

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2017

Homer-Center Elementary School

Mrs. Lisa Weaver, Reading Specialist

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Just Itzy* (Lana Krumwiede)

A little spider named Itzy doesn't want to be called "bitzy" just because he's small. To prove he has outgrown his nickname, he plans to catch his own fly for lunch. Find out what happens to Itzy, and look for "guest appearances" from other familiar nursery rhyme characters.



■ *The Dot* (Peter H. Reynolds)

Vashti is stumped in art class and says she can't draw. When her teacher asks her to draw a dot, little does she know what inspiration will come from that plain dot. Follow Vashti as she blossoms as an artist and even inspires a younger child to be creative, too.



■ *Hanging Off Jefferson's Nose* (Tina Nichols Coury)

This nonfiction book tells the fascinating story of how two sculptors carved four presidents' faces into Mount Rushmore. Gutzon Borglum came up with the idea and started the project. But when he passed away, his son, Lincoln, fulfilled his father's dream and completed the monument.



■ *Do Families Grow on Trees? / ¿Crecen en los árboles?* (Lauren Machta)

Eva is learning about family trees in school, and she thinks families actually grow on trees! Your child can follow along as Eva learns about her family in this tale told in English and Spanish. When you finish reading, help your youngster create her own family tree using the outline at the end.

A summer full of books

Every day is a good day when it includes reading! These ideas will help your youngster start his "reading summer" off on a fun note—and enjoy reading all season long.

Special reading days

From "Mystery Monday" to "Fairy Tale Friday" to "Science Fiction Sunday," every day of the week brings a new reason for your child to read. Help him write theme days on a calendar. Then, add surprise twists like hiding mystery books for your little detective to find or planting bean seeds after reading *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Your youngster will become familiar with a wide variety of reading choices.

A reading habit

Give reading a starring role all day. Try snuggling with your child for a "wake-up" story in the morning. Turn a vacation or day trip into a "reading voyage" by having everyone pack books in their suitcases or backpacks. And enjoy nice



weather by reading bedtime stories outdoors on the porch or on a blanket in the yard.

Portrait of a reader

Here's an artistic way for your youngster to practice writing his opinions. Suggest that he draw a portrait of himself on poster board. When he finishes a book, he could add a thought bubble. *Example:* "This hook was exciting. The boy got stuck at the top of a roller coaster and had to be rescued." He'll want to read more so he can add more opinions to his poster.♥

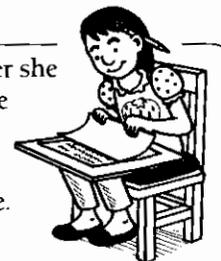
Edit—and shine

When your child writes a story in school or at home, tell her she can be an "editor" by improving and polishing it. Suggest these strategies.

Listen. Encourage her to read her tale out loud. That will help her hear if she left out a word or if a sentence doesn't make sense.

Ask. Offer to read your child's story to her, and ask questions about it. You will lead her to add more interesting details. *Examples:* "How old is the little girl?" "Was it a big school or a tiny one?"

Look. Have your youngster hold a blank sheet of paper beneath each line and check to make sure each sentence has a capital letter at the beginning and a punctuation mark at the end.♥



Fun reasons to write

What would your child like to do while school is out? Encourage her to plan summer fun and enjoy nonfiction writing at the same time. Here's how.

Design play spaces. Suggest that your youngster draw and label "blueprints" for indoor and outdoor places to play. She might redesign her room with a "science lab" where she can do experiments and a "construction zone" for building with blocks. A blueprint of your yard could show a "climbing tree" and a "cartwheel area." *Idea:* If possible, help her use her blueprints to set up each spot.



Make a to-do list. Perhaps your child wants to visit her grandparents, explore new bike trails, and learn to swim. Have her list her ideas and illustrate each one. She could hang up her list and check off each item she does.

Invent a game. Hula ball, anyone? Let your youngster use

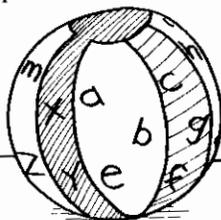
outdoor toys like balls, hula hoops, or racquets to make up a brand new game. Help her write the instructions, listing the equipment and the steps for playing. Try the game together as you follow the directions she wrote. She can make additions or changes to be sure her game works!♥

Fun with Words Now I know my ABCs

Whether your youngster recognizes a handful of letters or has learned most of them, these games will improve and reinforce his knowledge:

● Have a "ball" with this alphabet idea!

Help your child write his ABCs all over a beach ball. Toss or bat the ball back and forth.



When you catch it, call out the letter that's closest to your right thumb. *Bonus:* He'll work on recognizing left and right, too.

● Let your youngster use chalk to write the alphabet in random order on a sidewalk, driveway, or blacktop. Take turns tossing a beanbag (or a sock filled with dry beans and tied shut) onto the letters in alphabetical order. So the first player aims for A, the second for B, and so on. Continue until someone hits Z.

Variation: Your child can say a word that begins with each letter when you play either game.♥

Q&A Story hour and beyond

Q My son loves story hour at the library. How can we find other free reading-related events to try in our community?

A Great question! Your community probably has various "bookish" activities for your son to enjoy. For starters, bookstores may offer free story times or visits from local authors. Also, some farmers' markets, fairs, and festivals host storytellers or poetry readings for kids. And community theaters might put on plays based on children's books.

Here's another idea: Let your son host his own story times and other activities. He'll feel like a big kid as he leads story hour for younger siblings, cousins, or neighbors. Or he could invite friends over to read books together or to make up stories that they can perform for you.♥



Parent to Parent

See all the new words!

My daughter was excited about the "word wall" in her classroom this year. Her teacher wrote words the students were learning on colorful cards and posted them on a wall. Leah asked if we could make one at home, so we brainstormed categories to include.

She wrote our categories—"weather," "things you plug in," "buildings"—on separate sheets of paper and taped them to her closet door. Now, she listens and looks for new words

to add. For instance, she wrote *gust* after hearing a weather report and *incubator* from a nonfiction book we read on hatching chicks.

Leah also likes to ask visitors to put words on her wall. Her uncle recently added *yurt* under "buildings" and explained that it's a type of circular, dome-shaped tent. I love that she's learning, and using, new words. In fact, she's in the other room right now building a yurt for her doll to sleep in tonight!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Working Together for Learning Success

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Book Picks

■ *The Brilliant World of Tom Gates* (Liz Pichon)

When Tom's not annoying his classmates, playing tricks on his sister, or scheming to get tickets to see his favorite band, he's writing in his diary. This first book in the Tom Gates series invites readers to chuckle at Tom's hilarious mishaps. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Awesome Adventures at the Smithsonian* (Emily B. Korrell)

This nonfiction book lets your youngster explore the world's largest museum system, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The museums contain more than 154 million artifacts, including the Hope diamond and the Apollo lunar landing module. Created by a former teacher, the guide is packed with facts, photos, and activities.



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■ *Fuzzy Mud* (Louis Sachar)

In the woods, throwing weird-looking mud seemed like a good way for Tamaya and Marshall to deal with the class bully. But now Tamaya has a bad rash, and the bully hasn't returned to school. Is the mysterious mud at the heart of an environmental disaster?

■ *Eat Your Greens, Reds, Yellows, and Purples* (DK)

Encourage your youngster to eat a rainbow of foods with this kid-friendly vegetarian cookbook. Step-by-step photographs make it easy for young chefs to follow along. Plus, color-coded sections contain nutrition facts about the ingredients.



Read, sing, explore

Children who read during summer break are more likely to maintain and even improve their reading skills. Here are ways your youngster can fit in reading while spending time outdoors, enjoying music, or pursuing an interest.



Read on location

Suggest that wherever he goes, your child carry books related to his destination. At the beach or pool, he might read a novel set on a tropical island or a nonfiction book about ocean life. While camping, he could read a story about a mountain climber or a book on outdoor survival. He'll naturally make real-life connections to details in his books.

Collect song lyrics

Have your youngster print out lyrics to favorite songs and put them in a binder.

He can use the printouts to sing along with the radio or his playlist. Let him practice making inferences—can he “read between the lines” to figure out what the songwriter meant?

Follow interests

Your child's interests can inspire him to read. If he enjoyed a science unit on rocks and minerals, he might collect rocks and look them up in a field guide. Or maybe he loves animals. He could get a brochure of training tips from the vet and teach commands to your dog. 🐕

Roll-and-write poetry

With this fun family poetry-writing activity, your child will choose her words carefully!

1. Ask your youngster to pick a topic (say, thunderstorms) for each person to write a poem about.
2. Let your child roll two dice—the number rolled is how many lines each poem should be. (Roll an 8, and the poems will be 8 lines.)
3. For every line, take turns rolling one die to determine the

number of syllables in that line. If you roll 5, 2, and 1, your youngster's first three lines might go:

*Lightning cracks the sky
And then
Boom!*

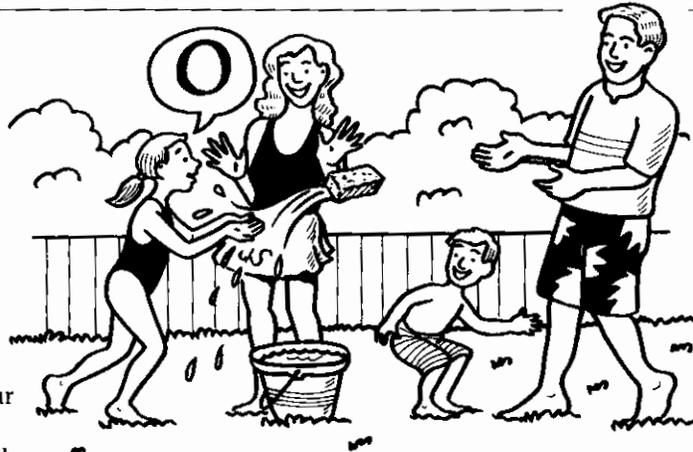


4. Read your poems aloud. It'll be fun to hear how different they are, even though the topic and rhythm are the same! 📖

Word games with a splash

Can your child spell *swimsuit*? Have everyone put theirs on, and beat the heat with these family spelling and vocabulary games.

Dunk and spell. Players stand around a bucket of water. Let your youngster dunk a large sponge in the water. She says any letter (perhaps O) and tosses the sponge to another player. That person dunks the sponge, thinks of a word that starts with O, and adds a letter that would begin to spell her word (O, C).



Continue until a word is spelled (*ocean, octopus*). If you finish a word or can't think of a letter to add, you're out. The last player to go starts a new word.

Downpour. Anyone who breaks the word chain is in for a soaking. Fill a large plastic cup with water, and name a category (*flowers*). The first player holds the cup and names something that belongs in the category (*tulip*). She passes the cup to the next person, who names a flower that begins with the *last* letter of the previous word (*petunia*). Play until someone is stumped—she must dump the cup over her head! 📖



My book of summer

Putting together a summer scrapbook is a fun way for your child to practice writing. Share these ideas for filling the pages:

- Take photos during an activity (say, a cookout). Arrange them in order on a page, and write captions to tell what happened.



- Save ticket stubs, maps, and other memorabilia. Glue them in the scrapbook, and use them to write a story.

- Keep a list of favorite quotations or passages from books he enjoyed.

- Draw a comic strip about a special memory, such as a water park adventure or a visit with cousins.

Idea: Suggest that your youngster plan to make a new book each summer. 📖

Parent 2 Parent Start a literature circle

This year in school, my son Seth enjoyed participating in a literature circle. He explained that it's like a book club where every reader has a special job—and he wanted to start one in our neighborhood.

My son and a few friends decided to choose books, meet regularly, and take turns with different roles. Seth was the group's first "director," so his job was to bring discussion questions, such as whether the main character would make a cool friend. Thanks to the group's "word detective," whose job was to look up unfamiliar words, the children decided the character's *deviousness* would make them unable to trust him. At the end of their meeting, they passed around hooks brought by the "recommender" and voted on the one to read next.

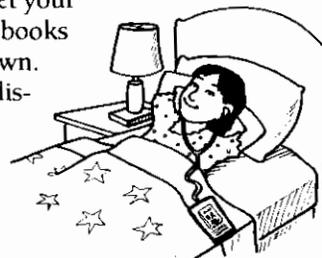
Seth is excited about starting the new book. And guess what? I told Seth that he inspired me to start a literature circle with my friends. We're having our first meeting next month! 📖



Q&A Listening to audiobooks

Q I've heard that audiobooks will help my daughter become a better reader. How can I get her interested in them?

A It's true! Audiobooks let your child enjoy more complex books than she can read on her own. Plus, when your daughter listens to an audiobook, she hears a good example of *fluent* reading—the narrator reads smoothly and with expression.



Have your youngster download a title or two from your public library's website. She might listen while she does chores or plays in her room, or she

could relax with an audiobook before she falls asleep. Or turn on an audiobook for everyone to hear in the car. You'll enjoy a book together, and the story could spark an interesting family discussion. 📖

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