

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Shelter Pet Squad: Jelly Bean

(Cynthia Lord)

Suzannah has just become the youngest member of the Shelter Pet Squad, a group of kids who help local shelter animals. Her first mission is to find a forever home for an adorable guinea pig named Jelly Bean. Book one in the Shelter Pet Squad series.



■ In Mary's Garden

(Tina and Carson Kugler)

This biography tells how Mary Nohl loved art as a little girl and grew up to create an unusual garden. She used materials like sand, metal, wood, and rocks to make interesting sculptures, turning her garden into what would become a historic landmark.

■ The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!

(Jon Scieszka)

According to the big bad wolf, the story everyone knows about the three little pigs is wrong. And he's here to set the record straight. Readers will laugh at the wolf's elaborate tale of how he never meant to eat the pigs—he just wanted to borrow a cup of sugar. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ If You Were the Moon

(Laura Purdie Salas)

The child in this story thinks the moon just hangs around in the sky. But it really has many “jobs,” from making ocean waves to waking nighttime animals. This picture book uses a conversation between a girl and the moon to present scientific facts.



Pretend play boosts vocabulary

“I’m grooming my stuffed dog.” “I can fix that car—I’m a mechanic!” Imaginary play gives your child chances to say words that he might not use every day. Try these ideas to grow his vocabulary through make-believe.



Find props

Give your youngster new things to talk about. You could put a wrench and a socket with his toy cars. Or offer him empty food packages to play store. When you notice him using the props, name them for him. You could say, “I see you’re repairing your cars with a wrench and socket” or “Oh, your grocery store sells relish and chickpeas.”

Play together

Spend time pretending with your child, and introduce new words. Maybe you’ll hold a chopstick and say, “I’m a conductor. I’m using this baton to conduct the symphony.” Or if you’re playing vet, ask,

“What kind of dog do you have? Mine is a Siberian husky.”

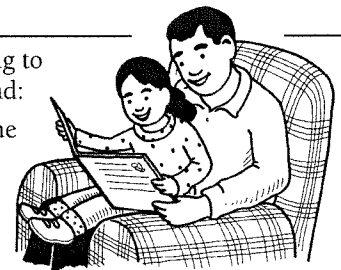
Act out a story

It’s common for youngsters to pretend they’re book characters after hearing a story. When you read to your youngster, explain unfamiliar words he can use to act out the book. If the story was about a scuba diver, perhaps he’ll pretend his pajamas are a wet suit. He might turn a cardboard tube into a snorkel and go on an imaginary underwater adventure!♥

How to handle reading errors

Oops! Your youngster just goofed while reading to you. What should you do? Keep these tips in mind:

- Wait to see if she catches her own mistake. If she doesn’t notice her error by the end of the sentence or paragraph, ask, “Did that part make sense?” or “What other word would make sense there?” She’ll learn to *self-correct*—an important step toward becoming an independent reader.
- Resist the urge to correct every mistake your child makes. That can interrupt the flow of the story. For example, if her error doesn’t really affect the meaning of the sentence (say, she reads *house* instead of *home*), consider letting her keep going.♥



“Just right” books for now—and later

Q: What are the three categories of books that help new readers grow?

A: Books that are too easy, ones that are too hard, and those that are just right!

Too easy. That favorite book you think your child has outgrown is similar to a “beach read”



for adults. She knows all the words and doesn't have to think too hard about the plot. Encourage her to relax with books like these—they build confidence and her enjoyment of reading.

Too hard. Sometimes kids want to read books that are out of reach of their reading abilities. If

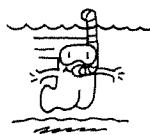
your youngster has her heart set on one, read it aloud to her. She'll enjoy listening to a book she chose. Plus, she'll pick up new words and be exposed to a more complex plot.

Just right. These books are ones your child can read with a little help. To determine if a book is a good fit, have your child read the first couple of pages to you. If she knows most of the words and understands what she's reading, it's likely the book will challenge her abilities without frustrating her.♥

Fun with Words

Rhyming dominoes

Forget dominoes with dots—this game uses rhyming words instead! Play it to help your child hear sounds in words.



Materials: 40 slips of paper, pencil

1. Have your youngster draw a line on each slip to divide it in half like a domino. On each half, help him write a word ending with one of these letter combinations: *all, et, in, og, un.* (Be sure to have 8 words per letter combination. Repeat words as needed.)



2. Spread the dominoes facedown, let each player take three, and flip a starting domino faceup.

3. Players take turns trying to form a chain of dominoes where rhyming words touch. Say the starting domino has *met*. If your child has a rhyme (say, *pet*), he links his domino with that one, end to end. If he doesn't have a rhyme, he takes a new domino, and his turn ends.

4. Continue taking turns, adding a rhyming domino to either end of the chain. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes wins.♥

Parent to Parent

And now...the family news

After a local news anchor visited my daughter's class for Career Day, Amelia wanted to be a reporter, too. I suggested that she interview her grandparents and deliver a news report about their activities. What a hit!

Her grandparents loved being interviewed, and Amelia remembered to ask *who, what, where, when,* and *why* questions—just like the news anchor said she does. For instance, Amelia asked her grandmother, “When did you start your new job?” and “What do you like best about it?” She listened carefully and wrote down the responses.

Finally, I videotaped Amelia reading her report in her best “anchor voice.” This has been a great way for her to work on writing, speaking, and listening skills.♥



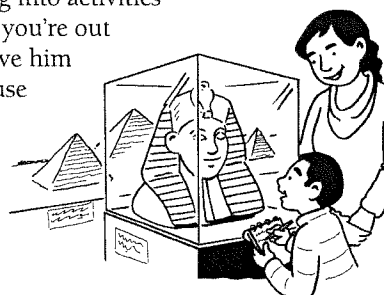
Q&A Writing on the move

Q: My son's teacher says he needs more writing practice, but it's a struggle to get him to sit still and write. Any ideas?

A: Try weaving writing into activities your son can do while you're out and about together. Give him a special notebook to use when you go places together, perhaps to a museum or the park. Encourage him to write about what he sees. At a museum, he

could jot down information about the Egyptian pyramids or a Tyrannosaurus rex. In the park, he might write a description of a carousel or a waterfall.

At home, suggest that he expand on what he wrote. Maybe he'll write a story about visiting a real pyramid in Egypt or making friends with a T-rex. Or perhaps he'll write a “visitor's guide” to the park.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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