

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2012

Sweetbriar Elementary School

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Tacky the Penguin*

Helen Lester's story is about a penguin who doesn't fit in.

Loud and quirky, Tacky wears bright clothing and does cannonballs into the water. But because he doesn't act like a penguin, he's able to trick a group of hunters and save the day. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Books!*



Your child might have read about the lady who swallowed a fly. But what happens when the woman eats books? She has to wash them down with school supplies,

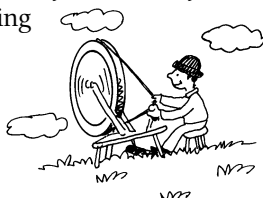
including a ruler, pencil case, and folder. The latest book in Lucille Colandro's silly series.

■ *Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie*

Edna Lewis was raised on a Virginia farm where she learned to cook with foods her family grew. Robbin Gourley's true story tells how Edna grew up to become an award-winning chef who was known for using farm-fresh ingredients.

■ *The Cloud Spinner*

A little boy sits at the top of a hill with a spinning wheel and a loom, turning clouds into beautiful fabric. When a greedy king demands more clothes than he can wear, the consequences affect everyone. A story about conserving resources by Michael Catchpool.



Reading independently

Like riding a bike or tying shoes, reading is a skill that gets easier with practice. Here are ways to help your child make the most of his independent reading time.

What should he read?

You want your youngster to enjoy reading so he'll do it often. If he's a brand-new reader, try giving him favorite stories that he has heard over and over. He will know many of the words and be less likely to get frustrated. Or suggest that he choose a book with chapters. He can read a chapter a night—he'll feel a sense of accomplishment when he's finished.

How do I know he's reading correctly?

Before your youngster reads a book, look at the illustrations together, and point out unfamiliar things. *Example:* "That's a *flamingo*. Do you see the word *flamingo* on this page?" Then, help him find the word. You might sit beside him



while he reads in case he needs help. And when he's finished, ask him a few questions about the story. ("Which animal do you like best?" "Where does it live?")

How long should he read?

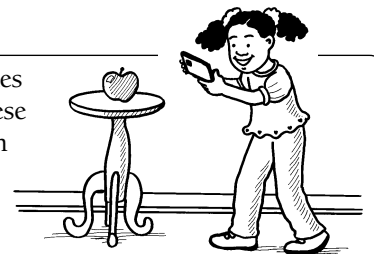
Have your child read on his own for about 10–20 minutes each day. Consider creating a family reading time—your youngster can curl up with his book while you read the newspaper or a novel. Or give him a book light, and encourage him to read in bed for a few minutes after you read him a story. ♥

Homemade books

Books that your youngster writes and illustrates are ideal for independent reading. Let her try these ideas—she'll be proud to show you how she can read all by herself.

Character book. Ask your child to choose a few favorite story characters (Cinderella, Frog and Toad). She can draw them on separate sheets of paper and label them with their names. *Variation:* An experienced writer could add a description of each character.

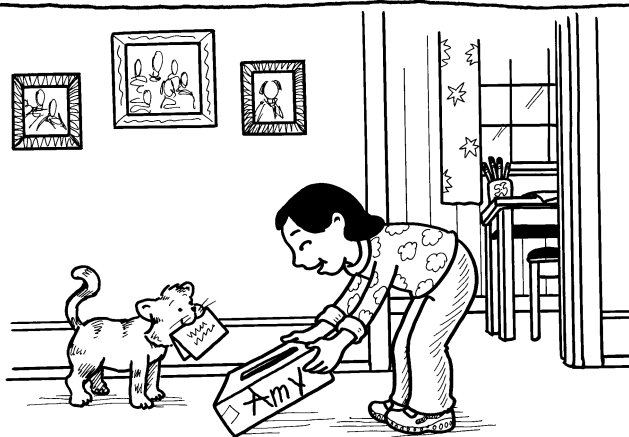
Photo book. Help your youngster pick a theme (colors, shapes) and take photos to match. For example, she might photograph something for every color of the rainbow (red apple, orange cup). Then, let her glue each picture on a piece of paper and write a caption ("This is a yellow pillow"). *Idea:* Have her list additional items for each color. ♥



Family mailboxes

Does your youngster enjoy getting mail? She can send and receive letters and cards on a regular basis—and practice writing—with this family project.

1. Make mailboxes. Save several tissue boxes or shoe boxes. Let each family member cover one with wrapping paper or construction paper, write her own name on it, and place it outside her bedroom door.



2. Gather mail supplies. You'll need writing paper, construction paper, pencils, crayons, stickers for "postage stamps," and envelopes. Make a sample envelope together so that your child can refer to it when she sends mail. Include the return address, the recipient's address, and a stamp.

3. Send mail. Encourage your youngster to write to family members. She might drop a quick note ("I love you!") or make a greeting card. Or help her write a friendly letter with information about herself and questions for the other person to answer. Then, she can address the envelope as you showed her and put it in the correct mailbox. Ask family members to send her mail, too—she'll be excited to reply.♥

Q&A

Don't forget the spaces!

Q When my son writes, a whole sentence sometimes looks like one long word. How can I get him to put spaces between words?

A Ask him to read his writing out loud so he can "hear" the spaces. As he reads, have him draw a vertical line where he thinks each space should be.

You can also show him spaces in books. Pick a sentence, and have him count



the words. He'll need to pay attention to the spaces to figure out how many words there are.

Finally, encourage him to use his finger as a "space bar" by laying it on his paper after he writes each word. It will show him how much space to leave before he begins the next word. Or let him decorate a craft stick with stickers and use that as a space bar.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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Fun with Words

Spelling in the snow

Have a snowy spelling bee!

This chilly challenge will help your child learn to spell.

First, find a list of words for your youngster to spell. If he has a weekly spelling list, you can use that. He gets to make a list for you by finding long words in the dictionary.

Then, head outdoors and take turns giving each other words to spell. But instead of spelling them aloud, carve the letters in the snow with your feet. Players must jump over clean snow to make each new letter so there are no extra footprints.

Tip: If there's no snow, play indoors by putting salt or sugar in separate baking dishes, one per player. Spell the words with your fingers.♥

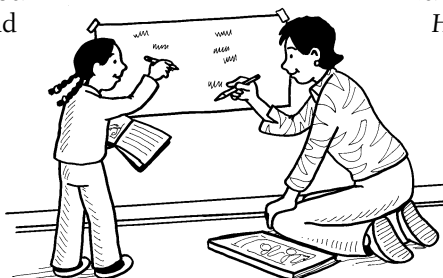


Tell stories together

Books make ideal jumping-off points for storytelling. With these suggestions, you and your child can use books to make up your own tales:

- Let your youngster choose a book—but read only the first and last pages. Together, tell your own version of what happens in between. You might sit in a circle, and have each person say one line of your story.

- Have each family member get a different book. On a whiteboard or piece of paper, each person



lists five random words from his book. Take turns making up lines of a story that include a word from the list. Cross out each one as you say it. The story ends when you've used all the words.

- Find a book with a series of events like *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Laura Numeroff) or *This Is the House That Jack Built* (Simms Taback). Suggest that your child put her own twist on the tale ("If you give a gymnast a balance beam...").♥