

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2011

St. Bernard of Clairvaux
Nick Teti, Principal

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ How Do Apples Grow?

Betsy Maestro's non-fiction book will give your youngster a colorful look at apples throughout the year.



On the first page, snow covers tree branches. When spring arrives, pink blossoms appear. Finally in autumn, ripe apples are ready to pick.

■ Miss Smith's Incredible Storybook

What if, when you read to your child, a princess and a dragon jumped from the pages? That's just what happens in Michael Garland's story about Miss Smith, an unusual teacher with a magic book. Find out what happens when the principal reads the book to the class!

■ Sol a Sol

The title of this poetry collection is Spanish for "Sunup to Sundown." Each verse, printed in both English and Spanish, describes one part of a family's day, such as cooking, enjoying music, and watching the sunset. Includes poems by Lori Marie Carlson and others.



■ Roller Coaster

Your youngster will feel like he's on a roller coaster when he sees Marla Frazee's book. The girl in the story is riding her first roller coaster, and the sentences twist and turn as the car winds across the pages.



My own books

The first book your child can read by himself may very well be one that he creates. Here's a perfect project to begin with—a book with a repeating phrase.

Provide supplies. Have your youngster collect pencils and crayons to write and illustrate his book. Help him make pages by cutting several sheets of paper into fourths. Staple the pages together to "bind" his book.

Think of topics. Your child might enjoy writing about a place he likes to visit (fire station, ice cream parlor). Or he could make a book about a subject he's an "expert" on (swimming, ants).

Write sentences. Beginning readers and writers often succeed with books that have a pattern, or words that repeat on each page. Help your youngster choose the pattern ("We saw a _____ at the fire station"). If he isn't writing much yet, you might write the repeating part for him and let him fill in the blanks. Encourage him to say the words slowly ("fire truck,"



"firefighter") and write letters that he hears. After he finishes each page, help him read the entire sentence so he'll remember what it says.

Read (and read again). Repeated readings help your child get the most from any book. He will probably learn a new word or two each time. Plus, being able to read an entire book by himself will build his confidence and encourage him to try reading other books.

Tip: Keep your youngster's home-made stories on a bookshelf along with his other books so he can pull them out to read any time. ♥

All kinds of words

A large vocabulary will help your child become a better reader and writer. Try these everyday ways to help her learn new words.

Keep your ears open. When you and your youngster go places, point out words that people use. Maybe a waiter describes an "entrée" or the dentist talks about "molars." Can your child figure out what they mean by the way they're used?

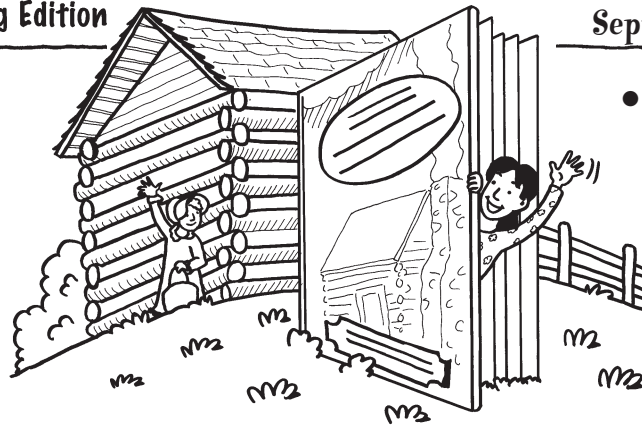
Go beyond nouns. Help your youngster add verbs and adjectives to her vocabulary. Sports and games offer opportunities to use action words. Let your child hear you comment on the softball that "soars" or the runner who "sprints." When she sends thank-you notes or greeting cards, suggest descriptive words (a "polka-dot" shirt, a "fantastic" birthday). ♥



Stories from long ago

Books about history are like time machines. They can transport your child back to the “old days.” Get your youngster interested in reading about the past with these ideas:

- Look for stories about children her own age (*Samuel Eaton’s Day* by Kate Waters, *The Buffalo Storm* by Katherine Applegate). Explain that these books are examples of *historical fiction*—made-up stories based on real events.



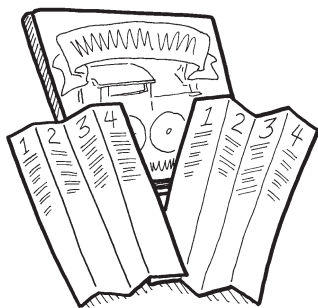
- Browse the illustrations together. Ask your youngster to look for clues that the story took place years ago. For example, she might notice covered wagons instead of cars, or lanterns rather than lamps. As you read, she’ll learn how the objects were used and how people lived back then.

- Have your child draw a picture using the book’s setting to put herself in the past. After reading about a one-room schoolhouse, for example, she might draw her school with just one class for all the students. She’ll think about the book as she imagines what life was like for the characters.♥

Fun with Words Super syllables

This activity will help your youngster hear syllables—an important step in sounding out words.

Each person folds a sheet of paper in half lengthwise once and then again. When opened, the sheet will have four columns. Then, have them number the columns 1, 2, 3, and 4. The first column is for one-syllable words (*the, friend*), the second column is for two-syllable words (*father, outside*), and so on.



Read a story aloud slowly. Everyone should listen for words with one, two, three, and four syllables and write them down in the correct column. At the end of the story, let each person read all the words he wrote. Then, flip the papers over, and read a new story.♥

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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Q&A Reading at home

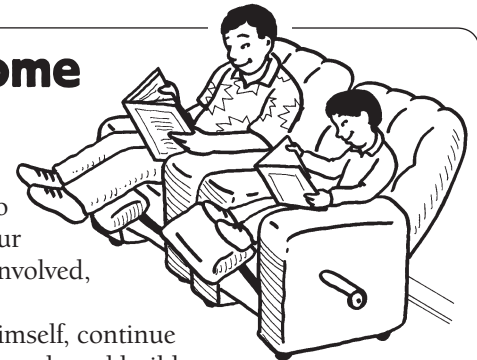
Q My son is learning how to read. What can I do at home to help?

A Your son’s teacher would be happy to hear that you’re interested in helping your child. That’s because when parents are involved, children learn more!

As your youngster learns to read by himself, continue reading aloud every day. He’ll hear new words and build comprehension skills as he listens to stories.

Also, give your child plenty of opportunities to practice reading alone. When he brings books home, encourage him to read them. (*Tip:* If he isn’t reading on his own yet, he can use the pictures to tell the story.) You might sit beside him with your own book, magazine, or newspaper so he’ll see that you read, too. Try to visit yard sales, used bookstores, and discounted online book sites so he can build a home library.

Finally, show interest in the reading your son does at school. Ask him about his reading group, and find out which stories the teacher and librarian read aloud.♥



Parent to Parent Finger plays

My daughter Amelia comes home from school singing songs with hand motions like “Five Little Monkeys,” “The Itsy Bitsy Spider,” and “Where Is Thumbkin?” She loves to perform them and teach them to us.

One day she was singing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm,” and I suggested that she make up her own motions for it. She made her fingers “gallop” for the horse, and she flapped her elbows for the chicken.



Now, Amelia makes up finger plays all the time. She even invents new songs based on her favorites—the other day she sang “Five Little Frogs,” with frogs jumping on lily pads instead of monkeys jumping on the bed. I mentioned this to her teacher, and I was happy to hear that my daughter’s singing and finger plays are building her language skills and creativity.♥