

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2019

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

Same, Same but Different

(Jenny Sue Kosteck-Shaw)

Two boys with an ocean between them become best friends in this story about similarities and differences. Pen pals Elliot and Kailash both like to climb trees—but Elliot's tree in America has a treehouse, while Kailash's tree in India is full of monkeys. What else will they discover as they exchange letters?

Sofia Martinez: My Family Adventure

(Jacqueline Jules)

There's one adventure after another for seven-year-old Sofia. She goes to hilarious lengths to stand out from her older sisters, make a piñata for her grandmother's birthday, and find an escaped pet mouse. A glossary helps readers learn the Spanish words sprinkled throughout the story. Book one in the Sofia Martinez series.



Digger, Dozer, Dumper

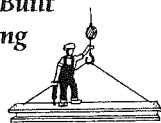
(Hope Vestergaard)

Trucks have many jobs! Your child can learn about their work as he reads this collection of 16 poems, each featuring a different vehicle. Colorful illustrations show everything from street sweepers to fire trucks, and rhyming verses describe their jobs—cleaning, rescuing, and more.

Sky Boys: How They Built the Empire State Building

(Deborah Hopkinson)

This true story offers amazing facts about the New York City landmark. For example, 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.



Be a nonfiction explorer

Lemonade, swimming, the zoo... no matter what's on your child's agenda while school is out, he can read to learn more about it! Try these tips for nonfiction reading before or even during summertime activities.



Learn how

Have your youngster think of something new he'd like to try, such as running a lemonade stand or putting on a magic show. Together, read books that might help him succeed. For instance, he could learn how to make change from a picture book about counting money. Or he could read a book of magic tricks to find out how to dazzle his audience.

Or if you're traveling on an airplane, pack a book for him to read about how planes fly.

Go beyond books

Suggest that your youngster collect and explore other nonfiction materials. He might get a map of the zoo, a takeout menu at the pizza parlor, or a calendar of events at the park. Ask him to read words he recognizes (*tiger, cheese, hike*). He could circle his favorite animals or pizza toppings, or highlight park programs he wants to attend.♥

Discover facts

Take books along wherever you go. Maybe your child will read a book of world records at the pool and tell you who swam the fastest or the farthest ever.

Revise and edit

How can your youngster make her writing shine? By polishing it! Here's how.

● **Revise.** Encourage your child to read her story aloud. What could she add or rearrange? To decide, she might think, "Did I leave out anything important?" or "Are the events in the right order?" Ask questions to help her add details or clear up confusion. ("Who is Chloe?")

● **Edit.** Now it's time to edit for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Have your child read her story once to check for each type of error. If you spot a mistake she overlooks (say, a word that should be capitalized), help her figure it out. ("What should the first word in a sentence start with?")♥



Writing “on location”

Inspire your youngster to practice writing vivid descriptions whether she's outdoors or at home. She'll have fun using *adjectives*, or descriptive words, with these ideas.

Nature on the playground. Take pencils and paper outside, and try this activity. Each of you secretly spots something

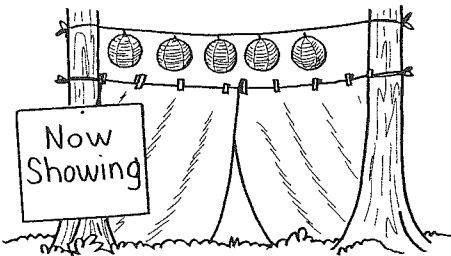


in nature and writes a description that includes at least two adjectives—but doesn't name the object. Your child could write, “I see something *big*, *white*, and *fluffy*,” and you might write, “I see something *short*, *yellow*, and *green*.” Trade papers, then take a look around, and try to guess what the other person is describing (cloud, dandelion).

Scenes from afar. Your child can write descriptions of faraway places without ever leaving home! Have her cut out pictures of different types of scenery from old magazines. *Examples:* tropical beach, snowy mountain, the surface of Mars. She could glue each photo on a separate page of a notebook and write about it, using adjectives to bring her sentences to life. (“Mars looks *red* and *dusty*. Some parts are *rocky*, and others are *smooth*.”)♥

Neighborhood theater

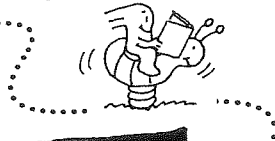
Lights, camera, action! Let your youngster put on a play based on a favorite storybook, and she'll work on reading, writing, and speaking.



First, help your child turn the book into a script by writing the dialogue on a sheet of paper. Then, make a copy for each character. Your youngster and friends and family can choose roles.

Suggest that actors read their lines aloud a few times to rehearse. Encourage them to ham it up, using voices that might sound like their characters. They could also make scenery on poster board and use household items as props.

Now it's show time! Invite neighbors to be the audience, and videotape the performance. Finally, hold a film premiere where the cast can watch the tape.♥



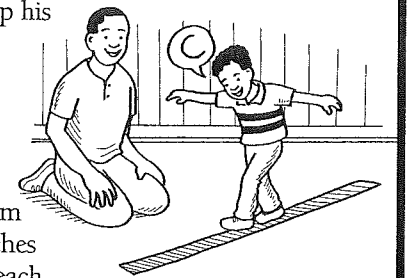
Fun with Words

Active spelling games

Your child can balance and hop his way to better spelling with these games.

Balance like an acrobat

Make a duct tape “tightrope.” Your youngster can spell words, taking one step for each letter. If you say *block*, he'd take five careful steps. If he spells it correctly without stepping off, give him another word. If not, his turn ends. Once he reaches the end of the tightrope, he scores one point for each word he got right. Then, he gives you words. After five rounds, the person with the most points wins.



Hop like a bunny

Let your child use chalk to write the alphabet in big letters scattered across a driveway, sidewalk, or blacktop. Then, call out a word (say, *hat*). He spells it as he hops to each letter—if he gets the word right, he earns one point per letter. Now he says a word, and you spell and hop. The first player with 10 points wins.♥

Parent to Parent

A reading campout

My sister recently reminded me about how much we loved making tents and reading in them when we were little. She said she felt grown-up helping me read, and I remembered how I wanted to practice reading so I'd sound just like her.

I decided to try a “reading campout” with my kids, Molly and Liam. We checked out library books and pitched a tent in the backyard. Then, my

husband and I sat in lawn chairs with our own books while the kids read. We heard Molly helping Liam sound out words. When it was her turn to read, we listened to her explain the meanings of words to her little brother.

Since that night, our kids have asked for more reading campouts. Now we're planning a real camping trip—and Molly and Liam are already deciding which books they want to take and read to each other!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

May 2019

TOOLS & TIDBITS

How many outfits?

Ask your child to lay out three of his shirts and two pairs of his pants. How many different outfits can he make? Let him check his prediction by drawing possible combinations. He'll learn to estimate based on what he sees and to use problem-solving skills to reach a conclusion. (Answer: Six outfits.)

Natural vs. human-made

Gather a dozen small objects. Some should be from nature (nut, leaf, rock) and others made by humans (eraser, bead, magnet). Can your youngster sort them according to whether they're natural or made by people? (Explain that natural objects come from the Earth.) When she's finished, she could collect more objects and sort again.

Book picks

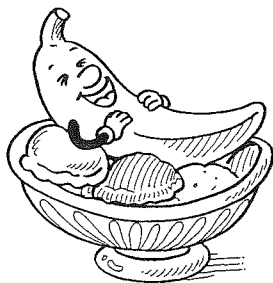
■ In *The Wishing Club: A Story About Fractions* (Donna Jo Napoli), your child will join four siblings as they discover fractions and, hopefully, get a pet pig.

■ Pictures and words tell the story of each animal's home in *Where Do I Sleep? A Pacific Northwest Lullaby* (Jennifer Blomgren). A nice bedtime read-aloud.

Just for fun

Q: What did the banana do when it saw a monkey?

A: It split!



Keep cool and do math

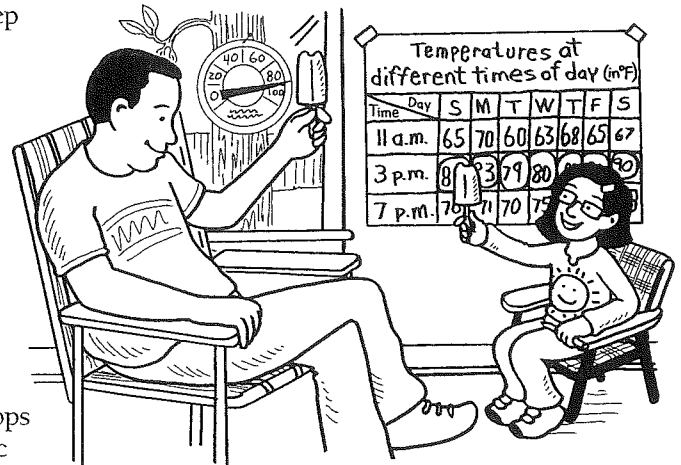
Your youngster can keep her math skills sharp and stay cool this summer by counting, comparing numbers, and practicing facts. Here's how.

Ice cream parlor

Encourage your child to set up a pretend ice cream shop to use *ordinal numbers* like first, second, and third. Be her customer, and ask for scoops of ice cream—in a specific order. *Example:* "Please make the *first* scoop strawberry, the *second* chocolate, and the *third* vanilla." Then, she can scoop play dough into a cup in the correct order (pink, brown, white).

Hot days

When is the hottest time of day? Help your youngster use a thermometer or weather app to check the temperature each day at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m. She should record the temperatures on a chart and circle each day's high in red. Each week, she could count to see which



time has the most red circles—that might be the best time to cool off indoors!

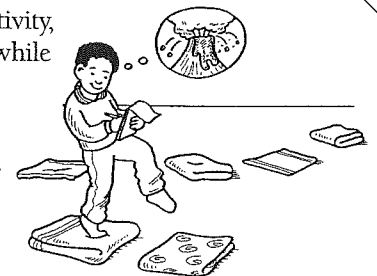
Solve and splash

Let your child work on math facts in the swimming pool. Have her use a permanent marker to write the numbers 0–20 on separate plastic plates. Float them in the water, and give each player a sponge. To play, one person says a problem like $12 - 3 = \underline{\quad}$, and the next player tosses her sponge onto the plate with the answer. If she hits the right plate (9), she gives the next person a problem. When everyone has had a turn, play again.

A coding adventure

Don't step in the lava! With this unplugged activity, your child will venture into the world of coding while staying "safe" from imaginary lava.

1. Have your youngster arrange towels or washcloths on the floor to make a path across the room.
2. Armed with a notebook and pencil, he can navigate the path while writing code to instruct others on how he avoids the "lava." *Example:* "↑ 2, ↗ 1" for "Jump forward twice, jump diagonally to the right once."
3. Once your child has crossed the lava, he should read his code aloud to help you cross the room "safely."
4. Now he could rearrange the path and write a new code.



Shapes: From 2-D to 3-D

What is made up of four rectangles and two squares? A *rectangular prism*! Your child can build geometry skills by matching flat, or 2-D, shapes with solid, or 3-D, shapes. Try these ideas.

“Mail” a shape. On separate index cards, have your youngster draw shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, trapezoid, pentagon, hexagon). Pick a card (say, the circle), and “mail” it to your child by placing it in a shoebox. He searches the house for a solid



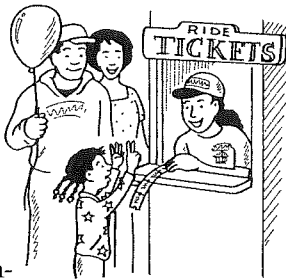
object with that flat shape as one or more of its faces (a soup can, or cylinder) and mails it back. Now he chooses a card for you. If he sends you a square, maybe you’ll mail him a Rubik’s Cube.

Trace a block. With your child not looking, pick a building block, and use a crayon to trace around each of its faces (sides) on a piece of paper. For a *triangular prism*, you’d trace around two triangles and three rectangles. Ask your child which block you chose. He could test different blocks by matching their faces to the tracings. When he finds the right block, he can name its faces and its shape. Then, it’s his turn to trace a block for you.

Q & A Family math “field trips”

Q: My daughter’s two favorite things about school are math and field trips. How can we turn our family’s outings into math “field trips” this summer?

A: Field trips connect what your daughter learns in school with hands-on, real-life experiences. Luckily, just about any outing is a potential math field trip.



During a baseball game, have your child read the score after each inning and announce who’s winning and by how many runs. If you attend a concert, she might count the musicians on stage and estimate how many people are in the audience.

At a county fair, your daughter could make up story problems. *Example:* “There are six spotted pigs and four pink pigs. How many more spotted pigs are there than pink pigs?” (Answer: $6 - 4 = 2$.) Or she might figure out how many tickets she needs if the Ferris wheel requires three tickets and the merry-go-round takes two ($3 + 2 = 5$).

SCIENCE LAB

Thick as molasses

This experiment shows your child how the thickness of a liquid affects how fast it moves.

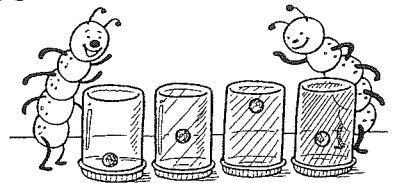
You’ll need: four same-size empty jars with lids, four same-size clean marbles, four liquids of different thicknesses (examples: water, cooking oil, honey, molasses)

Here’s how: Let your youngster put a marble in each jar and fill each jar with a different liquid. Have her screw the lids on tightly. Turn all four jars over at the same time (this will take two people), and watch the marbles drop. Which one hits bottom first? Last?

What happens? The thicker the liquid, the longer it takes the marble to fall.

Why? Thicker liquids have higher *viscosity*, or resistance to flow. If two marbles fall in about the same amount of time, the two liquids they’re in have similar viscosity.

Idea: Talk about how viscosity is important in foods. Would gravy or spaghetti sauce be good if it were as thin as water? Is it easier to make chocolate milk with thin chocolate syrup or thick hot fudge?



MATH CORNER

Just a minute

“One Mississippi, two Mississippi...” Your youngster will find out just how long a minute is with this homemade sand timer.

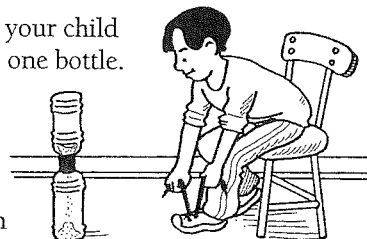
Materials: funnel, sand or sugar, measuring cup, two empty plastic water bottles (dried, caps removed), foil, sharpened pencil, duct tape, stopwatch

Hold the funnel while your child measures $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sand into one bottle. He should tightly cover the openings of the bottles completely with foil. Use the pencil to poke a hole (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

wide) in the center of the foil on each bottle. Place the empty bottle upside down against the mouth of the bottle with sand, and duct-tape them together.

Now, he can flip his sand timer while you set a stopwatch for 1 minute. He should separate the bottles, add or remove sand, and re-cover and reattach until there’s exactly 1 minute worth of sand in the timer.

What kinds of things can he do in one minute? He could use his new timer to find out. Maybe he’ll tie his shoes, tell a joke, or pick up his toys!



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