

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2020

Weakley County School System

## 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

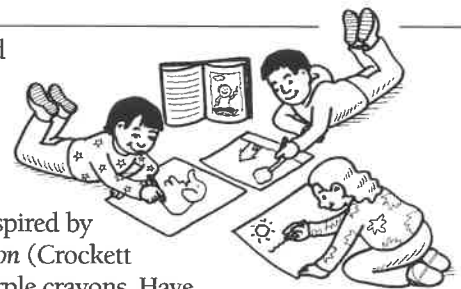
Create a block tower to show your youngster that a conversation involves building on each other's ideas. Lay down a block, and start a discussion. ("Monopoly is a fun game.") Your child puts a block on yours and adds to what you said. ("It is fun, but it takes a long time.") Keep talking and adding to 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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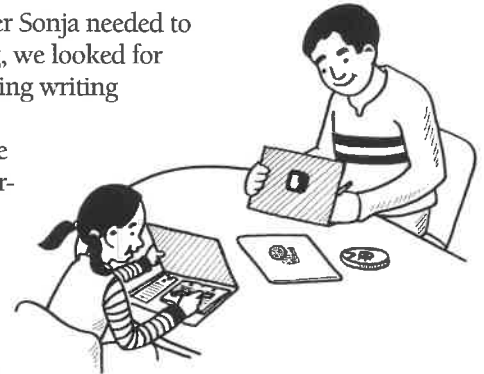
## Parent to Parent

### 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.♥

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## Book Picks

### ■ *Fablehaven* (Brandon Mull)

Kendra and Seth discover a secret: Their grandfather is the caretaker of a forest filled with magical creatures. When Seth breaks a rule, everyone is in danger, and it's up to the children to save everyone. Book one in the Fablehaven series. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *The Poetry of US*

(Edited by J. Patrick Lewis)

Organized by regions of the United States, this collection includes poems by Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, and many others. The poems highlight things found in America, from plants and animals to songs and food. Where will the next poem take you?

### ■ *Crow Smarts: Inside the Brain of the World's Brightest Bird*

(Pamela S. Turner)

In this nonfiction book, your youngster will find facts about brilliant birds who can solve puzzles and build and use tools. Includes photographs and an "Ask the author" section. Part of the Scientists in the Field series.



### ■ *It's Raining Cupcakes*

(Lisa Schroeder)

Winning a trip to New York City in a cupcake-baking contest is Isabel's only hope for summer travel. But she'll need to beat her best friend, Sophie, and avoid upsetting her mom, who has her own ideas about the contest. A story about following your dreams.



## Write around the house

How does writing make your child's life easier and more fun? Show him with these ideas for building writing into your family's routine.

### Weekly calendar

Place a calendar in a central spot, and have family members write their activities on it. This encourages your youngster to take responsibility for his schedule and helps everyone plan ahead. *Idea:* Have each person use a different ink color for their calendar entries—you'll be able to tell who has what at a glance!



### Grocery list

Post a sheet of notebook paper on the refrigerator where your child can keep a running grocery list. He could list things you're getting low on like whole-wheat pita bread, hummus, or clementines. Before going grocery shopping, see how many items he remembers from the list without looking at it. He'll realize that a written list is a handy tool.

### Jokes

Ask your youngster to write down jokes or riddles he comes across. He might look for them on cereal boxes, in joke books, or online. Or he might write his own! Suggest that he read his jokes at dinner or hide them around the house (behind a picture frame, under a pillow) for people to uncover and get a good laugh. ■

## Reading symbols on a map

Symbols are everywhere, from your youngster's math and science textbooks to street signs and electronics. Here are ways your youngster can use maps to practice reading symbols:

- Cover up the key on a map. Point to a symbol, and ask your child to figure out what it represents. *Example:* star = capital city. She can check the key to see if she was right and then pick a symbol for you to identify.
- Suggest that your youngster draw a map of a familiar place (your neighborhood, her school). She could include a key to show what each symbol means, perhaps a slide for a playground and a desk for a classroom.

*Idea:* Ask your child to read symbols when you're out together. For instance, at the airport, she might see a fork and knife to represent a restaurant or a suitcase for baggage claim. ■



## Tackling longer books

Books with lots of pages stretch your youngster's reading skills—and can teach her about perseverance. Try these tips to motivate her to choose and stick with longer books.

**Look for breaks.** Help your child find books with short chapters. When each chapter is just a few pages long, the task won't seem so big. Plus, she'll feel a sense of accomplishment with each chapter she finishes.



**Follow interests.** Check the library for more challenging titles on a subject your youngster loves. If she has some background knowledge about the topic, she may be more likely to try a longer book.

**Read together.** Read the same book your youngster is reading. Decide on stopping places (maybe every two or three chapters), and discuss what's happened so far. Sharing a book with you will motivate her to read on.

**Give it a chance.** Suggest that your child read 30 pages of a longer book to give it a solid chance. If she reads that far and doesn't like the book, she can move on to another one. 📖

### Parent <sup>2</sup> Parent Snapshot stories

My daughter Lara loves photography. She'd rather take pictures than do almost anything else. And she likes to show us her photos and tell the stories behind them, which gave me an idea for encouraging her to write more.



When she took a picture of her brother playing football, I suggested that she write about the game. She liked that idea, so she wrote a true story describing the suspense of the winning touchdown run and how the team went out for milkshakes to celebrate.

Later, I surprised Lara by framing her story alongside the photo to give to her brother. Now she often chooses pictures to write about and frame. Her new hobby has turned into a great way to practice writing—and decorate the walls! 📖



### Fun with Words

## Backward spelling

Your child can practice spelling and creative thinking by playing these two “backward” games.

1. Write a word in reverse order on a piece of paper. For example, *freezer* would be *rezeerf*. Ask your youngster to sound out the backward word, then give it a silly definition. *Example: “rezeerf: The sound screeching tires make.”* Next, let him write a backward word, and you make up a definition.
2. Take turns secretly thinking of a word, writing it backward, and saying it aloud. Can the other person figure out your word? *Tip:* Write down the sounds you hear, then reverse the letters to discover what the word is. 📖



### Q&A

## A thinking reader

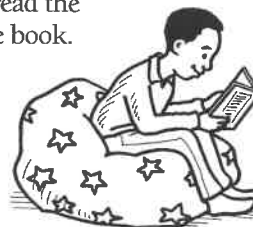
**Q** When my son has assigned reading, he rushes through and can't always answer the comprehension questions. How can I encourage him to think more about what he is reading?

**A** Suggest that your child read the questions before he starts the book. He'll get an idea of what he should be thinking about as he reads.

Also, get in the habit of asking him about his reading assignments—and

about books he reads just for fun. One way is to have him describe some of a book's themes, or “big ideas.” For example, he might say that *Tuck Everlasting* (Natalie Babbitt) is about doing the right thing.

Or you could ask your son about the characters. What traits made the hero a hero? What did the main character do that surprised him? *Tip:* Look for discussion questions in the back of the book or on the author's website. 📖



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