

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

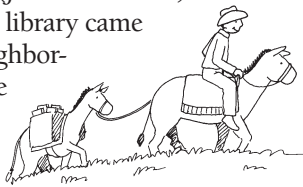
Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ **Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia** (Jeanette Winter)

What if the library came to your neighborhood on the back of a donkey?



This is the true story of a Colombian schoolteacher's traveling library that brought books to children in remote villages. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **Dragons Love Tacos** (Adam Rubin)

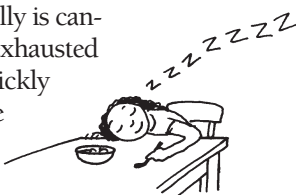
When a little boy discovers that dragons like to eat tacos, he decides to host a taco party for them. But if a fire-breathing dragon accidentally gets a bite of spicy salsa, look out! A silly story about a dragon party that turns into a disaster.



■ **Just a Second** (Steve Jenkins)

In just a single second, a bumblebee flaps its wings 100 times and the earth travels 18½ miles. This nonfiction book will help your child think about time in fascinating ways. She'll also discover different methods of measuring time.

■ **Bedtime Is Canceled** (Cece Meng)
Maggie and her brother write their parents an official-looking note: "Bedtime is canceled." Somehow, the note blows out the window, lands in a newspaper office, and ends up in a headline. Soon, bedtime really is canceled, and exhausted children quickly discover the importance of sleep.



Time for a story

Want to spend time with your youngster, build her reading skills, and help her learn to love books? You can do all three when you read aloud. Here are suggestions.

Read regularly

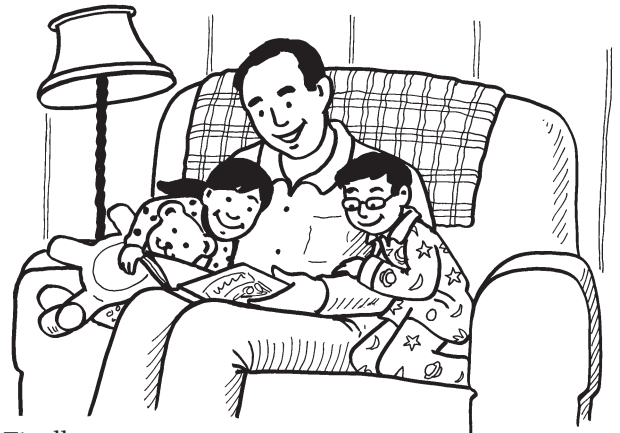
Try to read to your child every day. You might curl up together with a book after work or read while dinner is cooking. Going on a picnic? Bring along a book and read to her outside. Finally, aim for 10–15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to the day.

Take turns choosing books

Your youngster may want to hear old favorites again and again. That's fine! When it's your turn to pick, add new titles and variety, such as nonfiction or poetry.

Let her participate

Ask your child to turn the pages while you read. Also, she can finish sentences that rhyme or fill in words she knows. Go slowly so she has time to understand



the story and look at the illustrations. She'll enjoy read-aloud time more if she plays an active role.

Be playful

You can use different voices for different characters (a high, squeaky voice for a mouse or a deep, booming voice for a horse). Or substitute your youngster's name for the main character's name, and use family members' names for others.

Note: You don't have to be an expert reader—your child will love it when you read aloud because it's *you*.♥

Writing that makes sense

As your child first learns to write, his stories may not always make sense to others. Help his writing flow logically with these two ideas.

1. Even if your youngster isn't writing sentences yet, he can tell you stories. As he describes playing a game with his brother or something funny that happened at lunch, you can jot down his tale. He'll practice relating events in a logical order, and that can help when he writes.

2. Let your child read his stories to you. Ask questions to encourage him to add information ("Where did you bury the treasure?") or to clear up a confusing part ("Who said, 'Let's play tag'—you or your brother?").♥



Spot the details

What is an archaeologist? What do bears eat? Nonfiction books have the answers—and if your child reads carefully, he will find them. The following suggestions can help him read for details and boost his comprehension.

Read around the text. The pages of many nonfiction books are covered with “extras” that stories don’t have (headings, photo captions, an index, a glossary). Point out these features. Then, ask your youngster what questions he has about the topic that the book might answer. Say he’s reading *Archaeologists Dig for Clues* by Kate Duke. He might



child to look for ways that real bears are different from the fictional ones. For example, he might say that real bears eat things like grass, berries, fish, and insects, while the three bears eat porridge.♥

think, “What tools do archaeologists use?” or “What are fossils?” Help him read the book, and see how many answers he can find.

Pair fiction with nonfiction.

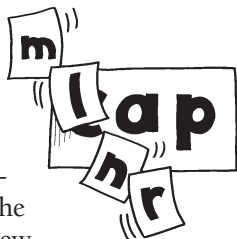
Together, read a story like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (James Marshall) followed by a nonfiction book such as *Bears* (Deborah Hodge). As you read the second book, encourage your

Fun with Words

Wonderful wordplay

Use these activities to boost your youngster’s awareness of sounds and syllables in words:

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



- Pick a long word, and tell her to clap once as she says each syllable. For *mozzarella*, she 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 but don’t swallow. The word has an *uh* sound in the middle.” (*Answer: Gum*)♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A Vocabulary-boosting conversations

Q I’ve heard that kids with bigger vocabularies have an easier time learning to read and write. How can I help my daughter learn more words?

A You’re right—a good vocabulary does help with reading and writing. Kids absorb many words just by hearing them regularly, so try weaving new words into everyday conversations.

When you talk to your daughter, use bigger words to expand on what she says. For instance, in response to “Mitten doesn’t like going to the vet!” you could say, “You’re right. Mitten is scared of the *veterinarian*” Or if she says, “I let the air out of the balloon,” you might reply, “It *deflated* really quickly.”

Then, encourage her to use the new word often to help it stick in her mind. “What else can you think of that *deflates*?” To jog her memory you might say, “Remember when I rode over a nail? It made my bike tire *deflate*.”♥



Parent to Parent A journal-writing tradition

My grandson Keith saw me writing in my journal and asked what I was doing. I explained that my grandfather got me started writing in a journal when I was a little boy. Keith said he wanted to start a journal, too, so I sent him a notebook.

He asked me what he should write about. I told him that I use my journal mostly to store

memories, but he can do whatever he wants—even draw pictures. He decided to sketch the two of us writing together in our journals. Then, his mom helped him write a sentence about his picture and sent me a photo.

Keith has stuck with his journal for a couple of weeks already. Now on our weekly video calls, he can’t wait to share what he has written and drawn.♥

