

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2014

Warren School -
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Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *The Pout-Pout Fish*

A little fish looks sad, so his fellow sea creatures try to cheer him up. Then, a newcomer takes a different approach—can she turn his pout upside down? Your child will be repeating the refrain (“I’m a pout-pout fish”) long after the story ends. The first in a series by Deborah Diesen.

■ *What Do Wheels Do All Day?*

Wheelchairs, strollers, tow trucks, merry-go-rounds...wheels are everywhere. They take us places, help us do work, and even keep us entertained. April Jones Prince’s rhyming nonfiction book lets your youngster explore the many purposes that wheels have. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *The Name Jar*

Embarrassed by her Korean name, Unhei asks her classmates to help her choose an American one. The children write suggestions on slips of paper and put them in a jar. In this story by Yangsook Choi, Unhei learns something important about herself and her fellow students when it’s time to pick a name.



■ *Vincent’s Colors*

This biography introduces young readers to Vincent van Gogh. Your child can see pictures of van Gogh’s most popular paintings, such as *Sunflowers* and *The Starry Night*, and read descriptions of them in the painter’s own words. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Let’s go to the library!

Here’s a riddle for your youngster: What has more stories than the tallest skyscraper?
Answer: The library!

Take advantage of all those stories—and other reading materials—by using the library often. Try these tips.

- **Create a routine.** Go to the library every other Thursday afternoon or every third Saturday, for instance. Your child will look forward to Library Day, and she’ll get used to returning books on time.
- **Tour the library.** Together, figure out how the library is organized. Find children’s fiction and nonfiction (picture books, biographies), music CDs, audio books, movies, and magazines. Suggest that your youngster pick a few items to enjoy while you’re there or to take home.
- **Put her in charge.** Getting a library card will make your child proud. She can also learn to check out her own books—she’ll get a kick out of scanning the code or stamping the return date. *Note:* Have her take a bag to put her books in.



- **Learn to research.** Encourage your youngster to read about her favorite topics. She could ask the librarian how to search the computer for books on ballerinas or baby pandas, for example. Soon she’ll be able to do it herself.
- **Attend special events.** Go over the library’s calendar with your child, and circle events to attend. You might find story hours, puppet shows, author visits, a young readers’ book club, or even a session for reading to dogs! ♥

Supporting little writers

As your child begins to write, you may wonder what you can do to help him. Consider this advice.

Read it. Ask him to “read” his writing to you—even if it looks like scribbles. Once children learn the alphabet, they often add letters or letter-like symbols to their drawings. When your child starts doing this, he’s figuring out that letters carry a message.

Spell it. Does your youngster ask you how to spell every word? Encourage him to sound out the words and write the letters he hears. He can also refer to spelling tests he brings home or lists of sight words (common words like *said*, *are*, and *look*). ♥

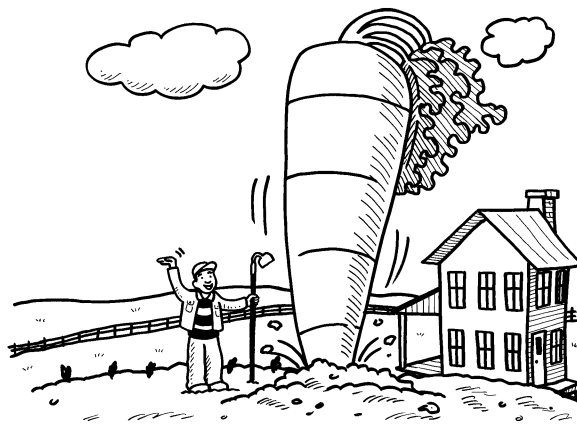


Storytelling fun

Telling stories together can build all kinds of skills in your youngster, from imagination and thinking to listening and speaking. Use these ideas for creative storytelling nights in your house.

Roll of the dice

Let your child cover 3–5 dice with small stickers (animals, sports, dinosaurs). Then, have him roll all the dice at once. Take turns making up lines of a story using the stickers shown. For example, he might start, “The farm animals challenged the dinosaurs to a baseball game,” and you could add, “The horse struck out, and the pig came to bat.”



(“Our carrot grew bigger than a house!”) or tell how fast he and his friends rode their scooters (“Max and I flew down the street faster than a rocket ship!”).♥

Anything but the truth!

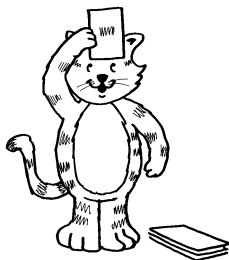
Give your youngster a chance to stretch the truth a little (or a lot) by telling tall tales—stories that use *exaggeration*. First, read one to your child (get a library book or look online). Then, he can pick something to exaggerate. He might describe a huge vegetable that grew in your garden



What's my word?

What's on your forehead? Why, a vocabulary word! Play this game to boost your child's vocabulary.

1. Help her make game cards by writing words from books or vocabulary lists, one per index card.



2. Shuffle the cards, and put them face-down in a pile.

3. On your turn, draw a card and hold it against your forehead so everyone can see the word but you.

4. Ask the other players *yes* or *no* questions about the word until you figure it out. You might ask about its part of speech (“Is it a noun?”), its meaning (“Is it a type of job?”), or its length (“Does it have fewer than six letters?”).

5. Score 1 point for each question. When all of the cards have been used, the player with the *fewest* points wins.♥



Less screen time

Q My daughter loves TV and video games—she would rather spend time in front of a screen than with a book. What should I do?

A Experts recommend no more than 1–2 hours of screen time a day for youngsters. Tell your child how much time she can have, and help her decide in advance how to use it (say, a 30-minute TV show and 30 minutes with a video game).

Then, try to incorporate reading into her screen time. For instance, turn on the TV closed-captioning so she gets reading practice. Even if she can't read all the words, she'll be excited to pick out some that she knows. Or look for videos based on picture books. Together, read the book, watch the video, and talk about how they're the same and different.♥



New learning standards

I had been hearing that children are reading more nonfiction in school, but I wasn't sure why. Attending a school night on the new Common Core State Standards cleared things up for me.

The presenter said the standards are designed to prepare kids for college and careers, where they'll need to read for information. By fourth grade, about half of what students read will be nonfiction. So she suggested that parents read some nonfiction at

bedtime and that we encourage our kids to read nonfiction for pleasure. She shared examples of picture books about frogs and construction vehicles that I'm sure our son, Sean, would like!

I also learned that Sean will be writing more in all subjects. At home, I can help by having him write for different reasons.

For example, he could make a birthday wish list and explain why he wants each item.

I was happy to have the standards explained—and to learn that there are ways we can help our son.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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