

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

Jourdanton Elementary School  
Ms. Michele Hartung, Principal

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *On the Night You Were Born*

Animals dance, the moon plays a saxophone, and stars shine to celebrate a baby's birth in Nancy Tillman's beautiful story. The book's poetic language and warm message—that each child is unique—make it perfect for reading aloud.



### ■ *Pinkalicious*

A little girl eats so many pink cupcakes that she turns pink. Her doctor's cure? Green foods! When too many treats finally turn her pink skin red, Pinkalicious takes his advice and devours brussels sprouts and grapes until she's back to normal. A funny story by Elizabeth Kann.



### ■ *No One Saw*

Bob Raczka shows readers how artists see ordinary things in unusual ways. He explains, "No one saw flowers like Georgia O'Keeffe" and "No one saw music like Marc Chagall." The book also introduces youngsters to the work of René Magritte, Joan Miró, and other 20th-century painters.

### ■ *Abuelita Full of Life*

When his grandmother moves in, José struggles with a few changes. She sleeps in his room, speaks Spanish, and cooks new dishes. But José soon realizes she has a lot to share, too. A bilingual story by Amy Costales about appreciating family and accepting differences.



## Reading fluency

When Eric reads, he instantly recognizes most words. He reads sentences smoothly, understands what's happening in the story, and has good expression.

Eric is a *fluent* reader—his reading sounds like speech. Here are some ways to help your youngster read fluently.

**Be a role model.** When you read to your child, have him read along with you. Don't be surprised if he tries to match his voice to yours. You can also alternate paragraphs or pages, or take turns reading for different characters.

**Choose the right book.** Your youngster should recognize most of the words (one to two unfamiliar words per page are okay—that will keep him challenged). If he's having trouble reading smoothly, try picking an easier book.

**Use expression.** Punctuation marks are clues that tell us how to read something. Encourage your child to sound excited when he sees an exclamation point, and make his voice go up for a question mark. Teach him to pause briefly at a comma and slightly longer at a period.

**Check for understanding.** If your youngster doesn't understand the book, he will sound choppy. And if he's reading one word at a time, he'll have a tough time following the plot. As he reads, ask him questions to make sure he understands the story. ♥



## Read-aloud enjoyment

Some of the best times with your child may be when you share a story. Get the most out of reading aloud with these three easy tips:

- 1 Hold the book so your youngster can see the words and pictures while you're reading. Run your finger under the text, or point to interesting things in the illustrations.
- 2 Take your time and don't rush the story. Your child can tell if you're in a hurry. Reading slowly will help you read clearly—and give you and your youngster more time together.



- 3 Don't be afraid to stop reading a book if your child doesn't seem interested. Have a backup selection ready so read-aloud can continue. ♥

# Routines for writing

Want your child to get in the habit of writing? Try making it a regular part of her life. Whether you have a little time or a lot, here are some ways to fit writing into both of your schedules.

■ Enjoy on-the-go writing. Carry a small notebook and pencil, and let your child see you use it to make a to-do list: "Mail package to Grandma; pick up dry cleaning." Has your youngster been invited to a birthday party? Suggest that she make a list of gift ideas on the way to the mall. She can draw pictures and write the first letters of the words if she's not spelling yet.

■ Start a family journal. Keep a pad by the telephone or on the kitchen counter. You could write about the weather getting cooler and the leaves changing colors; your child might report



(in pictures or words) that the dog learned a new trick. At the end of the week, read aloud from the journal after dinner.

■ Write a recipe. After making lunch together, you and your youngster can write down how to make a peanut butter and banana sandwich: "Spread peanut butter on two pieces of bread..." Suggest that she make up a silly recipe, too (dandelion tacos, sweatshirt stew). ♥

## Fun with Words

### Newspaper learning

With thousands of words in every issue, newspapers are a great way to build your youngster's reading skills. Grab a paper, and try these activities.



#### Matching game

Have your child cut out several photographs and their captions separately. Mix them up. Matching the captions and the photos will improve his reading comprehension.

#### Scavenger hunt

List items in the newspaper (car ad, crossword puzzle, weather forecast), and ask your youngster to find and circle each one. He'll build research skills as he looks through the pages.

#### ABC order

Together, find the names of 5–10 countries, states, and cities in headlines or stories. Let your child copy each one onto an index card and arrange the cards in alphabetical order. This will help him practice spelling and learn about geography. ♥

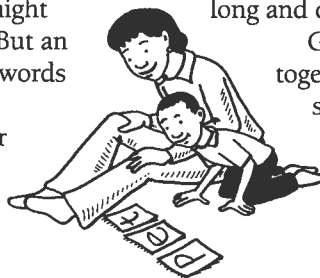
## Q&A

### Ready to read

**Q** My daughter learned her letters and sounds this year. But she's having trouble putting them together to sound out words in books. How can I help?

**A** Letters and sounds might seem easy on their own. But an entire page of unfamiliar words can be tough.

Start with a three-letter word, such as *pet*. Write each letter on a separate scrap of paper. Lay the



letters in order, a few inches apart. Ask your youngster to tell you the sound each letter makes. *Note:* Be sure she is saying the sounds correctly—they should be short and sharp, rather than long and drawn out.

Gradually move the letters closer together and ask her to say the sounds faster and faster until they run together. By the time the letters touch, they should sound just like *pet*. ♥

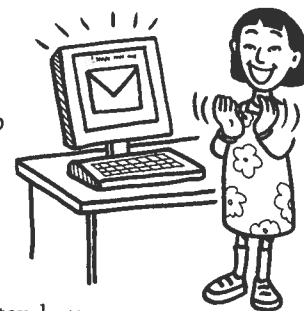
## Parent to Parent

### "I've got mail!"

Sometimes our daughter is asleep by the time my husband gets home from work. To help keep in touch, he started sending Nina e-mails to read after school. The idea worked so well that she looks forward to her message every day.

As a bonus, the e-mails have helped improve her reading skills. I used to read the messages to her—now she reads them to me. Nina's writing also has gotten better, since she loves to write messages back. Of course, I have to help her type, but she is learning to do more of it herself.

Nina is happy because she feels closer to her dad, and I'm thrilled that she's reading and writing so well! I told our neighbor about the e-mail messages. She doesn't have a family computer, so she has started leaving handwritten notes for her child to read after school. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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