

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2014

LaMotte School
LeeAnn Burke, Principal

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ Extra Yarn

When Annabelle finds an apparently bottomless box of yarn, she starts knitting...and knitting.

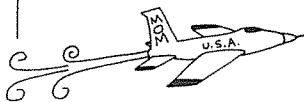
She knits sweaters for people, animals, and even houses in this story by Mac Barnett. Soon, her black-and-white world is filled with color. Will she ever run out of yarn?



■ Good Night Captain Mama

At bedtime, a mother uses the patches on her military uniform to explain her job to her little boy. Marco learns that his mommy

flies airplanes and helps to protect the country. Written in both English and Spanish by Graciela Tiscareño-Sato, an Air Force veteran and a mom. Based on a true story.

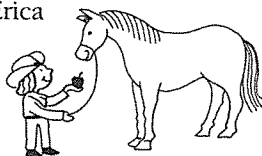


■ Reusing and Recycling

Help your child learn about everyday things he can do to take care of the earth. Author Charlotte Guillain includes suggestions like using cardboard tubes and boxes for craft projects or turning a glass jar into a pencil holder instead of throwing it out.

■ Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa

This is a story about a cute little cowgirl and her talking horse. Together, they count cows, enjoy treats of apples and carrots, and even have a sleepover in the barn. The first book in a series by Erica Silverman.



Be an author

Would your child like to be a real author? Strengthen his writing by helping him create homemade books with ideas like these.

Hide-and-seek book

For this clever hidden-picture book, have your child color a different background (a playground, a classroom) on each page. Then, he can draw objects to blend in with the scene (a hockey stick on monkey bars, a pencil in the teacher's hair). At the bottom of each page, help him list the hidden items. Let him make a cover, hole-punch the pages, and tie them together with yarn.

Seasonal storybook

Suggest that your child create a wintry story with white chalk on dark construction paper. He can sketch snowy scenes and write one sentence beneath each picture. ("I woke up, and it was snowing!") Staple the pages together.



Tip: If he's not writing yet, ask him to dictate the sentences to you.

How-to book

What is your youngster an expert on? Perhaps he's good at jigsaw puzzles or a whiz at basketball. Give him a long strip of poster board to fold like an accordion—forward and backward. Help him write directions (one step per panel) for putting together a puzzle or shooting a basketball. For example, in the first panel, he might write, "Turn all the pieces right side up." Finally, he can illustrate each step.♥

Personalize it!

When your youngster makes a book, she can add to the fun—and learning—with one of these finishing touches.

● **Summary.** On the back cover, help her write a few sentences about the story. Tell her that an interesting summary will make people want to read her book!

● **About the author.** Have your youngster write a page with facts about herself to put in her book. *Example:* "Lily lives in Virginia with her mom, dad, and brother. She likes to write stories about animals."

● **Endpapers.** Some books have decorative "wallpaper" inside the front and back cover. Your child could glue wrapping paper inside her cover, or she might use paint or crayons to create her own design.♥



Use books to problem-solve

Your youngster may have learned in school that most storybooks include a *conflict*, or problem. You can use books to boost her problem-solving skills along with her reading comprehension. Try these ideas.

Discuss problems and solutions.

Read a book to your child, and tell her to listen carefully for the problem. For example, the children in *Hansel and Gretel* get lost in the woods. After you read, talk



about how the characters solved the problem (they used bread crumbs to find their way home). Ask her what else they could have done. Perhaps she'll imagine Hansel and Gretel using GPS to get out of the forest.

Link to real life. When your youngster faces her own problems, suggest that she think about books she has

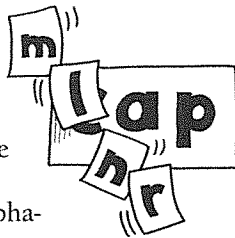
read. Maybe she's having a disagreement with a classmate or a sibling. She might try one of the "recipes" for getting along in *Enemy Pie* (Derek Munson). This will help her to reflect on books and see them as useful as well as entertaining.♥

Fun with Words

Wordplay

Use these activities to build your child's *phonemic awareness*—his ability to hear sounds in words:

- Choose a three-letter word, such as *cap*. Have your youngster substitute different beginning sounds from the alphabet (*lap, map, nap, rap, sap, tap, zap*). How many can he think of that are actual words?



- Pick a long word, and tell him to clap once as he says each syllable. For *mozzarella*, he would clap four times: *moz-za-rel-la*.

- Ask your child to say a word without the first sound. *Example:* "Can you say *sit* without the *s*?" (*Answer: It.*)

- Think of a word, and give your youngster a "sound" clue to figure it out. For instance, "I'm thinking of a word for something that you chew. The word has an *uh* sound in the middle." (*Answer: Gum.*)♥

O U R P U R P O S E

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

Resources for Educators,
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
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Q&A

Participate in class

Q My son's teacher said he doesn't take part in class discussions. What can I do at home to help him with this?

A Try talking with your son ahead of time about what he might say. For instance, his class may have morning meetings or circle time where the kids share personal experiences. On Sunday evening, you could review the weekend by asking questions like "Where did we go?" and "Who did we see?"



Also, help him feel comfortable during discussions about learning. Have him tell you what he liked best about a story or what he learned during a school assembly.

If your son feels hesitant about talking in front of others, give him practice. He might make phone calls or order his own food in a restaurant, for instance.♥

Parent to Parent

Learning to read—together!

I am a parent who struggles as a reader.

Because of this, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to help my daughter, Rosa, as she learns to read. So I asked her teacher for advice.

One of the teacher's suggestions was to take my daughter to the library and check out children's audio books. Then, Rosa and I can follow along together in the book while we listen to the CD.



The teacher also mentioned that the library offers a free adult literacy class once a week. I signed up, and when I told my daughter about my class, she asked if we could do reading "home-work" together!

We are both learning a lot—and I think it's good for her to see that learning can take place at any age.♥