

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2015

John Fenwick Academy
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Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Miss Malarkey Doesn't Live in Room 10*

(Judy Finchler)

Like many kids, the little boy in this book believes that his teacher lives

at school. But when Miss Malarkey moves into his apartment building, he learns that she has a home and does everyday things like grocery shopping and taking out the trash.



■ *Take Away the A* (Michaël Escoffier)



Without the letter G, a *glove* falls in love. And *plants* wear *pants* if you remove the L! Each page in this alphabet book features clever wordplay and a silly illustration. Your youngster can learn about words—and enjoy guessing what will happen on the next page.

■ *The Camping Trip That Changed America* (Barb Rosenstock)

This picture book tells the true story of Theodore Roosevelt's camping trip to Yosemite. The president learns from naturalist John Muir that too many trees are being chopped down. When Roosevelt returns to the White House, he works to get laws passed that create our national parks.

■ *Caps for Sale* (Esphyr Slobodkina)

"Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!" Your child will love this simple, rhythmic classic. No one wants to buy the peddler's caps—but the local monkeys sure do like wearing them. Now, the peddler must hatch a plan to get his caps back. (Also available in Spanish.)



Ready to read

When your child recognizes her name on her classroom cubby or turns the pages of a familiar book and recites the story, she's making the connection between printed words and spoken ones. Celebrate her early reading efforts and help her move toward independent reading with these activities.

Shared reading

As you read aloud to your youngster, run your finger under the words. This shows her that the words tell the story. Encourage her to follow along and read any parts she can, or try reading the words together. If there is a repeating phrase, let her read it. ("I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down!") Suggest that she move her finger beneath the words, too.

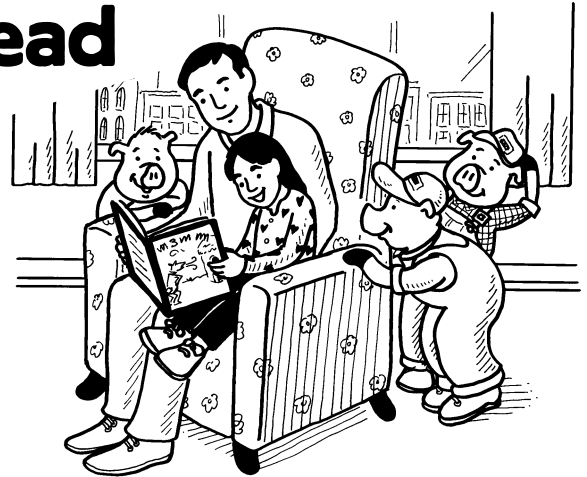
"I know what that says!"

Before children read by themselves, they rely on clues like logos, colors, and shapes to recognize words all around them. This is good practice for using pictures and context clues to read books.

Let's write together

Between email messages and electronic calendars, you might not write by hand too often these days. But it's good for your youngsters to see you using pencil and paper—just like they do in school. Try these suggestions:

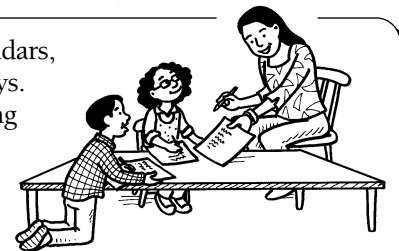
- Brainstorm family plans on paper. Ask everyone to write ideas for what they'd like to do on the weekend (picnic, bowling). Share lists, and vote on an activity.
- Make a guest list for a party or get-together. Your children could write names they know, including their own. Then, have them watch you write the rest.
- On a wall calendar, help your youngsters write their events ("Soccer game," "Dentist"). Let other family members add items, too, and remind your children to read the calendar each day.♥



At the grocery store, you might say, "Read the cereal boxes, and find the ones we usually buy." Or have her point to produce signs and tell you what they say. ("That says *bananas*.")

Listen to your child read

Ask your youngster to read books she brings home from school or ones she has heard many times. It's fine if she recites from memory—that's often how reading begins. Nudge her toward real reading by telling her to point to specific words on the pages. For example, if she says, "Goodnight cow jumping over the moon," you could ask her to touch the words *cow* and *moon*.♥



Add words

Encourage your little artist to incorporate words or sentences into pictures with these ideas.

Labels. Tape together poster boards or large sheets of paper. Have your child lie down on them so you can trace around him. He could use crayons to draw his face and clothes and then label his body parts and clothing (*nose, foot, shirt*).

Bubbles. Show your youngster a comic book or comic strip. What does he think the “bubbles” are for? (That’s where the



author puts the words that the character thinks or says.) Suggest that your child make a picture with bubbles, too. He could draw people or animals, add bubbles, and write what they’re thinking or saying.

Sentences. Let your youngster draw a line across a piece of paper, a few inches from the bottom. He

can draw a picture above the line and write a sentence below the line to go with the drawing. For instance, he might draw a picture of himself at karate class and write about a move he has learned. ♥

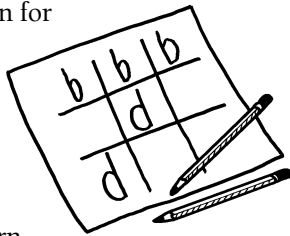
Q&A Is that a b or a d?

Q I’ve noticed that my first-grade daughter often mixes up letters like b and d or p and q. For example, she’ll say “dig” instead of “big” when she reads. Is this normal?

A It’s common for youngsters this age to confuse those letters. If your child is making good progress in learning to read and write, it’s unlikely that her mix-ups indicate a problem.

Ask your daughter’s teacher whether her reading skills are on target. Then, stay in touch with the teacher throughout the year to see if your youngster is on track or needs extra help.

In the meantime, here’s a fun way to help her learn the letters she’s mixing up. Play tic-tac-toe with *b* and *d* instead of *x* and *o*. Another time, play with *p* and *q*. Each of you can say the letters as you write them in the squares—that will help your daughter remember them. ♥



Fun with Words

An “opposite” dinner

Spice up dinnertime—and stretch your youngster’s vocabulary and thinking skills—by making your meal all about opposites. Your family will have fun with *antonyms*, or words that have opposite meanings.

Plan a meal

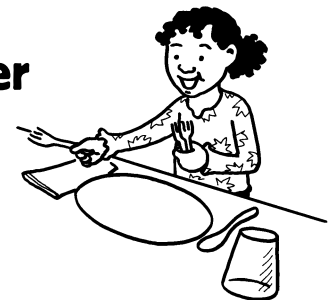
Together, come up with silly ways to weave opposites into your dinner. You could have *sweet* and *sour* chicken or *hot* and *cold* carrots. Or how about burgers with cheese on the *top* and the *bottom*? What other ideas can your child think of?

Set the table

Let your youngster get the table ready and talk about the opposites she’s using. (“I’m turning the cups over so they *face down* instead of *up*. I’ll put forks and napkins on the *right* and spoons on the *left*.”)

Enjoy conversation

Use lots of opposites during your dinner conversation. You could say, “My *night* was *boring*,” and your child can “translate” (“My *day* was *exciting*”). ♥



Parent to Parent

My reading spot

I asked my son Gabriel what he likes best about school so far, and he said the reading corner is “so cool!” As he described it to me, it dawned on me that we could make a reading space at home, too.

First, Gabriel organized his library books and his own books into several shoeboxes. We put the boxes in a corner of his room, along with a beanbag chair,

and plugged in a reading lamp nearby. I added a notebook and a pencil so Gabriel can draw pictures or jot down thoughts about what he reads.

He also included stuffed animals to go with his books, like a rhinoceros and a lion for a story about a zoo.

Now what he likes best about his room is his reading corner. And I love finding him curled up there, snuggling a stuffed animal that matches the book he’s reading. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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a division of CCH Incorporated

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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5648