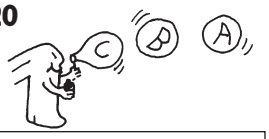
Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2020

Seneca Valley School District



Book Picks

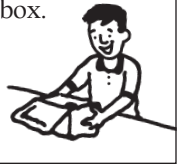
Read-aloud favorites

■ ***The New Small Person*** *(Lauren Child)*
Life as an only child is going well for Elmore, until a new little person comes along to interrupt his TV shows and knock over his toys. But as his brother gets older, Elmore realizes that a sibling can become a friend—maybe even enough of one to share his prized jelly beans with.

■ ***The Word Collector*** *(Sonja Wimmer)*
Luna loves to collect magnificent words, but one day she notices words disappearing from her collection. Soon she discovers that they're missing because people are too busy to remember them. Can Luna bring love, friendship, and fun back into their lives through the power of words? (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***Even Superheroes Have Bad Days*** *(Shelly Becker)*
Superheroes could use their powers to do naughty things, like change the weather or cause chaos when they are sad or mad—but do they? Readers will find out how even the mightiest superheroes work through their emotions to make a difference in the world.

■ ***How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? The Story of Food*** *(Chris Butterworth)*
Where do common foods like bread, cheese, and carrots come from? This nonfiction book describes their journeys from farm to lunchbox. Your child will discover that it takes a lot of work to grow and produce yummy foods.



Adventures in reading

What's between the pages of a book? An adventure that your youngster could go on—without leaving home! These ideas will show him all that he can learn on his nonfiction reading expeditions.

Take an animal safari

Together, look for animals outside, and help your child make a list of the ones you see. Then, read books or look online to learn facts about each one. What does it eat? What are its babies called? Does it sleep at night or during the day? Encourage your youngster to write each fact (or dictate it to you) in a notebook to carry on future walks. How many new animals can he "meet"?

Meet people

Scientists, artists, civil rights leaders … biographies are full of fascinating people. Suggest that your youngster make a trading card for each person he reads about. He could write facts like the person's name, birthplace, and accomplishments. Or he might write a letter (real or pretend) to the person that includes questions he has.

Visit new places

Let your child plan an imaginary trip to a book's setting. After a story about a rain forest, read a nonfiction book on jungles. He can use facts he learns to make a packing list for his journey. He'll have to think about the climate (hot, rainy) to decide what he needs (wide-brimmed hat, lots of water, umbrella). He could also write a pretend postcard from his destination.♥

Fine-motor fun

Playing with tiny objects strengthens little hands—building the fine-motor skills your child needs for handwriting, drawing, and more. Try these activities.

● **Cotton-ball race.** Give each player an empty bowl and a bowl containing 12 cotton balls or other small, soft items. Using tweezers or your thumb and forefinger, race each other to transfer them—one at a time—to the empty bowl. Who will win the race?

● **Yarn wrapping.** Let your youngster use safety scissors to cut long pieces of colorful yarn. Then, have her tape one end of each to the outside of a cup, wrap the yarn around and around, and tape down the opposite end. *Idea:* She could use her creation as a pencil or crayon holder.♥

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Ready, set, write!

Drawing is the first way children express their thoughts on paper. You may also have noticed—or will soon notice—your youngster writing scribbles, letters, or words on her pictures. Use these strategies to support your little writer at every stage.

Drawings. Invite your child to tell you all about pictures she draws. Ask questions that encourage her to tell a story: "Who is in your drawing?" "What are their names?" *Tip:* As your youngster learns to write her name in school, have her start printing it on pictures she draws at home.

Scribbles. Is your child adding scribbles or letter-like shapes to her pictures? Combining drawing and writing is a big step toward learning to write. Acknowledge her efforts by asking, "Can you read that to me?"

Writing. When your youngster begins writing actual letters or words, help her list words she uses frequently. *Examples: the*, *like*, *Mommy*, *Daddy*. She can label her list "Words I Know"—and refer to it to help her write captions for her pictures.♥

Q&A Reading aloud—together

Q *My son loves when I read to him. Any tips for using story time to help him learn to read himself?*

A Sure! Start by asking your child to join in when you read. Try reading a book with a refrain, perhaps *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Carle) or *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Laura Numeroff). After a few pages, pause before the repeating part—your son will feel proud to finish the page himself ("But he was still hungry!").

Your child will also learn from listening to you read rhyming books. Stop before you say each rhyming word to let your youngster fill it in.

Finally, develop his reading comprehension by talking about stories. Share your reactions ("That part really cracked me up!"), and listen while he tells you his response.♥

Fun with Words Plant an alphabet tree

Read an alphabet book with your child, then encourage him to build his own alphabet tree to identify and remember letters.

1. Let your youngster plant a "tree trunk" (an empty cardboard paper-towel tube) in a cup filled with dirt or sand. Then, help him cut small slits into the trunk and insert craft stick "branches."

2. Have your child draw 26 "alphabet leaves" on green paper, cut them out, and write a letter on each leaf. *Tip:* He could flip through the alphabet book to remind himself what each letter looks like.

3. Together, recite the alphabet (or sing the alphabet song) while he tapes each leaf to any branch.

4. Read the book again—can your child find each letter on his tree?♥

Parent to Parent Family show-and-tell

When my daughter Erica began kindergarten, she was hesitant to speak up during show-and-tell. Her teacher suggested that we practice at home, so we decided to hold a weekly family show-and-tell night.

Every Friday, we gather in the living room and take turns sharing something that's important to us. Each person explains why her show-and-tell item is special. Then we ask questions, such as, "What do you like best about it?" or "Where did you get it?" We've shared books, drawings, souvenirs, and more.

What began as a way to help Erica practice speaking has turned out to be a great family conversation starter. Now Erica is in second grade—she's speaking up more in class, and we still look forward to family show-and-tell each week.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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