

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2014

Warren School -  
Joanne Woodington, Literacy Specialist

## Book Picks



### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ Unicorn Thinks He's Pretty Great

Goat is cool and popular until Unicorn shows up. The magical flying creature seems to outshine Goat in everything he does. It takes a delicious goat cheese pizza to show Goat that he's special, too. A story about friendship and overcoming jealousy by Bob Shea.



#### ■ The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Young Readers Edition

This is the true story of 14-year-old William Kamkwamba, who used junkyard items to build a windmill. His creation brought electricity to his drought-stricken village in Africa and helped save the crops. A biography by Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer.



#### ■ Judy Moody Was in a Mood

It's the first day of school, and third-grader Judy Moody is in a bad mood. She's not looking forward to getting used to a new classroom. But a clever teacher just might change her mood. The first book in Megan McDonald's Judy Moody series. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ First Big Book of Why

"Why is the sky blue?" "Why do the stairs seem to disappear on an escalator?" "Why don't islands sink?" Amy Shields' colorful fact book answers questions your child may have asked—and others he might never have thought of!



## Learn from fairy tales

From "once upon a time" to "happily ever after," a fairy tale is full of opportunities for your child to become a strong, enthusiastic reader. Try these activities to help her summarize stories, compare books, and learn facts.

### My scrapbook

Your youngster can practice summarizing by making a fairy tale scrapbook. Let her design a page for each one you read. For *Jack and the Beanstalk*, she could draw a giant, glue down beans, and add a feather for the hen that lays golden eggs. Encourage your child to use the pages to retell the stories.



### Tales with a twist

At the library, check out two versions of the same fairy tale—for instance, *Cinderella* along with *Cindy Ellen: A Wild Western Cinderella* (Susan Lowell). Read them aloud, and ask your child to compare them. She might say that both heroines

search for a prince, but that Cindy Ellen goes to a rodeo instead of a ball.

### Real-life exploration

Although fairy tales are made up, some of the elements are realistic. For example, does your youngster know that there are real-life princesses? Together, read a non-fiction book so she can learn facts about people, places, or animals from a fairy tale, such as kings and queens, famous castles, or foxes and wolves. ♥

## Read about money

Reading can help your youngster with many skills, including financial literacy. Start early to raise a money-smart child with these ideas.

First, find a picture book about money, like *Bunny Money* (Rosemary Wells) or *Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday* (Judith Viorst).

Then, give your youngster coins and bills, and let him count out the amounts mentioned. For example, when Alexander rents a snake for 12 cents, your child could count 1 dime and 2 pennies.

Finally, talk about the characters' decisions (spending too much, not saving). Suggest that your youngster write a pretend letter to a character giving financial advice. ("Think carefully before you buy something. You might run out of money!") ♥

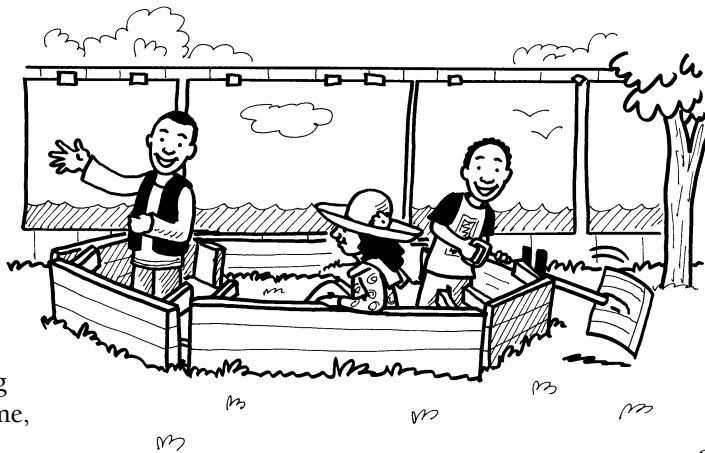


# Put on a backyard play

“Now showing...” Staging a play in your yard is fun—and it lets your youngster practice writing, reading, and speaking. Suggest that he invite friends over and follow these steps.

**Choose a topic.** Encourage the children to pick a scenario, such as sailing across the ocean, traveling through time, or going on a camping trip.

**Pick parts.** Roles might include the boat captain, the passengers, and the people they meet when they arrive on a distant shore.



**Write lines.** Have the youngsters write down what each actor will say. (“Look out—there’s a shark!” “I see land!”) *Idea:* The kids could work together to paint a backdrop and gather props.

**Rehearse.** Remind them to read their lines loudly and clearly. They might

decide to add stage directions to the script, such as, “Read in a nervous voice” or “Sound excited here.” This will help them learn to read with expression.

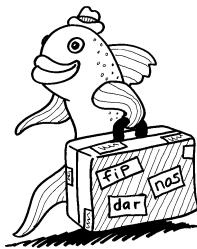
**Perform.** It’s showtime! Let the youngsters invite neighbors or relatives to watch their production. ♥

## Fun with Words

### Nonsense words

What is a *bep*? How about a *lig*? Playing with made-up words is a silly way for your child to sound out real ones. Here’s how.

**1.** Cut a piece of paper into 12 slips. On six slips, help your youngster write real three-letter words (*bed, run, lot*). On the other six, she should write made-up words (*fip, nos, dar*).



**2.** Mix up the slips, and have your child sort them into two piles—real words and fake words. As she puts each one into the correct pile, she can sound it out. Even a nonsense word lets her practice saying the sounds that letters make.

**3.** Have fun making up definitions for the fake words. Ask her to think of a real word that starts with the same beginning sound and one that has the same ending sound. Then, she could combine them into a new word. *Example:* For *fip*, she might pick *fish* and *trip*—it’s a fish’s vacation! ♥

## Q&A

### Singing along

**Q** My daughter loves to sing. Can I use music to help her practice reading?

**A** Suggest that she find lyrics for a few of her favorite songs. You could look online, in a songbook, or inside a CD cover. Then, read them together, and ask what she thinks a song is about. For example, what are “pufferbellies” in “Down by the Station”? She might be able to figure it out from the other words in the lyrics, or she could use a dictionary.

Another idea is to have her read a book and make up a song about it. Encourage her to think about what happened in the story—she could take a familiar tune and change the lyrics to go with the plot. For instance, after reading about a beach vacation, “Down by the Station” might become “Down by the Seashore.” She may want to keep on reading so she can make up more songs. ♥



## Parent to Parent

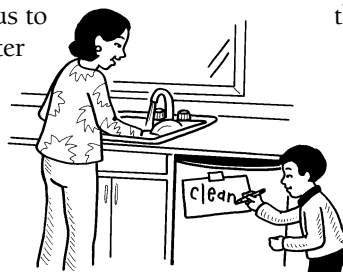
### Write with confidence

When my son Elliot started learning to write in school, he wasn’t interested in practicing at home. His teacher thought he lacked confidence, and she suggested ways we could help.

First, she encouraged us to make Elliot feel like a writer by giving him jobs that involve writing. Even a tiny bit each day could build his confidence, she said. So one day I had him make a sign to tape to the dishwasher that

says “clean” on one side and “dirty” on the other. Another day when we ran to the bank, I had him leave a note letting his dad know where we were.

The teacher also said that we could show interest in writing assignments that Elliot brings home from school. For example, we might hang his story on a bulletin board or collect his work in a binder. Now he seems proud to share his stories, and I’m hoping he’ll want to write even more. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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