

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2008

Strawberry Knoll Elementary School  
Kristin Pierce, Reading Specialist

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *The Sweet and Sour Animal Book*

Animal poems—one for each letter of the alphabet—make up this volume by Langston Hughes. Young children from the Harlem School of the Arts created the colorful pictures that accompany the rhymes. This beautiful ABC book is a fun introduction to poetry.

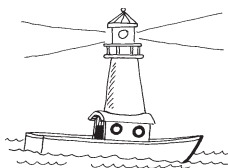


### ■ *My Diary from Here to There*

Amada Irma Pérez tells the true story of her family moving from Mexico to Los Angeles when she was just a little girl. Keeping a diary helps Amada be less lonely. She discovers that she can still feel close to her faraway friends and relatives by writing about them. (Also available in Spanish.)

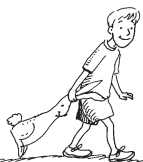
### ■ *Lightship*

Youngsters who like boats will enjoy Brian Floca's book about floating lighthouses. These vessels kept other ships safe by lighting the way and blowing horns on foggy nights. The true story, with detailed watercolor illustrations, depicts life at sea aboard a lightship.



### ■ *The Velveteen Rabbit*

What makes a toy "real"? A wise old toy horse in a little boy's room says it is a child's love. Margery Williams' classic tale tells of a stuffed rabbit that was loved so much by the little boy that it became real.



## Adventures in nonfiction

Your child can travel around the world, meet interesting characters, and learn new things—all through the pages of books! Share the magic of nonfiction with these ideas.

### Explore new places.

Activity books combine reading with fun things to do. After reading *Pyramids!* (Avery Hart, Paul Mantel), your youngster might make Egyptian drawings or build a Lego pyramid. *The Remarkable Rainforest* (Toni Albert) shows him how to create an indoor rainforest or make a rainforest fruit shake. Where would your child like to visit?

**Meet new characters.** Nonfiction picture books introduce your youngster to real people and animals. Teach him about friendship and tolerance with *Owen & Mzee*, the tale of an orphaned baby hippo and a giant turtle (by Isabella and Craig Hatkoff and Paula Kahumbu). Or share the story of young



Michael Jordan, *Salt in His Shoes*, written by his mother and sister, Deloris and Roslyn Jordan. Your youngster will be inspired by the basketball star's determination—and he'll learn a lesson in handling bullies.

**Discover new interests.** A how-to book can teach your youngster a skill like doing magic tricks or juggling. Check out *101 Easy-to-Do Magic Tricks* by Bill Tarr or *Juggling: From Start to Star* (Dave, Dorothy, and Ben Finnigan). Read the instructions together, and help your child pick one or two tricks to practice. Then, watch as he puts on a show for your family.♥

## Get set for spelling

Learning to spell helps your youngster be a better reader and writer. Put studying for spelling quizzes into her weekly schedule with these suggestions:

✓ Help your child plan a different study routine for each weekday. *Example:* On Monday, quiz her while she swings at the playground. On Tuesday, toss magnetic letters in a cookie tin so she can spell words on the way to swim practice.

✓ Create homemade spelling supplies. Collect colorful bingo chips or bottle caps. Your youngster can write the letters of the alphabet on them with a permanent marker, and then arrange them to spell words.♥



# The “write” way to play

Children love to act out everyday life: visiting the doctor, going to school, having a party. Encourage your youngster to use this playtime to practice writing and build creativity.

● **Play office.** Put small notepads and colored file folders in your child’s play area. She can write prescriptions while using her doctor’s kit or put files in ABC order. You might include an old keyboard so she can practice typing letters to “clients.”



● **Create a writing spot.** Hang a chalkboard, dry erase board, or large sheet of paper on your youngster’s bedroom wall. Print worksheets from a Web site such as [www.abcteach.com](http://www.abcteach.com) to have nearby for playing school. Or have her write daily specials on the board for her own restaurant. On a computer or by hand, she can make up takeout menus.

● **Throw a pretend party.** Your child can write out invitations for an “unbirthday” party. Then, give her plain plastic cups and plates, and white construction paper for placemats. She can put the names of her stuffed animals or dolls on each piece.♥



## Fun with Words Picture book

Help your child create a book that even a brand-new reader can tackle with confidence. This activity will also teach your child sentence-writing skills.



Ask him to take photos of family activities: eating pizza, reading books, fishing at the lake. Print them out or get them developed, and have your child glue each one onto a separate sheet of construction paper, making sure to leave space for captions. *Variation:* If you don’t have a camera, your child can draw the pictures.

Then, help your youngster write a sentence under each picture: “Pizza is my favorite food,” or “This lake has the biggest fish.” Finally, staple the pages together, and ask your child to read his book.♥

## Q&A From words to stories

**Q** My child can read a lot of words but doesn’t always recognize them in books. Why is this?

**A** Youngsters have a lot to think about while reading: sounding out words, remembering definitions, and keeping track of the plot.

When you hear your child struggle with a familiar word, jot it down. After he finishes the book, have him write the word three different ways. He might print it big, write it small, and use a blue marker. Save the sheets for reading practice later.

You can also have your youngster make a bookmark by writing a dozen frequently used words (their, could, because) on both sides of a cardboard strip. Suggest that he review the list before reading a book, and then use the bookmark to hold his place.♥



## Parent to Parent Family helpers

At my daughter’s classroom open house, we were surprised to learn how important parent volunteers are. Catherine’s teacher explained that volunteers help the teachers and students, and volunteering is a great way for parents to keep in touch with what’s going on in school.

Since I work during the day, I signed up to organize the classroom library one morning before work. I also

volunteered to set up a parent e-mail list so the teacher can stay in touch with families.

My wife stays at home, so she offered to help in the classroom by typing stories that students dictate to her. She’s also going to go in to school monthly to play word games with small groups.

The first time my wife went in, Catherine was so proud and the teacher was thankful. We’ve decided to make volunteering a regular family event.♥



### 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 Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • [rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com](mailto:rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com)  
[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1540-5648