouble. Translated by Tiina Nunnally.

■ *Sky Boys*

How was the Empire State Building built? This nonfiction book by Deborah Hopkinson offers amazing facts about the New York City landmark. Steel columns were sunk 55 feet underground to support the 365,000-ton tower, and the builders took lunch breaks on beams dozens of stories high.



Sentence success

Being able to build a sentence is important in every school subject—and in everyday life. Try these activities to help your youngster recognize sentences that work.

Spin and read

Together, make a sentence spinner. Cut out two circles—one 10 inches and one 6 inches—from sturdy material like file folders or paper plates. Draw lines to divide each circle into eight wedges, and lay the smaller circle on top. Across each wedge in the outer circle, write sentence starters, or subjects (The clown, The ballerina). In the inner circle, write sentence endings, or predicates (juggled at the circus, danced in the recital). Hold a pencil in the center, spin the inner circle, and read the silly sentences you create (“The clown milked the cow”).



Put in order

Ask your youngster to think of a sentence, and help her write each word on a separate slip of paper. Put the words in a paper bag, and shake them up. Then, take turns pulling out one slip at a time, and

work together to assemble the sentence. Add a second and then a third sentence to the bag. How many sentences can you unscramble at a time?

Finish the sentence

Leave an incomplete sentence on the refrigerator for your youngster to discover when she wakes up in the morning (“_____ French toast for breakfast”). Ask her to read the message and think about what would make sense in the blank (“We are having” or “Let’s eat”). Then, let her write an unfinished sentence for you to complete. ♥

Discovering new genres

There’s a big world of books out there! Introduce your youngster to all kinds of stories with these suggestions:

- Wordless books use only pictures to tell a story. Have your child “read” one to you (try *The Red Book* by Barbara Lehman or *Jour de pêche* by Laurent Moreau). Using the illustrations to describe what’s happening lets him work on comprehension skills.
- Tall tales rely on exaggeration. For example, *Paul Bunyan* (Stephen Krensky) is about a lumberjack who was so big, his shirt had wagon wheels for buttons. Read a few tall tales, and ask your youngster to point out places where the author exaggerates. This will improve his thinking skills. ♥



My listening center

Any time is story time when your youngster has easy access to audio-books. Consider setting up a special spot where he can listen to recorded stories—he'll build vocabulary and fluency. Here's how:

- Put a tape recorder, a CD player, or an MP3 player in a quiet place, such as a corner of the living room or your child's bedroom. Then, help him collect audiobooks. You can check



them out from the library, buy discounted ones through a school book club catalog, or download recordings (try audible.com or storynory.com). Or you could record your own. *Idea:* When relatives visit, invite them to record a story for your youngster. That way, he can listen to his aunt or grandpa read to him any time.

- Get print versions of audiobooks so your youngster can follow along as he listens. He may want to slide his finger under the text to keep his place. Hearing and seeing the story at the same time can help him learn to read new words. *Tip:* Suggest that he read aloud with the recording. He'll practice reading at a good pace. ♥

Q&A Printing neatly



Q My daughter's handwriting is very messy. How can I encourage her to write neatly?

A Give your child lots of opportunities to practice. You could hang up a chalkboard and use a yardstick to draw straight lines on it. Ask her to write tonight's dinner menu or tomorrow's weather forecast—and remind her to use her best printing so everyone can read it.

Thank-you notes are another fun way to work on writing. Show your youngster notes with nice handwriting that you've received. Then, encourage family members to write notes for one another ("Thank you for putting my bike away") and leave them in fun places for the other person to find.



Finally, help your daughter strengthen her hand muscles with a variety of activities. Spinning miniature tops, doing mazes, and building with Legos all improve hand coordination. ♥

Fun with Words

Outdoor word play

Spring has arrived! Here are ways your child can practice reading, writing, and spelling while she plays outside:

- Draw a hopscotch game. In each square, write a word that rhymes with several other words (ship). When your youngster lands on a square, she reads the word and says a word that rhymes with it (lip).
- Use a twig to write a word for your child in dirt or sand. Help her read it. Then, have her smooth out the soil and write a word that begins with the last letter of your word. How long can you keep going back and forth?
- Let your youngster collect 26 rocks. She can use chalk to write a letter of the alphabet on each one. Give her a word and ask her to spell it with the rocks. Or have her write words in chalk on the sidewalk. ♥



Parent to Parent

Choose your own ending

My son liked reading *The Gingerbread Man*, but he always said he didn't like the ending because the fox eats the cookie. So I suggested that he write a different ending.

I gave him a piece of paper, and he wrote about the gingerbread man outsmarting the fox and returning home to live "happily ever after." He folded the paper and tucked it into the back of the book so he could use his ending the next time he read the story.



It reminded me of a choose-your-own adventure book, so I encouraged him to think of other endings, too. He wrote one where the fox and the gingerbread man become friends and another where the gingerbread man moves to a gingerbread village.

We put all the endings in the book. Every time we get to the end of the story, he shuffles the papers and pulls out one. We have done this with several other books, too. Now, my son's favorite stories always have surprise endings! ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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