

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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Darien Public Schools

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Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ Little Miss Giggles

Little Miss Giggles laughs while she eats, while she brushes her teeth, and even while she sleeps!

Then one day, she loses her giggle. Can Mr. Happy make her laugh again? Part of the classic Mr. Men and Little Miss series by Roger Hargreaves.



■ I Love Our Earth



What does your child love about the earth? Maybe he likes spring blossoms, autumn leaves, or sunsets.

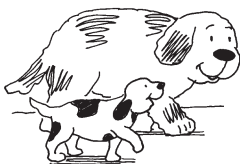
This book by Bill Martin Jr. and Michael Sampson combines simple words and photographs to show the wonders of nature.

■ The Bat Boy & His Violin

Reginald dreams of being a violinist. But his father, a manager in the Negro National League of the 1940s, needs a bat boy for his struggling team. When Reginald starts playing his violin between innings, the team's luck seems to change. An inspiring read-aloud by Gavin Curtis.

■ Lucky: A Dog's Best Friend

In this story by Gus Clarke, Lucky and the other dogs in the pound organize a plan to get their friend Bernard adopted. The scheme works, and Lucky says good-bye to his friend. Will Lucky find an owner, too? (Also available in Spanish.)



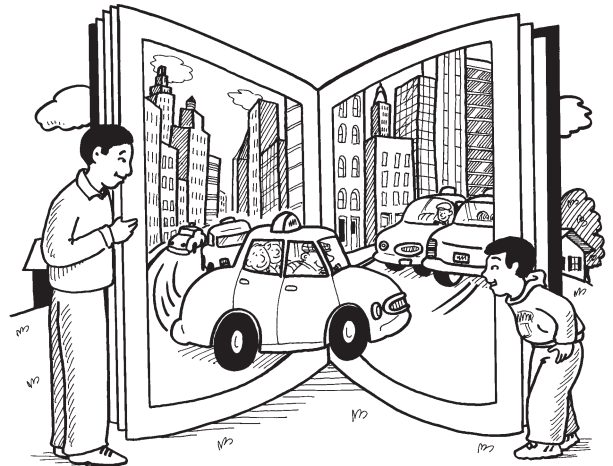
Keys to reading comprehension

When you read with your child, you can help him understand the book by discussing the story and the pictures. Here are three strategies that will boost his reading comprehension and help him enjoy reading more.

Build background knowledge.

Say your youngster is reading about a boy who lives in a city. If your home is in a rural area, he may not be familiar with taxis, high-rise apartments, or busy streets. You can prepare him to understand the book before you read by flipping through the pages and pointing out these things in the pictures.

Predict what's next. Your child can use clues in a book to help him predict what's coming. For example, he might say, "I think the little girl is going to a party." Ask him why he thinks that ("She's holding a present"). He'll learn



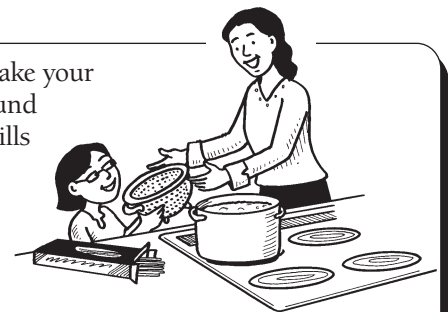
to read carefully for details that will help him imagine what will happen next.

"See" the action. Good readers picture story events in their minds. Try reading a book to your youngster without showing him the illustrations. Have him describe what a character or a place looks like. You can help him by repeating information from the book: "It says a storm is coming. What do you think the sky looks like?" Then, show him the illustrations to see if they're similar to what he pictured. ♥

A language-rich home

Good news: Strong language skills can make your youngster a better reader, writer, and all-around student. Great news: You can build those skills just by talking to your child. Here's how:

- Narrate everyday activities like driving or cooking. Hearing new words in conversation will help your youngster understand words in books ("Please hand me the *colander* so I can drain the spaghetti"). *Tip:* If she doesn't know the word, explain: "This is a colander. Water drains through the holes."
- Encourage your child to join family conversations. Ask her questions to help her expand on her answers. ("Why do you think so?" "What else happened?") She will learn to talk about events and give her opinions. ♥



Here a poem, there a poem

Celebrate National Poetry Month by reading and writing poetry with your youngster. You'll help her learn to love words—and get her hooked on poetry!

■ Reading a poem about food is a fun way to introduce your child to *imagery*—descriptive words and phrases that poets use. You might read a poem like “A Pizza the Size of the Sun” by Jack Prelutsky. Then, eat pizza together, and ask your youngster to read the words Prelutsky used to describe the pizza (oceans of sauce, mountains of cheese).



■ Help your child pay attention to sounds in words by writing a rhyming poem. Have her think of a word (sky) and then write down words that rhyme with it (bye, high, my). She can use the words to create a poem.

■ Inspire your youngster to read and write poetry with “shape poems.” Have her cut out shapes of objects (heart, football) from colored paper. Then, help her look in poetry books for verses about the objects and write them on the shapes. Or she could make up her own shape poem. For example, on a football shape, she might write: “Football is fun/The players run.” She can keep her shapes in a zipper bag to read poetry anytime.♥

Fun with Words Reading symbols



Chances are, your child can “read” the buttons on your household electronics—even the ones without letters. For example, he probably knows that a triangle on the DVD player means *play*, a square means *stop*, and two vertical lines stand for *pause*.

You can have him practice reading other symbols by helping him make a guide to the symbols in your house. Have him walk around with a notebook and draw as many symbols as he can find.



He might choose your computer’s “on” symbol or the “fire” sign on the fire extinguisher. Next to each symbol, help him write the word that it stands for.

Finally, suggest that your youngster make up his own symbols. For instance, the microwave “start” button could have three wavy lines to indicate “heat,” and a closed eye could symbolize “snooze” on the alarm clock.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A Proper spelling

Q My first-grader always asks me how to spell words. How can I encourage him to spell them on his own?

A This is a good time to introduce your youngster to the dictionary. Look for a children’s picture dictionary in a bookstore or at a yard sale. When he asks you how to spell a word, help him look it up. After doing this together a few times, encourage him to look up words on his own.

You can also have your son save his weekly spelling quizzes. Go over them, and have him practice any words that he spelled incorrectly. He can put the quizzes into a folder or binder, making a collection of words to refer to when he writes.♥



Parent to Parent Learning about cultures

My parents recently moved here from Mexico, and we wanted our daughter, Carla, to learn more about our family’s background. So I asked our librarian to recommend books that might help.

Mrs. Blair showed us books like *Look What Came from Mexico* by Miles Harvey, which told about food and places in Mexico. Reading that book gave Carla lots of things to talk about with

her grandparents. We also went home with several books that had both English and Spanish words. Together, Carla and my father read *A Walk with Grandpa/Un paseo con abuelo* by Sharon Solomon. My daughter read the English words, and her grandfather read the Spanish.

Books have been a great way to help Carla get to know my parents, and we’re happy that she is learning about her heritage.♥

