Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2021

Seneca Valley School District

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Let's Do Nothing!*** *(Tony Fucile)*
When Frankie and Sal feel like they've done everything, from baking cookies to reading comic books, they find themselves in a pickle. Follow along with this silly duo as they try to sit and do nothing, only to realize that it's much more difficult than they thought.

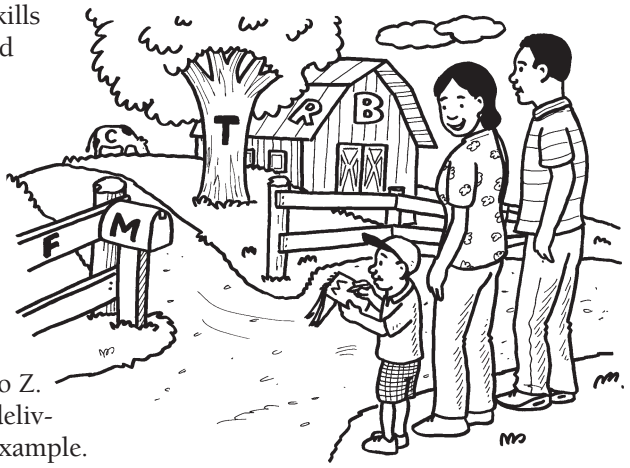
■ ***Dreaming Up: A Celebration of Building*** *(Christy Hale)*
Whether they're building block towers, sandcastles, or pillow forts, children are natural architects. This book pairs drawings of youngsters' buildings with real photos of similar structures around the world. It also recommends fun building materials like gumdrops and toothpicks, mud, boxes, and more.

■ ***My Friends*** *(Taro Gomi)*
In this easy-to-read story, a little girl names things she has learned from others. For instance, her teachers taught her to study, a dog showed her how to jump, and a butterfly taught her to smell flowers. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***The Sea Book*** *(Charlotte Milner)*
The ocean is home to many different animals and plants. Humans depend on the ocean, too—it gives us the water we drink and the air we breathe. This nonfiction book explores sea life and suggests ways to keep oceans healthy, like using less plastic on land. Includes instructions for making a reusable shopping bag.

Literacy on the move

These active ideas will keep your child's reading and writing skills strong all summer long—and into the new school year.



Take an alphabet walk

Challenge your youngster to find something in your neighborhood or town that starts with each letter of the alphabet. Let him carry a small notebook and a pencil on a walk and write down everything he spots from A to Z. He might see a **b**ike rack, a **d**elivery truck, and a **q**uarry, for example.

Hop and spell

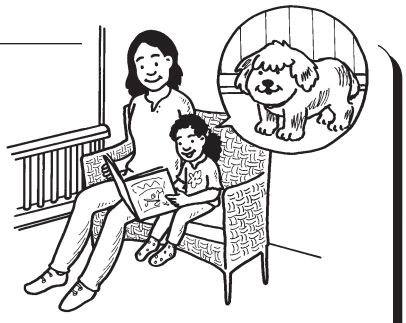
Practice spelling with this giant word search. Have your child use chalk to draw a 5 x 5 grid on the driveway or a playground blacktop. Write a random letter in each square, making sure to include plenty of vowels. Take turns finding a hidden word and hopping on each letter to "spell" it. (Letters must touch, but words can snake in all directions.) Help your youngster write everyone's words beside the grid.

Find the title

Ask everyone to secretly think of five familiar book titles and write each word of each title on a separate sticky note. Mix up all the notes, and hide them around the yard. Players race to collect notes and put the titles together. The person with the most correct titles wins. Now celebrate by reading the books! ♥

Picture this

Good readers picture images in their minds that help them understand and remember a story. When you read with your youngster, ask her what she "sees." Here are some ways to start.



- **Begin with a word.** For example, what comes to mind when she reads the word *love*? Perhaps she thinks of a heart or a hug.
- **Move on to sentences.** If your child tells you she pictures her dog after reading "I love my dog," help her fill in the details. ("I see myself petting our dog. What do you see yourself doing with Biscuit?")
- **Use whole pages.** Once she can see clear pictures from sentences, try paragraphs or pages. Choose a page without an illustration, and ask your child to illustrate it.♥

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A plan for my story

This summer, encourage your youngster to write stories about her adventures. These two story-planning strategies will help her organize her thoughts and get started.

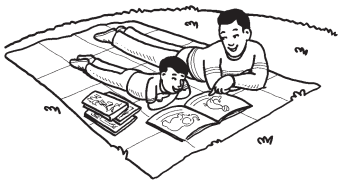
1. Make a chart. Have your child draw a three-column chart labeled "Beginning," "Middle," and "End." At the top, she can write the topic she wants to write about (camping, visiting a park, going to the beach). In the first column, she could write or draw a picture of the beginning of her story (setting up a campsite). She can add the main event in the middle column (hiking to the top of a mountain) and the ending in the last one (eating hot dogs and s'mores around a campfire). As she writes her story, her chart will help her keep the events in order.

2. Create a story string. On separate slips of paper, suggest that your child draw important details to include in a story. If she'd like to write about her school year, she might draw her teacher on one slip, a favorite book she read on another, a fun science project she did on a third, and so on. She can tape the slips to a piece of yarn and use her story string for inspiration while she writes.♥

Q&A Extra help with reading

Q *My child is not yet reading on grade level. He will attend summer school reading classes, but what can I do to help him at home?*

A Instilling a love of reading at home is one of the best things parents can do for any young reader. That's especially true for struggling readers, who may lack confidence and lose motivation.



Let your child choose library books that interest him, even if they're below or above his level. Set aside time each day to listen to him read and to read aloud to him. Reading easier books will boost his confidence, and hearing you read harder ones will expose him to more complex plots and language.

Also, introduce yourself to your son's summer school teacher. Let her know you'd love ideas for supporting your child at home. She'll be happy to have you as a partner.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent Backyard theater

After my twins overheard me reminiscing with my brother about the plays we put on as children, they wanted to perform their own show. I loved the idea, and I knew they'd get plenty of writing and speaking practice.

The kids decided their play would be based on *The Little Red Hen*. They called it "The Little Gray Mouse," with Leah as the cheese-loving mouse and Simon as the other animals, who refused to help make pizza. My youngsters giggled together as they wrote and rehearsed lines like "Who will help me make the dough?" and "Not I!"

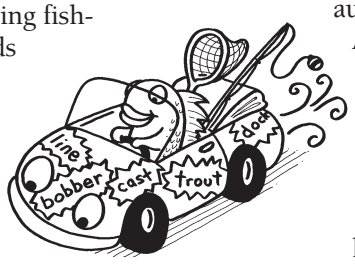
When they were ready, we assembled the audience: my husband and me in person, with our parents on Zoom. The twins received a standing ovation, of course, and now they're planning their next production. This one will be based on a story Leah wrote in school.♥

Fun with Words Vocabulary around town

New words are everywhere. When you're on the road, try these ideas to expand your child's vocabulary.

Make connections

Your youngster can learn new words by associating them with familiar activities or places. Say you're going fishing. Take turns saying words you might see or use there (*pond*, *trout*, *cast*). Explain meanings of unfamiliar words. ("I'm going to *cast*, or throw, my fishing line over the water.")



Listen and write

Have your child keep crayons and paper in the car. Play music, kid-friendly podcasts, or children's audio books, and encourage him to listen for unfamiliar words. He can pause the audio to write them down. At home, look up the words' definitions together in a dictionary.

Tip: Encourage your youngster to use his new words regularly so he remembers them.♥