

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2008

Strawberry Knoll Elementary School
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Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Bear Feels Sick*



It's a beautiful fall day, but Bear has the sniffles and can't come out of his cave. When his caring friends serve him soup and tuck him in, he gets better soon. But before long, they're sick, too. A cozy tale of friendship by Karma Wilson.

■ *Tar Beach*

Even though Cassie's family struggles with money, she feels rich. The 8-year-old in Faith Ringgold's story loves spending time with her family on her apartment building's tarred roof. She imagines she's flying over Harlem and looking down upon skyscrapers and city lights.



■ *An Island Grows*

In a poetic geology lesson, Lola Schaefer explains how an undersea volcano erupts to create an island: "Magma glows. Volcano blows. Lava flows... An island grows." And when plants, animals, and people arrive, the island becomes a home. The illustrations show each step in the process.

■ *Número Uno*

Who is the most important person in town? Strong Hercules thinks he is, while smart Socrates believes he's the one. The townspeople come up with a test to settle the question once and for all—and the answer is a big surprise. A bilingual picture book by Alex and Arthur Dorros.



Loving the library

Stacks of books from floor to ceiling, comfortable chairs, the "click, click" of keyboards... what could be more inviting to young readers than a library?

Help your child enjoy the library as a fun, familiar place with these ideas.

Pajama party

Get ready for bed, and head to your local library for a bedtime story. A younger child might put on pajamas or take a stuffed animal. Plan to meet another family who has a child the same age.

Learning adventure

Your youngster can learn from cookbooks, game books, and books about nature. Visit the nonfiction shelves and check out a few. You might read a nature book, and then go on a hike to look for bugs, plants, and rocks.

Magazines for all

"Subscribe" to a magazine for free. Each family member can find a favorite magazine at the library. Then, visit each month to read a new issue. Your child may enjoy *Highlights*, *Spider*, or *Sports Illustrated Kids*.

Screen time

Many libraries have video versions of popular children's series like Marc Brown's Arthur books. Choose the video and book versions of the same



story, and take them home for a movie-and-reading night.

Online exploring

Surf your library's Web site. You might read a book and then post a review. Use the Web page to learn about story hours, puppet shows, and other events. Pick one out, and sign up to attend.♥

Learn a new language

Your youngster is likely to have children from other cultures in his school or activities. Introduce him to different languages with these suggestions:

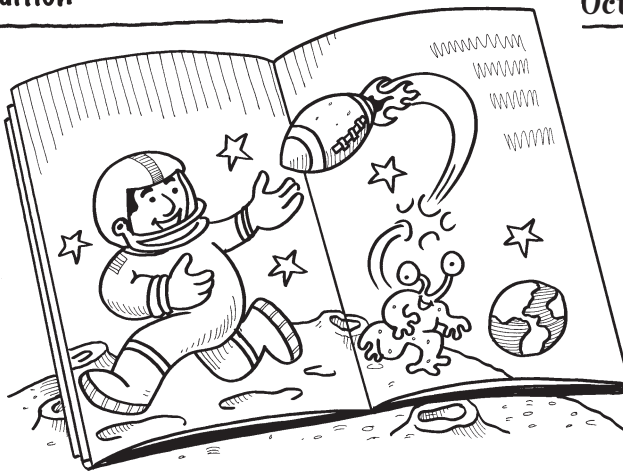
- Look for bilingual books. Some stories are written with English and Spanish words on each page, for instance. Read through once in English so your child understands the plot. Then, try it in Spanish. Can he translate any of the words?
- Visit bilingual friends and relatives, or find a babysitter who speaks another language. Ask them to speak their native language around your youngster. As he picks up words, encourage him to use them in conversations with you.♥



Read like a writer

Children's authors make great role models for young writers. You can help your child create better stories by talking about authors and how they write their books. Try these steps:

- 1 Point out the author when you read aloud.
Example: "This story is called *Cloud Dance*. It was written by Thomas Locker." When your child writes a story, tell him that he's an author, too.
- 2 After you read a book, ask your youngster what he liked about the writing. Maybe the author chose words that



think of descriptive words or a cool comparison? Maybe he'll write about a football game on the moon where the field is "covered with green glop" and the ball "flies through the air like a spaceship." ♥

Painted a picture in your child's mind ("Winter clouds, low and thick, bring sparkling snow") or made the clouds seem human ("High, wispy clouds race in the autumn wind").

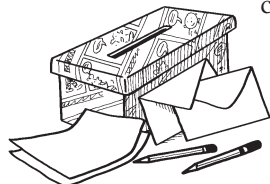
3 Suggest that your child try the ideas in a story of his own. Can he



Fun with Words Family mailboxes

Set up a postal service in your house, and you can deliver extra reading and writing practice to your child.

Start by helping her make mailboxes to put by each bedroom door. She can use wrapping paper or newspaper comics to cover a shoebox for each person. Carefully cut a slit in the lid that's big enough for envelopes to fit through. Then, have each person choose an address, and ask your youngster to write them on the boxes. *Example:* 123 Larson Lane.



Together, gather blank envelopes, paper, index cards to use as postcards, and stickers for stamps. Encourage everyone to write letters and drop them in each other's mailboxes regularly. If your youngster gets "real" mail, be sure to add it to her box, too. ♥

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

Reading star

I've been hearing a lot about "podcasting" lately, but I didn't think it was something for kids. So I was surprised when my son Marcus came home and said he had made a podcast at school.

The teacher told me there are easy ways to record stories at home using a tape recorder or even my cell phone.

I helped Marcus choose a book he could read on his own. Then, I let him record himself reading it into my cell phone. When he finished, he asked if he could read another story into his dad's tape recorder.

Next, we signed up for a free podcast service at www.gcast.com. We called the phone number on the Web site, using our own password so my son's recording would be private. Marcus read the story right into my cell phone. Then, we followed the directions to "publish" his podcast so his friends and relatives could hear his story. He felt like a real star! ♥



Q&A

Handling homework

Q My daughter has homework this year for the first time. I want Kelsey to start off on the right foot—what can I do?

A You're right to want to establish good habits now. First, find out from Kelsey's teacher how much homework to expect each night. Then, encourage your daughter to set aside a block in the afternoon or evening when

she'll have time to finish everything without feeling rushed.

Help her come up with a system to make sure everything gets done. She might write each subject's homework in a mini-notebook to keep in her backpack.

When Kelsey gets home, look over her list together, and help her decide what order to do it in. For example, one night she might do math and then reading. The next night, she could do reading first. Finally, have her check off completed assignments. ♥

