

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2012

Sweetbriar Elementary

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ Listen to My Trumpet!

Piggie is excited to play her trumpet for Gerald the elephant. But the sounds she plays ("Bl-ah!" "Tr-ink!") aren't very musical. Gerald is a good friend, so he compliments Piggie on how loud and shiny her trumpet is. Mo Willems's story ends with a silly twist.



■ Whoever You Are

Children around the world might speak different languages and live in different kinds of houses, but they can have the same feelings. That's the message in this colorful book by Mem Fox. Pictures show little ones hugging their mothers, laughing with friends, and crying over scraped knees. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ Cloulette

The big clouds in the sky are good at making rain and thunder, but little Cloulette can't keep up. Then, she meets a friendly frog who needs just enough rain to make a pond. It's the perfect job for a tiny cloud! A cute story by Tom Lichtenheld.

■ Every Thing on It

Imagine a hot dog with "everything" on it: a parrot, a goldfish, and a front-porch swing, plus other toppings. This collection of more than 100 poems and drawings by Shel Silverstein also includes "Kid-Eating Land Shark" and "Twenty-eight Uses for Spaghetti."



Fun with picture books

When you read to your child, she probably likes to look closely at the illustrations. They show her what the characters look like, and they help her understand the plot. You can use her interest in the pictures to improve her reading skills. Here are activities to try.

"Read" the pictures

Encourage your youngster to look at the pictures and make up her own story. Pick a book she's not familiar with, and use a sheet of paper to cover up the words while she tells her tale, page by page. Then, read the book to her and ask her to compare the two stories ("Mine was about a jungle, too, but no one got lost").

Be an illustrator

Suggest that your child make pictures to go with a favorite book. She can pretend that she is the illustrator and she gets to decide what the characters and the setting look like. Have her consider different materials (paint, ink, chalk) and choose what works best with the story. She might use bright finger paints for a book about autumn leaves or soft



pencil drawings for a story about nighttime.

Invent a solution

Most stories have a problem and a solution. Read a book to your youngster, and ask her to identify the problem. Next, encourage her to come up with a solution. For instance, she could suggest ways two characters might compromise when they disagree. Or she might invent a device that would solve a problem. *Example:* After reading *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (Judi Barrett), she could use building materials (craft sticks, cardboard tubes, tape, rubber bands) to design a giant slingshot that would get rid of the food. ♥

I'm a reader

Put your youngster on the path to independent reading with this three-step strategy:

1. Read a book aloud. While you read, call his attention to the words by running your finger under them. Ask him to point to words that he recognizes.
2. Read the same story in unison. Your child can match his pace and tone to yours. *Note:* Remember that however you read is fine—your youngster is happy to read with you!
3. Listen to your child read. He might have memorized parts of the book or learned some of the words. Reading all by himself will boost his confidence as a reader. ♥



Tell me all about it!

“The tooth fairy came last night!” When your youngster shares an experience with you, take the opportunity to help him learn to tell stories—an important pre-writing skill. Consider these ideas.

● **Write it.** Offer to write down your child’s news or to help him write. He might print words he knows (*the, came*) while you add the harder ones (*tooth, night*). As you write each word, say it slowly to help him make the connection between sounds and letters.



● **Build vocabulary.** You can introduce new words as you talk about or write down his announcement (“Soon, your *permanent* tooth will come in”).

● **Get details.** Try asking questions, such as “What do you think the tooth fairy does with the teeth?” or “What does she wear?” Encourage your

youngster to add the answers to his story. This will help him use his imagination and create more vivid stories.

Idea: Post his tale on the refrigerator and ask family members to add comments (“Congratulations on losing your first tooth”). Help him read them at the end of the day.♥

Fun with Words Word machine

Letters go in, and words come out! Help your child use this word-making “machine” to build her spelling skills.



Secretly think of a word your youngster knows. (Her name is a fun word to start with.) Write each letter on a separate slip of paper, and put the slips into a small container with a lid. Then, ask her to shake the container, remove the lid, and spill out the letters. She can arrange and rearrange the letters to spell as many words as possible. For example, *Michelle* might spell *me, hi, and lime*. Tell her that one word will use all the letters—can she find it? (It’s her name!)

Idea: Write down the words your child spells. After you’ve played several times, let her cut the words out and sort them (by first letter, number of letters, or vowel sound). For example, *me* and *hi* would go together because they each have two letters.♥



Q&A Choosing library books

Q When we go to the library, my daughter is overwhelmed by all the choices. How can I help her pick books?

A Being able to choose books that she’ll enjoy is a skill your child can use throughout her life.

As she browses the shelves, she might look for book covers that catch her eye. Help her read the front flap or the back cover to get an idea of whether the story interests her.

Also, when a teacher reads a book that your daughter likes, suggest that she try to remember the author’s name. At the library, the two of you can look for other books by that writer. Finally, encourage your youngster to talk to classmates who enjoy the same kinds of books she does. If she and her best friend both like Barbara Park’s *Junie B. Jones* series, they might recommend other books to one another.♥



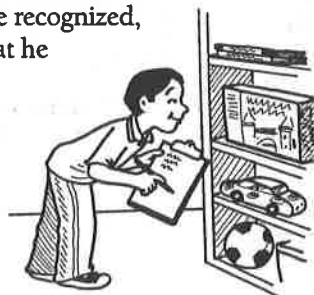
Parent to Parent Write around the house

My son Max came home excited about a classroom activity called “writing around the room.” The students carry clipboards and write down words posted on walls and bulletin boards. He showed me his list—it included words he recognized, like *morning*, and ones that he didn’t, such as *schedule*.

Then, he asked if he could write around our house. I was happy that Max wanted to practice writing, so I gave him a clipboard, paper, and

a pencil. He copied *power* and *high* from the microwave, and *garage* and *race* from his toys. When he was finished, we read his list together.

Now, I purposely put up words for him to discover. I’ll clip a *recipe* for his favorite foods and hang it on the refrigerator at his eye level, or I’ll label a household item *desk* or *chair*. Max loves finding the words and adding them to his list. Every few days, he likes to count the words and tell me how many he has.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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