

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

Early Learning Center at George Earle

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia* (Jeanette Winter)

What if the library came to your neighborhood on the back of a donkey?

This is the true story of a Colombian school-teacher's traveling library that brought books to children in remote villages. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Dragons Love Tacos* (Adam Rubin)

When a little boy discovers that dragons like to eat tacos, he decides to host a taco party for them.

But if a fire-breathing dragon accidentally gets a bite of spicy salsa, look out! A silly story about a dragon party that turns into a disaster.

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■ *Just a Second* (Steve Jenkins)

In just a single second, a bumblebee flaps its wings 100 times and the earth travels $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles. This nonfiction book will help your child think about time in fascinating ways. She'll also discover different methods of measuring time.

■ *Bedtime Is Canceled* (Cece Meng)

Maggie and her brother write their parents an official-looking note: "Bedtime is canceled." Somehow, the note blows out the window, lands in a newspaper office, and ends up in a headline. Soon, bedtime really is canceled, and exhausted children quickly discover the importance of sleep.



Time for a story

Want to spend time with your youngster, build her reading skills, and help her learn to love books? You can do all three when you read aloud. Here are suggestions.

Read regularly

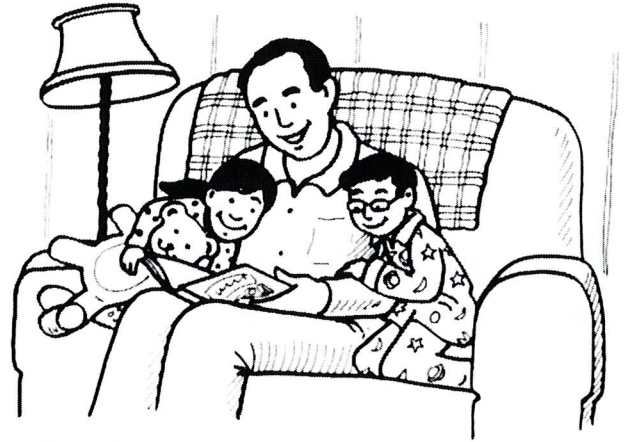
Try to read to your child every day. You might aim for 10–15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to the day. Bring along a book, and read to her during a sibling's sports practice. Or curl up together with a book when you get home from work.

Take turns choosing books

Your youngster may want to hear old favorites again and again. Use your turn for new titles and variety, such as nonfiction or poetry.

Let her participate

Ask your child to turn the pages while you read. Also, she can finish sentences that rhyme or fill in words she knows. Go slowly so she has time to understand



the story and look at the illustrations. She'll enjoy read-aloud time more if she plays an active role.

Be playful

You can use different voices for different characters (a high, squeaky voice for a mouse or a deep, booming voice for a horse). Or substitute your youngster's name for the main character's name, and use family members' names for other characters.

Note: You don't have to be an expert reader—your child will love it when you read aloud because it's you.♥

Writing that makes sense

As your child first learns to write, his stories may not always make sense to others. Help his writing flow logically with these two ideas.

1. Even if your youngster isn't writing sentences yet, he can tell you stories. As he describes the new class pet or something funny that happened at lunch, you can jot down his tale. He'll practice relating events in a logical order, and that can help when he puts his thoughts and ideas down on paper himself.

2. Let your child read his stories to you. Ask questions to encourage him to add information ("What did you do with your friends at recess?") or to clear up a confusing part ("Who said, 'Let's go home'—you or your brother?").♥



Spot the details

What is an archaeologist? What do bears eat? Nonfiction books have the answers—and if your child reads carefully, he will find them. The following suggestions can help him read for details and boost his comprehension.

Read around the text. The pages of many nonfiction books are covered with “extras” that stories don’t have (headings, photo captions, an index, a glossary). Point out these features. Then, ask your youngster what questions he has about the topic that the book might answer. Say he’s reading *Archaeologists Dig for Clues* by Kate Duke. He might



think, “What tools do archaeologists use?” or “What are fossils?” Help him read the book, and see how many answers he can find.

Pair fiction with nonfiction.

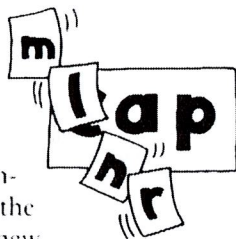
Together, read a story like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (James Marshall) followed by a nonfiction book such as *Bears* (Deborah Hodge). As you read the second book, encourage your child to look for ways that real bears are different from the fictional ones. For example, he might say that real bears eat things like grass, berries, fish, and insects, while the three bears eat porridge. ♥

Fun with Words

Wonderful wordplay

Use these activities to build your child’s phonemic awareness—her ability to hear sounds in words:

- Choose a three-letter word, such as *cap*. Have your youngster substitute different beginning sounds from the alphabet to make new words (*lap*, *map*, *nap*, *rap*, *sap*, *tap*, *zap*). How many can she think of?
- Pick a long word, and tell her to clap once as she says each syllable. For *mozzarella*, she would clap four times: *moz-za-rel-la*.
- Ask your child to say a word without the first sound. *Example*: “Can you say *sit* without the *s*?” (*Answer*: *It*)
- Think of a word, and give your youngster a “sound” clue to figure it out. For instance, “I’m thinking of a word for something that you chew but don’t swallow. The word has an *uh* sound in the middle.” (*Answer*: *Gum*) ♥



Vocabulary boosters

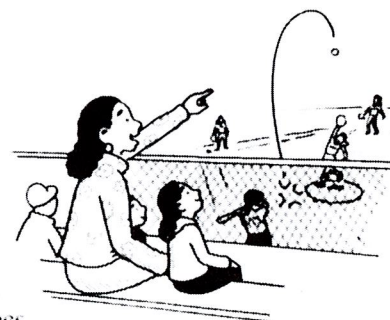
A large vocabulary can turn your child into a better reader and writer. Try these everyday ways to help her learn new words.

Keep your ears open

When you and your youngster go places, point out words that people use. Maybe a waiter describes an *entree* or the dentist talks about *molars*. Encourage your child to figure out what the words mean by the way they’re used.

Go beyond nouns

Help your youngster add adjectives and verbs to her vocabulary. Sports and games offer opportunities to use action words. Let your child hear you comment on the softball that *soars* or the runner who *sprints*. When she sends thank-you notes or greeting cards, suggest descriptive words (a *polka-dotted* shirt, a *fantastic* birthday). ♥



Parent to Parent

A journal-writing tradition

My grandson Keith saw me writing in my journal and asked what I was doing. I explained that my grandfather got me started writing in a journal when I was a little boy. Keith said he wanted to start a journal, too, so I gave him a notebook.

He asked me what he should write about. I told him that I use my journal mostly to store

memories, but he can do whatever he wants—even draw pictures. He decided to sketch the two of us writing together in our journals, and he had me help him write a sentence about his picture.

Keith has stuck with his journal for a couple of weeks already. Now when he comes to my house, he can’t wait to share what he has written and drawn. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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