

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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North Canaan Elementary School

Rosemary Keilty, Principal

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*

(Kathryn Gibbs Davis)

This is the true story of how an American engineer invented the Ferris wheel.



George Ferris designed an enormous steel wheel with fancy cars that fairgoers could ride in, and it became one of the most popular carnival attractions of all time.

■ *Henry and Mudge: The First Book*

(Cynthia Rylant)

Henry's new puppy, Mudge, quickly grows into a 180-pound dog who walks Henry to school, sleeps in Henry's bed, and occasionally gets into trouble. The boy and his dog learn a valuable lesson when Mudge gets lost. Book 1 in the Henry and Mudge series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Before After* (Anne-Margot Ramstein and Matthias Arégui)

In this wordless book, pairs of pictures show "before" and "after"—a caterpillar and a butterfly, a pumpkin and a carriage, a snowy winter scene and a lush spring one. Can your child explain how each pair is related?



■ *I Had a Favorite Dress*

(Boni Ashburn)

A little girl wears her favorite dress every week until she starts to outgrow it. She asks her mom to turn it into a shirt—which she wears every week until it's too small. But that's not the end of it! What will her mom turn it into next?



Plan for creative writing

Youngsters are naturally creative, whether they're doing art projects or playing with toys. Let your child use his creativity to plan the stories he writes. Here are playful ideas.

Sculpt a character

Who will star in your youngster's story? Encourage him to create a main character out of play dough. It could be a person, an animal, or an imaginary creature. Suggest that his character perch nearby as he writes about it—he might write its name and its age, describe its personality (silly, serious), and tell what it likes to do for fun.



write a detailed story: "My best friend and I sit at the same round table in class."

Plan a plot

What problem does your youngster's character face? He could flesh out his plot by using small toys (action figures, bouncy balls, blocks) to act out scenes. "Seeing" the action will help make his writing more vivid and specific. For instance, he might describe exactly how a basketball player sank the winning shot or how the dragon toppled the tower.♥

Sketch a setting

Where will your child's story take place? Have him draw or paint the setting (a classroom, a playground, a castle), and ask questions that will inspire him to add details. For example, are there tables or desks in the classroom? Does the castle have a moat and a drawbridge? He can refer to his picture while you help him

Everyone reads!

Show your youngster the importance of reading by talking about books on a regular basis. Consider these everyday tips.

● "Today I read..." Tell your child what you read at work or in your spare time. You could describe the dishes on the new menu at your restaurant or mention a suspenseful mystery that's keeping you on the edge of your seat. Ask her to tell you what she's reading, too.

● "I know who'd enjoy this book..." Point out what relatives or friends might like to read. While looking at the "new arrivals" shelf at the library, you could say, "Uncle Rick loves science fiction. Let's tell him about this book." Then, encourage your youngster to be on the lookout for other books to recommend.♥



Super sight-word activities

Being able to recognize common words automatically is an important step toward fluent reading. Try these activities to help your youngster learn to read frequently used words like *said* and *went*.

Note: Use a list of sight words that your child's teacher sends home, or find a list online (try lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/Dolch_Basic.pdf).



Slide and find. Your youngster can reveal sight words hidden in rice. First, cut a sheet of construction paper to fit inside a plastic zipper bag. Write 15–20 sight words in random places on one side of the paper, slide it into the bag, and have your child add scoops of dry rice until the page is covered. Seal the bag, and lay it flat on the table. She

should use her finger to slide the rice around through the plastic and say each word as she uncovers it.

Park and read. Let your youngster draw a parking lot for her toy cars on poster board or construction paper. In each parking space, have her write a sight word (*was*, *they*, *because*). As she parks each car, she reads the word in its spot. Or call out any word in the lot, and she has to park a car in the space labeled with that word.♥

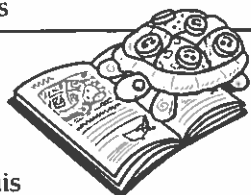
Stuffed animal research

What would your child's stuffed squirrel like to eat? What kind of home does his turtle need? He can practice reading nonfiction and build early research skills as he finds out!

1. Together, find library materials that would answer his questions. You might try information books, picture book biographies, children's encyclopedias, or kids' science and nature magazines.

2. Help him read the table of contents and the glossary to see which pages contain the facts he wants. For instance, he could look for pages that mention *diet* or *habitat*.

3. Now it's time to use what he learned to "take care of" his animals. He might "serve" acorns to his squirrel. Or he can create a pond for his turtle using blue construction paper. He'll discover that doing research to learn new things is fun and useful!♥



Q&A

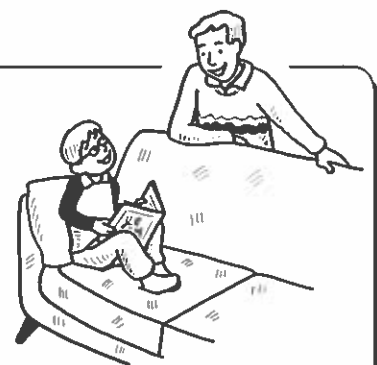
Reading silently

Q My son recently started reading silently. Since I can't hear him read, how can I check on how he's doing?

A Silent reading is typically—but not always—a sign that a child is reading automatically and efficiently.

To make sure your youngster understands what he reads silently, invite him to tell you about it when he's finished. Browse through the book as he talks so you can see how well he understood it. Ask him to show you any hard words he figured out—or any he couldn't get. Also, tell him that he can come to you or an older sibling for help when he reads.

And remember, just because your son *can* read silently doesn't mean he has to do it all the time. Let him read aloud to you, and you'll be able to hear his progress.♥



Parent to Parent

A recipe for writing fun

In school, my daughter Sara had to write a recipe for something other than food. Sara decided that her recipe would be for friendship, and it called for "ingredients" like 1 cup loyalty and a pinch of laughter.

She enjoyed the assignment, so I suggested that she write recipes for other things. In her recipe for a perfect day, her instructions included mixing together

½ cup sunshine, ½ cup playground fun, and 1 cup family. Sara has also written recipes for her ideal sleepover, soccer game, and school field trip.

This has been a great way to encourage my daughter to practice writing. Now, she's compiling her recipes into a "cook-book" to keep on our bookshelf for everyone to read.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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