

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2015

South-Western City Schools

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Up, Down, and Around*

(Katherine Ayres)

Corn grows up toward the sky, but beets grow down into the ground. This nonfiction book introduces your child to plants and prepositions at the same time, as she sees the different directions that vegetables grow. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Ellison the Elephant*

(Eric Drachman)

Ellison can't produce a trumpet sound like his sister or his friends do. His mother tries to reassure him that being different makes him special. But the other elephants tease him for the quiet toot that comes out of his trunk. Includes a CD that lets children hear the "jazzy" sound that Ellison learns to make.



■ *The Lost Lunch* (Lori Mortensen)

This graphic novel for early readers begins by showing kids how to read a comic strip-style book. Then, find out what happens when Ethan can't find his lunch and his friend Dylan helps him look for it. Part of the My First Graphic Novel series.

■ *A Book for Black-Eyed Susan*

(Judy Young)

Ten-year-old Cora is heading west in a wagon train with her family. Along the way, she discovers that being with her brand-new baby sister can help her cope with the terrible tragedy she suffers. A story about the difficulties and joys of pioneer days.



Let's go for a reading walk

It's springtime—the perfect time to go for a walk. Why not make it a reading walk? Here are fun ways your child can read words in her environment while you enjoy the outdoors together.

Match the card

Before heading out, help your youngster write words on index cards to match ones she might see. For a walk downtown, she could write *main* and *sale* or draw street signs and store logos. If you're going to the park, her cards may include words like *trail* and *playground*. As you walk, have her search for each word, read it aloud, and hand the card to you. Can she match all of her cards?



she can choose a different category. She could keep track of how many words she reads for each one and declare her most popular category!

Spot little words

Encourage your youngster to look for little words within big ones—a strategy that can help her read longer words. Look for a long word like *department* or *transportation*. Together, see how many small words you can find in it, such as *part*, *art*, *men*, and *depart* in *department*.♥

"And the teddy bear said..."

Teddy bear...lizard...bald eagle...any stuffed animal can star in this family storytelling activity. You'll boost your youngster's language skills as you make up a story together.



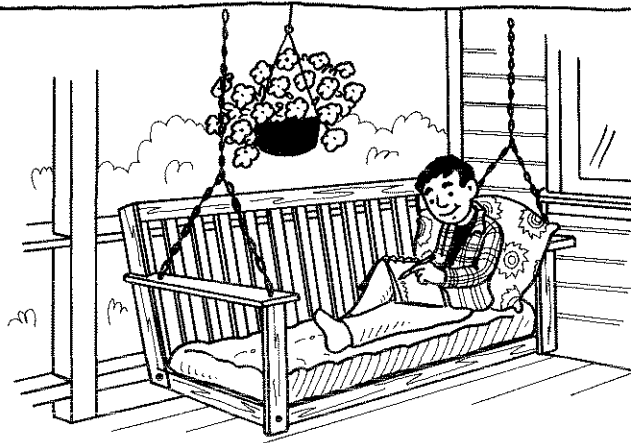
1. Develop your character. Let your child select a stuffed animal (say, a chameleon), and take a few minutes to "get to know" it. You could each name character traits or describe its appearance. *Examples:* Colorful, changeable, quick.

2. Tell a story. Your youngster can start the tale. ("Once upon a time, there was a chameleon that slithered quickly across the rocks.") Then, he tosses the stuffed animal to the next person, who continues the plot. Keep "tossing and telling" until someone wraps up the story.♥

My writer's notebook

A writer's notebook can inspire your youngster to write every day. Give him a notebook, and let him decorate the cover. Then, share these ideas.

Onomatopoeia. It's fun to say and write words that sound like their meanings. Your child might list ones such as *boom*, *hiss*, and *crunch*.



Heart map. This big heart is filled with all the things your youngster loves. Let him draw a heart that fills a page. Inside it, he can illustrate and label his favorite things (*family*, *mountains*, *music*).

Jokes. Help your child write down jokes he hears or thinks up. He

could draw a funny picture to go with each one.

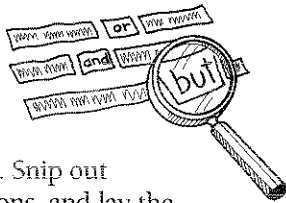
Questions. Does your youngster wonder why apple slices turn brown or why puddles disappear? When he asks a question, have him jot it down. Help him look it up in a book or online so he can add the answer.♥



The case of the missing conjunctions

Or, *and*, or *but*? One of these words is missing from each sentence in this game. Let your little detective crack the case—and learn about conjunctions (words that link other words or clauses).

Cut out three sentences from a magazine that include *or*, *and*, or *but*. Snip out the conjunctions, and lay the remaining sentence pieces on a table. Now, write those conjunctions on separate slips of paper, and hide them around the room. Your child can use a magnifying glass (or her super x-ray vision) to find the missing words.



Then, help her decide which conjunction goes where. Explain that *and* means both (“She eats apples *and* oranges”), *or* means one or the other (“Should we walk *or* bike?”), and *but* explains a difference (“I want a pet hamster, *but* Mom said no”). Once all the conjunctions are in place, help her read the complete sentences. Case solved!♥

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 Create a home library

Q I'm looking for inexpensive ways to help our daughter build a book collection. What do you suggest?

A Warmer weather means more yard sales and garage sales—and more chances to add used books to your daughter's shelves. Shop together so she can pick out books she'll want to read.

Any time of year, you'll find bargains at used bookstores, thrift shops, library book sales, and online bookstores. You could also ask relatives and neighbors to pass down books their children have outgrown. Your daughter may find it special to own books that her cousins or the “big kids” in the neighborhood used to read.

It's nice to get a few new books, too. For inexpensive ones, attend the school book fair and watch for the book-club catalogs that your daughter brings home.♥



Parent to Parent Celebrate poetry

My son's class is celebrating National Poetry Month this April, and his teacher sent home great ideas for poetry activities to do as a family.

Liam was excited to pick a few. First, he wanted to plan a poetry picnic. We checked out children's poetry books from the library, packed sandwiches and fruit, and went into our backyard. As we ate, we took turns reading poems aloud.



We also loved the teacher's “poem-in-your-pocket” idea. We each wrote down a poem, folded it up, and put it in our pocket to share with classmates or coworkers.

Liam enjoyed sharing Shel Silverstein's “Ice Cream Stop” with the server at our local ice cream shop—and I liked that he's discovering how much fun it is to read poetry.♥