

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

November 2019

Weatherly Area Elementary School

## Book Picks

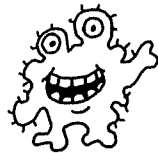


Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Do Not Lick This Book*

(Idan Ben-Barak)

The title of this picture book offers good advice—since, as the pages explain, germs are everywhere. A little microbe named Min gives readers a humorous introduction to germs, explaining where they live and what they do.



### ■ *Froggy Gets Dressed* (Jonathan London)

Froggy should be hibernating through the winter, but playing in the snow is more exciting. Soon, he's outside and ready to play—but he's not dressed for the weather. Early readers will love



predicting what Froggy has forgotten each time his mother calls him back inside. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Katherine Johnson* (Thea Feldman)

Even as a little girl, Katherine Johnson knew she wanted a job using her favorite subject—math. But she didn't know that one day she would help NASA calculate flight paths for astronauts. This biography describes her life and work. Part of the *You Should Meet* series.

### ■ *The Treasure* (Uri Shulevitz)

In this retelling of a classic folktale, Isaac keeps dreaming about hidden treasure under a bridge near a castle. But when he goes in search of it, the treasure is not there. Where will he find it in the end?



## Playing with ABCs

Recognizing the letters of the alphabet is one of the first stepping-stones on the exciting path to becoming an independent reader. Try these activities as your child learns her ABCs.

### Alphabet train

All aboard! This playtime project encourages your youngster to write and play with letters. Let her collect small cardboard boxes. She can cover each one with construction paper and label it with a different letter of the alphabet (uppercase and lowercase). Then, punch holes in the boxes, and use yarn to string them together like cars in a train.

### Alpha-doodles

Calling your child's attention to loops, lines, and curves helps her tell similar letters apart. Pick two lowercase letters, perhaps *p* and *q* or *v* and *w*. Have her print a big version of each letter and turn them into doodles. She might draw a



smiley face in the loop of the *p* and make the straight line into a ponytail by drawing a ribbon around it.

### Letter search

Choose a word, and see if your youngster can find its letters on signs or labels. She'll learn to recognize letters with different fonts, which will help her read the print in various books. Before dinner, you could say, "We're having tacos. Go find *t-a-c-o-s*." Maybe she'll spot *t* on the package of tortillas, *a* on a jar of salsa, and so on.♥

## I found a poem!

A pile of books next to your youngster's bed or at the library could inspire him to write a "found poem."

A found poem uses words your child finds in print—in this case, on book spines. Have him choose several books with fun titles and stack them so he can see all the spines. For example, his stack might include *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault) and *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin!* (Lloyd Moss).

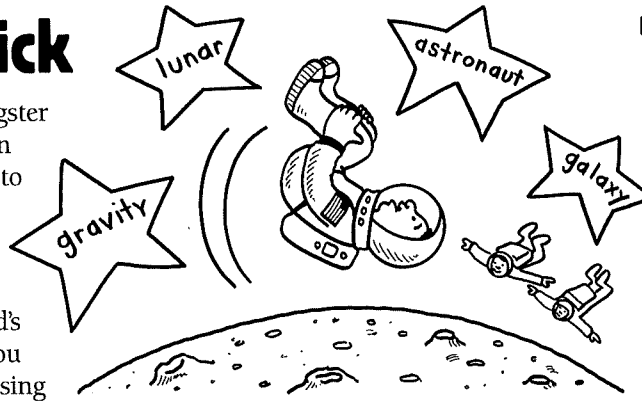
Now he can use the words to write a poem. It's fine for him to add words of his own, too. His poem might begin: "Chicka chicka zin zin / I like to play the violin."♥



# Make words stick

To truly learn new words, your youngster needs to use them over and over again in different situations. Use these strategies to make new words a permanent part of his vocabulary.

**See.** Attaching words to something concrete helps to cement them in your child's memory. When you're out and about, you might point out construction workers using a crane to lift a load, or say the wind is *blustery* because it's blowing hard.



**Explain.** Ask your youngster to teach his little sister or his grandpa a word he learned today. Example: "Prefer means you like something better than something else. I prefer blue to red." Explaining the definition in his own words helps him make sense of it in a way that works for him.

**Repeat.** Look for opportunities to use new words in various contexts. For instance, if your child learned *gravity* while reading about space, you could take turns naming something that might happen if we didn't have gravity. ("Without gravity, it would be really easy to do flips in the air!")♥



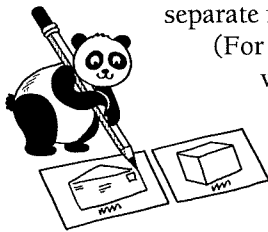
## Compound combos

Thanks + giving = Thanksgiving! Here's an idea that lets your child learn about compound words, or longer words made up of two smaller words.

### Make cards

Together, think of a dozen compound words (*mailbox*, *playground*). Have her write and illustrate the two words from each compound word on separate index cards.

(For *suitcase*, she would write *suit* on one card and *case* on another.)



### Mix and match

Ask your youngster to form other compound words. She might think, "A *housefly* is a fly in the house. I could make *firefly* by using *fire* from *campfire* and *fly* from *housefly*." Or maybe she'll form *sunflower* by putting together *sun* from *sunrise* and *flower* from *flowerpot*. How many combinations can she find?♥

### 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  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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## Getting the most out of audiobooks

My daughters love audiobooks. I mentioned this to one of their teachers and asked if listening to them counts as "real" reading. Mr. Jackson said audiobooks are great for readers of any age. Then he gave me an idea for using them to build the girls' comprehension skills.

Mr. Jackson suggested that I listen to audiobooks with my daughters. We could follow along in a print version so they make the connection between the words they hear and the words they see. He also recommended that we stop sometimes to talk about the book—just like we would if I were reading it aloud. We might discuss the characters, predict the ending, or go over a confusing part, he said.

Since then, the girls and I have checked out several audiobooks from the library, and I think they're helping them become stronger readers.♥



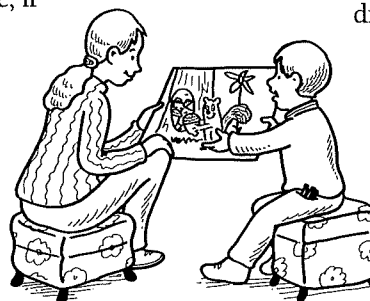
## Q&A Tell me about your drawing

**Q** While volunteering in my son's classroom, I noticed the teacher asking students to tell stories about pictures they drew. What's the purpose of this?

**A** Drawing a picture is one way your son tells a story. For instance, if he draws a squirrel with its cheeks full of nuts, he's communicating that the squirrel is collecting nuts. Describing the picture out loud encourages him to think it through and perhaps add more information.

After he finishes telling you about a picture, take the conversation a step further by asking questions. For example, you might say, "Where will the squirrel hide the nuts?" Or maybe you'll ask about the process that went into his drawing: "How did you choose the colors?"

**Tip:** Suggest that he write a story about his drawing—or offer to write down his story as he dictates it to you.♥



# Math+Science Connection

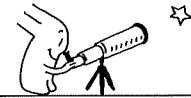
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Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

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## TOOLS & TIDBITS



### Hooray for patterns

Encourage your child to practice making patterns by creating “cheers.” She might count by 2s: “Give me 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Say my pattern once again!” Or make up a cheer for her, and she can continue your pattern and add a rhyme.

### “Bendy” light

Have your youngster fill a glass with water and place a spoon in it. What does he see when he looks through the side of the glass? (The spoon looks bent.) This is called refraction—the bending of light as it passes from one material to another (in this case, from air to water).



### Book picks

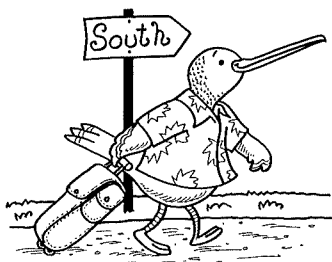
■ *If You Were a Minus Sign* (Trisha Speed Shaskan) shows cute critters solving subtraction problems as they let go of balloons, hide acorns, and more. Part of the Math Fun series.

■ *Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos* (Stephanie Roth Sisson) tells the true story of a boy who was fascinated by the universe and grew up to become a famous astronomer.

## Just for fun

**Q:** Why do birds fly south for the winter?

**A:** Because it's too far to walk.



## Let's make shapes

Triangles, rectangles, circles—shapes like these make up the world around us. These hands-on geometry activities will teach your youngster about shapes and their attributes.

### Walk the “tightrope”

Ask your child to make large shapes (square, triangle) on the floor with masking tape. Have him walk along the edges of each shape, balancing like a tightrope walker and counting the sides and corners (vertices). What does he notice? (A triangle has 3 sides and 3 corners, for example.) Does each shape have the same number of sides as it has corners?


### Shift the shapes

How many turns will it take to make a stop-sign shape (an octagon) in this game? Each person gets 8 craft sticks and lays down 5 to form a pentagon. On each turn, a player flips a coin and changes his shape: heads = add 1 stick, tails = remove 1 stick. Name your new shape. *Example:* Flip heads, and add 1



stick to your pentagon—it's a hexagon (6 sides). Add another, and you've got a heptagon (7 sides). The first player to create an octagon (8 sides) calls “Stop” and wins.

### Build in 3-D


With this activity, your youngster will see how 2-D shapes make up 3-D shapes. First, he might build a square using 4 toothpicks and 4 marshmallows. Then, he could add more toothpicks and marshmallows to create a cube (12 toothpicks, 8 marshmallows). He'll see that a cube has 6 square faces. What other 3-D shapes can he construct out of 2-D shapes? 

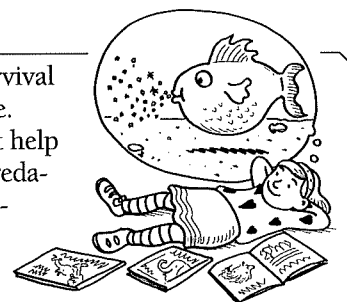
## Imagine a new animal

Your child can use what she knows about the survival skills of real animals to invent an imaginary creature.

Together, think of animals with cool features that help them survive. A porcupine's quills protect it from predators, an elephant's trunk picks up food, and a kangaroo's pouch carries babies.

Now suggest that your youngster draw an imaginary animal with a good survival strategy.

Maybe she'll sketch a colorful fish that stuns predators with a cloud of sparkles. Or perhaps she'll create a furry blue mammal that lives on blueberries and camouflages itself in blueberry bushes. Encourage her to make up a story about her animal and read it to you. 




# Estimating with collections

Whether your youngster realizes it or not, she's probably a collector. She might have lots of scrunchies, rocks, or stickers, for instance. Here's how she can use her treasures to estimate.

## Choose storage

Let your child find a way to display her collection. First she'll have to consider the size and number of her items. Will an empty jelly jar be big enough for all her scrunchies? She can put them in to find out. Not enough room? She'll need a larger container.



might estimate which type of food sticker she has the most of—fruits, vegetables, or desserts. Have her count to see how close her estimate was. 

## Make comparisons

Does your youngster have more animal stickers or food stickers? More smooth rocks or rough ones? Which color scrunchie does she have the most of? She could estimate, then sort and count to check. Now suggest that she make estimates within each group. For example, she

## MATH CORNER


### That's my age!

Six candles on a cake ... your child lights up at the mere mention of her special number: her age. Use this excitement to help her recognize and represent numbers.



Encourage your youngster to make groups of objects (crayons, forks, blocks, toys) that have the same number as her age. For example, if she's 6, she might stand 6 toy dinosaurs together.

Your child can also use her age to solve problems and represent other numbers. How old will she be next year? She would show 7 dinosaurs ( $6 + 1 = 7$ ). How old was she last year? She should show 5 dinosaurs (because  $6 - 1 = 5$ ).

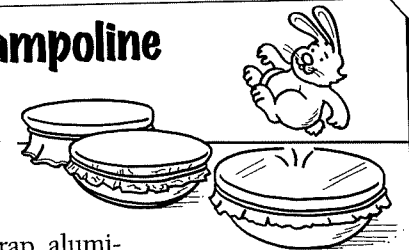
**Idea:** Have her represent other family members' ages, too. Can she use a box of 36 crayons for Dad's age? 

## SCIENCE LAB

### Design a mini-trampoline

Bounce, bounce, bounce!


With this experiment, your youngster will test different materials to make the bounciest trampoline.



**You'll need:** three identical bowls, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, cloth napkin or dish towel, three rubber bands, small plastic animal

**Here's how:** Help your child stretch a different material (plastic, foil, cloth) over each bowl to create a flat surface and then secure each "trampoline" with a rubber band. To test his trampolines, he should drop an animal on each one.

**What happens?** The toy bounces on the plastic-covered bowl but not on the foil- or cloth-covered ones.

**Why?** The plastic is the best material for the job, since it is stretchy, or elastic. In real life, gymnasts and acrobats jump on trampolines that use elastic material, too. 

## PARENT TO PARENT

### A math walk in the park


My mother-in-law teaches math, and she often gives me good ideas to try with our son Stephen. Recently, she suggested that we take a "math walk." She said I should ask Stephen what he's working on in math, and then we could look for examples outdoors.

On our next trip to the park, Stephen said he was learning about "equal parts." When we stopped for a picnic, he pointed out that our table had four equal rectangles. Then we noticed people

playing volleyball, and he said there were two teams of six people each, for a total of 12 people.

During our most recent walk, Stephen told me he's studying symmetry. An object has symmetry, he said, if each side is a mirror image of the other.

He spotted a flying flock of geese and realized the "V" was symmetrical, and I saw a symmetrical swing set on the playground.

Our math walks give me a glimpse into what Stephen is learning—and they let him practice his skills in a real-world way. 



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 a division of CCH Incorporated  
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
 800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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