

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2020

Weatherly Area Elementary School

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Spend It!* (Cinders McLeod)

Sonny Bunny has a big list of things to buy. But his allowance doesn't stretch very far—especially when he wants a bouncy castle that costs 100 carrots. With a little help from his mom, Sonny learns a lesson about money. This is the first book in the Moneybunny series.



■ *The World Is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid* (Jeanette Winter)

Young Zaha Hadid loved designing clothes, furniture, and buildings. When she grew up, she wanted to be an architect, but her designs were so unusual that no one wanted to build them. This biography tells how Hadid's persistence helped her realize her dreams.

■ *Moldylocks and the Three Beards* (Noah Z. Jones)

The Three Beards aren't home when Moldylocks and her friend Princess drop by for a visit. So the girls enjoy some chili, test the chairs, and jump on the beds. What will happen when the Three Beards return? Book one in the Princess Pink series. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Book of Bones: 10 Record-Breaking Animals* (Gabrielle Balkan)

This award-winning nonfiction book invites your child to explore animal skeletons. He'll get answers to questions like "Which creature has the most bones?" and "What has a skeleton but no bones?"



The give and take of conversation

A good conversation is a two-way street that includes speaking and listening—two skills your child needs to succeed in school. Use these ideas to help her practice.



Take turns

Sit on the floor facing your youngster, and roll a ball back and forth as you carry on a conversation. The person with the ball is the speaker, and the other is the listener. Your child will learn to listen and wait for you to roll the ball before it's her turn to talk.

Ask questions

Let your youngster see how questions keep a conversation going and show interest in what the other person said. Make a statement and ask a question. *Example:* "I like cookie dough ice cream. What's your favorite flavor?" Then your child answers your question and asks a related one: "Strawberry. What's your favorite topping?"

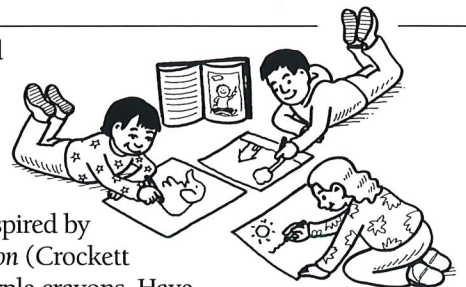
Build on

Create a block tower to show your youngster that a conversation involves building on each other's ideas. Lay down a block, and start a discussion. ("Monopoly is a fun game.") Your child puts a block on yours and adds to what you said. ("It is fun, but it takes a long time.") Keep talking and adding to your tower until you run out of things to say. Now your youngster gets to start a new tower—and a new conversation. ♥

Throw a book party

Celebrate reading with a party based on a book of your youngster's choice. You'll improve his comprehension by giving him fun ways to connect with the story. Here's how.

- **Play.** Let your child plan an activity inspired by the story. For *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Crockett Johnson), everyone might draw with purple crayons. Have your youngster imagine he's Harold—what might he draw that wasn't in the book?
- **Eat.** What party snacks would go well with *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (Judi Barrett), for example? Ask your child to think of foods mentioned in the story, like meatballs, dill pickles, and cherry tomatoes. If he lived in the town of Chewandswallow, what other foods would he want to rain down? ♥



Winter at the library

Imagine a cold winter afternoon. You and your youngster are at the library. It's warm and cozy, and there are books everywhere!

Sound magical? Try these suggestions for making library visits special.

Explore different sections. Have your child name a topic that interests him, such as polar animals or engineering, and find related materials in various parts of the library. Your youngster might get a picture book about a seal family, a magazine with an article on



jellyfish, or a biography of an oceanographer.

Enjoy family reading time. Walk around the library to select a perfect reading spot. Perhaps your child will pick a table by a window or a corner with beanbag chairs. You could each read your own book silently, or read aloud quietly to your child.

Attend special events. Ask a librarian or check the library's website for a calendar of events.

Then, plan to attend one as a family. Maybe a children's author is coming to share her latest book or there's a family book club you could join.♥

Fun with Words

Move and spell

With this activity, your youngster will "spell" words by doing a series of movements—one for each letter.

Ask your child to write the alphabet down the left side of a piece of paper, one letter per line. Together, think of a different action for each letter. *Examples:* A = act like a chicken, H = hop on one foot, T = touch your toes.



Secretly choose a word from your youngster's spelling list or the dictionary. Spell it for her using the movements instead of the letters. For instance, spell *hat* by hopping on one foot, flapping your arms while squawking, and touching your toes. Can she figure out your word? Now she acts out a word for you to identify.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent

Writing + board games = fun!

When my daughter Sonja needed to work on handwriting, we looked for ways to make it fun. Our favorite was adding writing to our weekly family game night.

Some nights, we play games that have writing built in, like Hangman or Scattergories Jr. Other times, we have to use a little creativity. For example, we write down our guesses in Clue Jr., our answers to questions in trivia games, and our requests for cards in Go Fish. We've also made Sonja our official scorekeeper—she gets to write our names and the numbers for our scores.

This has been a great way to improve Sonja's handwriting, and it feels more like play than practice!♥



Q&A

Choose specific words

Q My son is learning to pick more specific words when he writes stories. How can I help him with this at home?

A Specific words create pictures in the reader's mind. For example, there are many ways to say *run* (*jog, sprint, scamper, race*). Each has a slightly different meaning, bringing to mind a different image.



After your son writes a rough draft, suggest that he use a highlighter to mark words to replace. If he can't decide, ask questions like "Which breed of dog is that?" or "What kind of house does the family live in?" He could replace *dog* with *poodle* or *mutt*, and *house* with *townhouse* or *cottage*.

Tip: If he can't think of a replacement, look in a thesaurus together. He can read his sentence aloud, substituting each new word to see which one sounds best.♥

Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

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TOOLS & TIDBITS

Twinkle, twinkle
Stargaze together—no telescope necessary!

Share this hint with your youngster to tell if he's viewing a star or a planet: Stars appear to twinkle, but planets usually don't. Can he spot a planet (or two)? *Tip:* Get a sky guide from the library or use a free app so he learns the names of stars, constellations, and planets.

Odd and even addresses

On many streets, houses or shops on one side have odd numbers, and those on the other side have even numbers. Look for streets like this when you and your child are out. She could read the numbers and figure out whether they're odd or even. *Hint:* A number is odd if the digit in the ones place is odd and even if the digit in the ones place is even.



Book picks

- ▣ Cute little animals decide the best way to divide into equal teams in *Equal Shmequal* (Virginia Kroll).
- ▣ The average snowflake has 180 billion water molecules! Fascinating facts like that are sprinkled throughout *Curious About Snow* (Gina Shaw).

Just for fun

Q: Who was the first animal in space?

A: The cow that jumped over the moon!



Survey says: Graphs are fun!

Graphs are packed with information. Your child can practice reading them and then make his own with these ideas.

Be a detective

Encourage your youngster to learn facts from graphs. Perhaps he'll notice a graph in the doctor's office showing how much sleep kids need. Help him find his age group to see how long he should sleep. Or maybe he'll spot a graph in school about a fundraiser. How many rolls of wrapping paper did his grade sell—and which grade sold the most?

Tell a story

Have your child make a graph based on a book. For instance, he could create a bar graph comparing the elements in a fairy tale (castles, dragons, knights). Invite him to use his graph to tell you a story. ("Once upon a time, 3 knights

lived in 1 castle. There were 6 dragons, so each knight got 2.")

Graph your day

Keeping track of everyday activities is easy with a picture graph. Your youngster might draw an apple to stand for a meal or snack, a book to represent reading, and a hand for each time he washes his hands. At the end of the day, ask questions about his graph. ("How many times did you eat?" "How many more times did you wash your hands than read?")



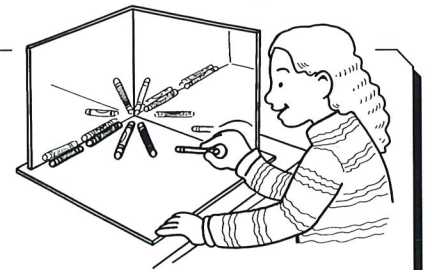
Mirror science

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, how do you reflect it all? Here's how your youngster can explore the science behind this fascinating everyday object.

Let your child form a right angle (like an L) with two mirrors, then lay down several crayons so their tips point toward the angle. The reflections create a colorful pattern!

When light hits a mirror, everything in front of the mirror is reflected back. When two or more mirrors are placed at an angle to each other, they reflect light back and forth, creating multiple reflections—this is how a kaleidoscope works.

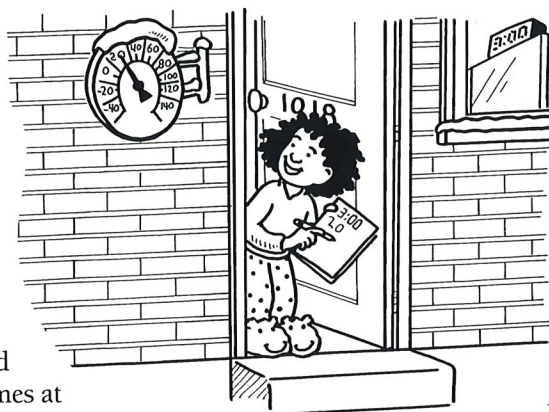
Idea: Encourage your youngster to experiment with other objects (googly eyes, pipe cleaners, building blocks). What patterns and shapes can she make?



A zero's job

Poor little zero...it's often treated like "nothing." But it's just as important as any other number! Your youngster will discover what zero does with these activities.

Add and subtract. Take turns making up real-life story problems with zero. Your child could say, "I went down the slide 8 times at recess. The teacher said it was time to go



inside, so I went down zero more times. How many times did I slide?" You say the number sentence for her problem: $8 + 0 = 8$, so you went down the slide 8 times." Your problem might be, "I packed 12 grapes in my lunch. I ate 12 grapes. How many were left?" Your youngster should answer "Zero, because $12 - 12 = 0$."

Search. Get notebooks and pencils, set a timer for 5 minutes, and race to find zeros around the house. Write down the numbers and where you found them. Your child might spot page 102 in a book or 20 degrees on the thermometer. What would happen without zeros? (You'd have page 12 and 2 degrees.) She'll see that zero can show there are no tens in the tens place or no ones in the ones place.

SCIENCE LAB Floating on ice

Try this experiment where toys float on "icebergs." Your child will discover how an iceberg's mass can affect how long it floats.

You'll need: ruler, water, two identical small plastic containers, two identical lightweight toys



Here's how: Help your youngster use a ruler to measure 2 inches of water into one container and 4 inches of water into the other. Freeze 4-5 hours, until solid. Fill a sink with cold water, and have your child carefully flip over the containers and tap on the bottoms to remove the icebergs. Now he can float them in the water, put a toy on each one, and check back every few minutes.

What happens? The thinner iceberg melts faster, so the toy on that one winds up in the water first.

Why? The thinner iceberg has less mass—there is less ice to melt, so it melts before the thicker iceberg does.

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PARENT TO PARENT

Domino math

My parents were coming to visit, and I wanted to think of math games my son Aaron could play with them. I asked them what games they might enjoy, and they said they both had fond memories of playing dominoes with their grandparents.

So I got a set at the dollar store and showed Aaron how to match the dots to play. We turned the tiles facedown and each drew seven. Then, we turned our dominoes faceup. Aaron put out the first tile—it had three dots on one half and four dots on the other. I made a match with a tile that had four dots on one half and one dot on the other. He looked at his tiles until he found a half with one dot.

By the time we finished, Aaron was able to quickly recognize the number of dots on each domino without counting them. And he was more than ready to play dominoes with Grandma and Grandpa when they came to town!



MATH CORNER

Above or below?

Is the cat *in* the hat? Or is the hat *on* the cat? Describing relative positions is an early geometry skill that your youngster can work on with this challenge.

1. Make a list. Together, brainstorm words that tell where objects are located in relation to other objects. *Examples: beside, next to, in front of, behind.*

2. Draw and describe. Sit back-to-back



with paper and crayons. Draw two objects on your paper (say, a house and a tree). Using words from the list, give your child instructions to draw the same items in the same positions. ("Draw a tree *beside* a house.") After she follows your directions, she draws something and gives you instructions. ("Draw a cloud *above* the house.")

3. Compare your pictures. Are the objects in the same places relative to each other?