

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2011

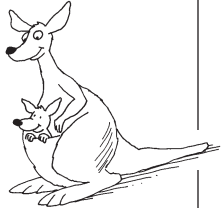
Haywood County Schools

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

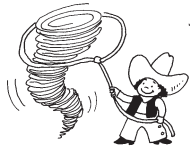
■ Pouch

"Pouch!" yells the baby kangaroo when he's ready to return to the safety of his mother. Each time he hops out, he meets a new animal friend and explores a little more of the world. A cute story by David Ezra Stein.



■ Thunder Rose

Jerdine Nolen's tall tale features a brave little cowgirl with some amazing abilities. Thunder Rose is born able to talk, and soon she is taming tornadoes and capturing outlaws—all with her pet bull Tater by her side.

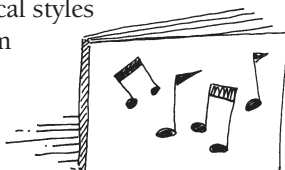


■ Miss Rumphius

When Alice was little, her grandfather gave her a piece of advice: make the world more beautiful. As an elderly, retired librarian, Alice still isn't sure how to follow his advice—until her favorite flower provides the answer. An American Book Award winner by Barbara Cooney. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ M Is for Melody: A Music Alphabet

Let your child explore the world of music with this nonfiction book from Kathy-jo Wargin. In 26 playful entries (one for each letter of the alphabet), she'll read about instruments like the xylophone and the zither and learn about musical styles ranging from ragtime to yodeling.



Story lessons

A good book lets your child put herself in a character's shoes or look at a situation in a different light. These kinds of reading experiences can help her with a variety of life's challenges—and make her a more thoughtful, enthusiastic reader. Try these suggestions.



Find titles

Look for books that your youngster can relate to. Perhaps she's going through a tough time (new sibling, parents' divorce) or working on a particular behavior (taking turns, being polite). The right book can show her she's not alone, or it can teach a lesson in a gentle way. Let a librarian know what you're looking for, or use the library database. *Tip:* Get more than one book so your child can see how different characters handle the same issue.

Talk about themes

Ask questions that will help your youngster understand a character's actions or feelings. For example, after reading *Goodbye House* by Frank Asch,

you might ask, "What did Baby Bear do to make moving easier?" Or if you read *The Mine-O-Saur* by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen, you could ask, "Why do you think the dinosaur didn't want to share?"

Remember the lesson

Help your child handle a challenging situation by referring back to a book. *Example:* "I know you're sad about moving—should we say good-bye to each room like Baby Bear did?" or "Do you remember how the Mine-O-Saur felt when he decided to share?" *Idea:* Suggest that your youngster draw a picture after reading a story. Her drawing will serve as a reminder of what she has learned. ♥

Speak, listen, and learn

Did you know that speaking and listening help lay the foundation for reading and writing? Play these family games to improve your youngster's oral language skills:

- Ask each person to write a topic (pets, pollution) on a scrap of paper. Sit in a circle, crumple the slips, and throw them in the middle. Take turns picking one and starting a discussion about the topic. Your child will learn to discuss a wide variety of subjects.
- Have one family member think of a question. Then, take turns answering—but practice listening by repeating what the person before you said. If your question is "What would you pack for a trip to Jupiter?" the conversation might go like this: "Mom would pack her pillow. I would pack my skates." ♥



Writing models

When your child watches you write, he sees you use uppercase and lowercase letters, put spaces between words, add punctuation, and much more.

Although you'll want your youngster to write on his own most of the time, letting him dictate allows him to get his thoughts on paper faster and learn from your example. Here's how:

1. Look for everyday writing opportunities. If your child tells a joke, you might say, "Let's write that down so we'll remember it." When he brings home an art project, ask him to tell you about it. Record his description on an index card and clip it to the project as a keepsake.



2. As your youngster dictates, write each word slowly. Call attention to a skill he is working on. For example, you might put your finger on the paper between words and say, "We need a space here because we're starting a new word."

3. When your child is finished dictating, read his words to him or have him read them to you. Then, switch roles, and dictate sentences for him to write.♥



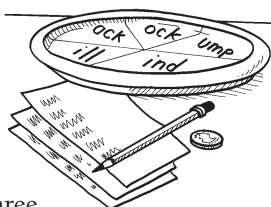
Fun with Words Word families

Your youngster may know a Smith or a Jones family...but does she know an "ind" or an "ack" family? A *word family* includes words with a common ending (such as -ind in "find" and "kind"). Here's an activity that will help her use word families to write new words.

Draw lines to divide a paper plate into five sections. Help your child write a word family in each section (-ack, -ill, -ind, -ump, -ock).

Take turns tossing a coin onto the plate to see which word family it lands on. Then, set a timer for three minutes. All players write as many words as possible with that ending (for -ill, you might write "fill" and "chill"). When time's up, read your lists aloud. Whoever got the most words can toss the coin for the next round.

Variation: Play in teams if your child isn't writing yet.♥



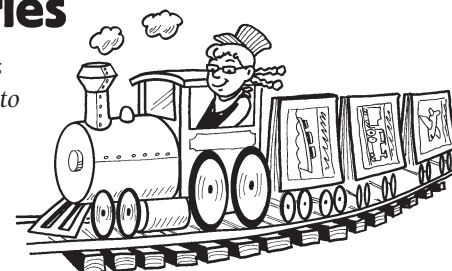
Q&A Ready for a series

Q Some of my daughter's friends are reading books with chapters, and she wants to try them, too. Any recommendations?

A Children who are learning to read often can't wait to start longer books that have chapters. Series written for young readers can fit the bill. It's easy for youngsters to get hooked on a series, since they're eager to find out what happens in the next installment.

Popular choices for early readers include series like *Henry and Mudge* by Cynthia Rylant, *Junie B. Jones* by Barbara Park, *Monty* by Johanna Hurwitz, and *Candy Fairies* by Helen Perelman.

You can also ask parents what series their youngsters enjoy or suggest that your daughter ask her friends about their favorites. And be sure to visit the public library—most have series books in an "easy reader" section. Also, look for lists of series online at sites like www.kidsreads.com/series.♥



Parent to Parent "I predict..."

We recently attended a family literacy night at my son's school. Boy, did I learn a lot! The reading teacher explained that if a child predicts what a book will be about before he reads, it will be easier for him to understand it.

She used a nonfiction book on ants as an example. We watched as she read the title and the first page aloud. Then, she skimmed the rest, talking about the photos and reading headings and captions aloud. Next, the teacher had us work with

our kids to make predictions. My son thought the book might explain how ants dig in the dirt, because many of the pictures showed them living in their tunnels.

We have been trying this at home, and it seems to help him get comfortable with new books. He loves to check his predictions as he reads, and he's excited when he's right. Now, he practices predicting all the time—not just when we're reading. We all laughed the other day when he said, "The baby didn't take a nap, so I predict she's going to be cranky!"♥



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 Aspen Publishers, Inc.

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www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5648