

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2012

Sweetbriar Elementary School

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ Hero Dad

The superhero dad in this story doesn't have a cape—but he can fly with his parachute. Melinda Hardin's touching story is told through the eyes of a boy whose father, an American soldier, is serving overseas. The son proudly compares his dad's adventures to those of comic book heroes.



### ■ Moira's Birthday

Moira orders 200 pizzas and 200 cakes for her birthday party. Why? Because she invited the entire school! Although her parents are a little overwhelmed, there are advantages to having 200 guests: they bring 200 gifts, and they clean up in just five minutes. Robert Munsch's silly tale is filled with exaggeration. (Also available in Spanish.)

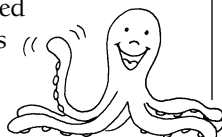


### ■ Previously

What happened to fairy tale characters before "once upon a time"? Your child can find out in Allan Ahlberg's clever book, which tells fairy tales backward—and then continues in reverse to before the adventures even began. To make things more fun, the characters' tales are intertwined, and modern-day references are sprinkled in.

### ■ Life in the Ocean

It's not unusual for Sylvia Earle to live under the sea for two weeks. That's because she is an oceanographer (an ocean scientist). Your youngster will delight in learning about Earle's life and how she has loved the sea since she was a little girl. A biography by Claire Nivola.



## Reading sight words

Did you know that just 100 words make up about half of everything your child reads? Learning these frequently used words, or sight words, will help him read smoothly and with good comprehension. Try these steps.

**Collect words.** Let your youngster make his very own sight word collection. Each time you read to him, have him choose several words that appear often (*the, can, you*). He might write each word on a craft stick and "plant" it in a green craft-foam "garden" to display on a windowsill. Or he could copy the words onto poster board to make a "word wall" to hang in his room. **Tip:** Ask his teacher where you can find a sight word list, or search for one online.

**Practice reading.** Encourage your child to play with the words that he gathers. You might help him write the words in separate cupcake liners. Then, he can put the liners in a muffin pan, toss a marble or penny into each cup, and



read the word that it lands on. Or have him write words on the backs of jigsaw puzzle pieces and put the puzzle together upside down. Ask him to read each word as he places the puzzle pieces.

**Search signs.** Sight words are everywhere! Suggest that your youngster try to spot them on road signs. Before you head out, use scissors to cut 2-inch-wide tabs all around the edge of a paper plate. Let your child write a word from his collection on each tab. As he finds a word, he can fold down the matching tab. For example, he might see the word *to* ("Begin to exit here") or *for* ("Closed for repairs").♥

## Family nights

The ability to carry on conversations is an important literacy skill. Here are two ideas that can boost your youngster's oral language.

**Improv night.** Put on a mini-play without a script. Start by reading a sentence from a magazine ("Water balloons are all you need to have a splashing good time"). Your child gets to add a funny line ("It also helps to have some towels"). Take turns until you run out of ideas. Then, help her choose a sentence for the next round.

**Game night.** Play games that involve talking. Try a silly game like Two Truths, where one player says two things that are true and one that isn't, and the other person has to decide which is which. Or your youngster can practice asking questions with Go Fish! or 20 Questions.♥



# Pretend play, real writing

When your child plays, try giving her some writing supplies. Then, watch her combine her imagination with writing in fun and interesting ways! These suggestions can get her started.

## School

Offer to be the student, and let your youngster “teach” you. On a chalkboard or dry-erase board, she can show you how she writes her name, the alphabet, or words that she is learning. Then, ask her to write a “lesson” for you to do.



## Store

Your child can practice writing descriptions by opening an imaginary shop. For a shoe store, she could label shoe boxes. (“Black high heels. Size 8.”) Or she might make a bakery with play-dough cupcakes and signs describing the flavors (“Creamy vanilla,” “Spicy carrot cake”).

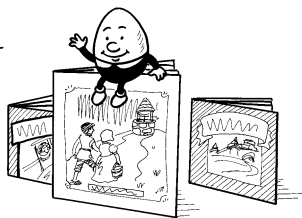
## House

Running a pretend household offers lots of opportunities to write. Encourage your youngster to make a grocery list or write instructions for a babysitter for her dolls (“Nap at 1:30”). Or she could write a note asking the delivery person to leave the package on the porch.♥

## Fun with Words Nursery rhymes

Your child can learn a lot from “Humpty Dumpty” and “Jack and Jill.” The rhyming words and rhythmic verses in nursery rhymes build phonemic awareness—the ability to hear sounds in words. Look for a book of nursery rhymes at the library or online, and then enjoy these activities together:

- Read a nursery rhyme aloud, and ask your youngster to tell you which words rhyme. If you read “Jack and Jill,” he might say “Jill” and “hill.” Ask him to think of other words that rhyme with Jill. *Tip:* Suggest that he go through the alphabet, trying each letter with *-ill* at the end (*bill, dill, lill*). Which ones are real words?



- Encourage your child to choose a nursery rhyme and say it several times. He can clap his hands or tap his foot so he hears the rhythm. He might like to recite his rhyme for the whole family—and get everyone to chant along with him.♥

## Q&A Oops! Fixing reading mistakes

**Q** When my son reads to me and I point out mistakes, he gets upset. What’s the best way to correct him?

**A** Let your son know that *all* readers make mistakes. You can tell him that to be a good reader, it helps to know when a word doesn’t seem quite right.

If he says *bus* instead of *busy*, try waiting until he reaches the end of the sentence or paragraph. Then, say something like, “Did *bus* make sense in that sentence?” Have him read it again so he gets a chance to correct himself.

If he still doesn’t recognize the mistake, you can gently say the correct word (“It’s *busy*, because it has a *y* at the end”). Then, encourage him to reread the sentence correctly. That way, he’ll catch the meaning of the sentence, and he’ll be more likely to know the word the next time he sees it.♥



## Parent to Parent A book nook

I recently volunteered in my daughter Savannah’s classroom and noticed that her teacher had a cozy corner where kids were reading. There were beanbag chairs, stuffed animals, and baskets of books organized into categories like “Alphabet books” and “Biographies.”

When Savannah got home that day, I asked her if she wanted to set up her own book nook. We gathered plastic baskets that we had around

the house and put books from the public library in one basket and those from the school library in another. Then, I let her decide how to organize her own books.

She separated animal stories, series books, and bedtime stories. Finally, we put the baskets in a corner of her room, and she added a chair and some dolls.

Now Savannah can see at a glance which books she has, and she loves to snuggle up with a doll and read in her own library corner.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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