

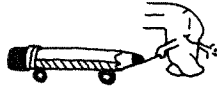
Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Big Adventures of Tiny House*

(Susan Schaefer Bernardo)

Tiny is a little house on a big journey. He travels across the country with his friend Big Truck, looking for a place to settle down. Along the way, he meets all kinds of houses and learns that home is anywhere, as long as you feel it in your heart.



■ *LOOK I'm a Scientist*

(DK Publishing)

Just like a scientist, your child can ask questions and use her five senses to make discoveries. The experiments in this book call for everyday materials and include easy-to-follow directions for creating bubbles, making slime, learning about sound, and more.



■ *Calendar Mysteries: January Joker*

(Ron Roy)

When seven-year-old Bradley Pinto's friends go missing, all the clues point to an alien abduction. But are those mysterious lights and footprints really caused by something from a UFO? Bradley will need to follow the clues to solve the mystery. Book One in the Calendar Mysteries series.

■ *Mapping Our World* (Sandy Phan)

This nonfiction book introduces your youngster to maps and globes. He'll begin by exploring map symbols and lines of longitude and latitude before moving on to fun facts about the seven continents. There's even an activity for inventing a new continent. (Also available in Spanish.)



Fluency: Bringing it all together

As your youngster learns to read, a main goal is for her to become fluent. Fluency happens when all the pieces click into place: recognizing many words instantly, reading smoothly and expressively, and understanding what she reads. Try these tips to help her read more fluently.



Build word recognition

The more words your child knows at first sight, the more fluently she'll read. Ask her teacher for a list of sight words (frequently used words), and play games with them. She could write them in a hopscotch grid to read as she hops. Or play cooperative "Scrabble." Place all the tiles faceup, and together, make a crossword of sight words.

Practice with familiar books

Fluent reading sounds like normal speech—not too fast or too slow, but just right. To practice, let your youngster read books she knows well. She won't need to stop to figure out words, so she'll

be free to read at a comfortable pace and focus on the meaning of the story. Also, ask a librarian for books with a refrain—the same phrase repeats on each page.

Use punctuation "clues"

Encourage your child to think of punctuation marks as clues for reading with expression. Commas and periods tell her to pause slightly. For quotation marks, she might change her voice to show a character is speaking. Have her listen to an audiobook and follow along in the print version, noticing how the narrator uses the punctuation. Then, she can read the book to you. ♥

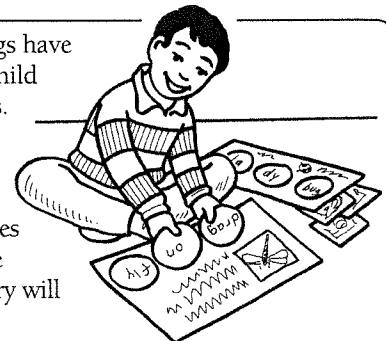
My sylla-bug book

Dragonfly, caterpillar, bumblebee... many bugs have long names. Making this cute book lets your child spell big words by breaking them into syllables.

1. Help your youngster list bug names (*grasshopper, ladybug, centipede*).

2. Let him trace around a soup can to make circles on colored paper and cut them out. He can write each syllable on a separate circle. *Tip:* A dictionary will show him how to break a word.

3. Mix them all up. Have your child glue the circles for each word back together onto separate sheets of paper. He could draw each bug and write about it. Now staple the pages into a book for him to read again and again. ♥



Writing: Start with a plan

Before your youngster writes, making a kid-friendly graphic organizer helps him plan what he'll say. And looking at his plan while he writes will remind him of facts or details to mention. Suggest these clever ideas.



Rays of sunshine. To plan a report or story, your child could draw a big sun. He can write a report topic ("Hamsters") in

the center and then a fact on each ray ("Sleeps all day," "Stuffs cheeks with food," "Runs on a wheel"). Or before he writes a story, he might put his main idea in a sun ("Visited relatives") and a major plot event on each ray ("Rode a train," "Played with cousins," "Went to a fair").

Rungs on a ladder. If your youngster needs to write instructions or explain a scientific process, have him draw a ladder with a rung for

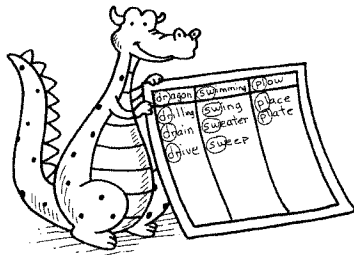
each step. "How to Pack a Suitcase" may include "Choose clothes," "Fold clothes," "Open suitcase," and "Put clothes inside." If he's describing how a seed becomes a plant, his rungs could say "Seed is planted," "Seed sprouts," "Leaves grow," and "Flowers bloom." Let him refer to his ladder to write a thorough explanation.♥



Spot the consonant combo



Here's a portable activity that will help your child learn consonant combinations like *bl* and *st*—an important part of sounding out words.



First, have her look through a book and choose words that start with two consonants (*dragon*, *twins*). Suggest that she draw columns on a sheet of paper, write one of the words at the top of each, and circle the beginning consonants.

Now let her take her paper when you go out. Together, try to spot words on signs that begin with the same combinations, and she can write them in the correct columns. Under *dragon*, she might write *drive*, *drilling*, and *drain*.

At home, help her read unfamiliar words. Then, she could count to see which combination she saw the most.♥



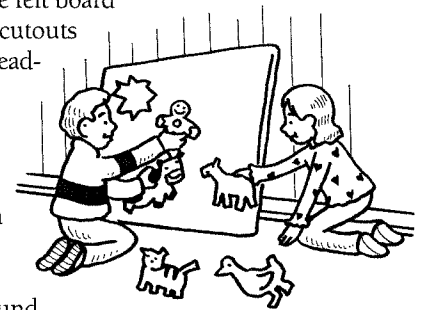
Make your own felt board

My son Antoine loves the felt board at school. The kids use felt cutouts to retell stories, which the teacher said boosts reading comprehension. So I decided to make a felt board for Antoine to play with at home.

I stapled felt to a big piece of cardboard. Then I gave my son smaller pieces of felt, and he used them to make the characters from *The Gingerbread Man*. He drew them with a marker, and I cut them out for him.

Antoine had fun moving the characters around on the board as he retold the story. I smiled when I heard him chanting, "Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!"

Now Antoine is eager to make more characters and retell other stories on his felt board.♥



Q&A "Swap" to find new books

Q My daughter wants new books for her shelf, but we're on a tight budget. Any suggestions?

A Luckily, you don't need to spend money for your child to get new books.

Consider starting a book swap. Invite friends, relatives, and neighbors with older and younger children to gather at your home and trade books. Your daughter's outgrown books can be passed on to a

younger reader, and she could find ones that are just right for her now.

For another type of book swap, scout your area for Little Free Libraries. These cute mini-libraries let people exchange

books for free. Check littlefreelibrary.org, and click on "Map" to find ones near you. When your daughter takes a book, it's hers to keep. Just have her leave one in its place for someone else to enjoy!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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