Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2017

Patrick County Public Schools
Family Involvement

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Rosario's Fig Tree*** *(Charis Wahl)*
A little girl believes her neighbor, Rosario, is a magician because he grows things in his garden. Rosario knows just when and how to plant seeds that give him eggplants, tomatoes, and even figs. When the girl becomes Rosario's helper, she discovers she can do magic, too.

■ ***I am Jim Henson*** *(Brad Meltzer)*
As a child, Jim loved to laugh, act out movies he saw at the theater, and draw happy monsters and birds. This picture book biography introduces little readers to the boy who grew up to create *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*.

■ ***Armadillo Rodeo*** *(Jan Brett)*
Bo the armadillo is in for an adventure when he wanders off from his mother and follows a new "friend" to a Texas rodeo. The "friend" turns out to be a child's red cowboy boot that Bo mistook for another armadillo! By the time his mom finds him, Bo has had a great time riding a horse and going to a barn dance at the rodeo. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***The Earth Book*** *(Todd Parr)*
This nonfiction book explains simple ways to help take care of the earth. Read it together, and then celebrate Earth Day (April 22) by starting a new tradition inspired by the book. For example, ride bikes to the store instead of driving, or reduce food waste by enjoying a weekly leftovers dinner.

Keys to better conversations

If discussions with your child mostly involve things like "What should we have for lunch?" or "Please put on your shoes," you're not alone. Here are ways to enjoy rich conversations and help your youngster build speaking and listening skills.



Make a "spark" jar

Fill a jar with questions that will spark fun discussions. Family members can write conversation starters on slips of paper. Then, pull a "spark" out of the jar before you sit down to dinner or get in the car, and you'll have something interesting to talk about. *Example:* "What's the first thing our hamster would say if she could talk?"

Play "piggyback"

Encourage your child to listen closely to what others say and piggyback on their ideas with lines like "That reminds me of…" or "Good idea. What if we also…" Maybe someone suggests that you celebrate the 100th day of 2017 on April 10. Your youngster might add, "That reminds me of the 100th Day of School party. We could make a 100-link paper chain like we did at school."

Expand your range

Give your child chances to talk to a variety of people. Their different experiences and perspectives will provide new topics to discuss. She might speak with guests at your home or call or video-chat with relatives. Ahead of time, help her think of what to say. ("Aunt Terry works as a nurse, and she lives in Minnesota where it's still cold. What could you ask her?")♥

Let's read the mail

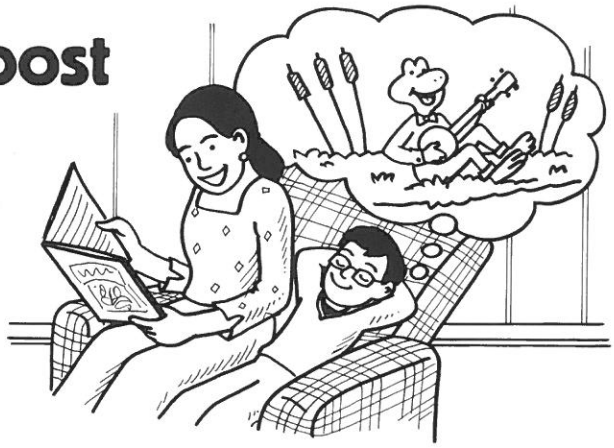


What's in the mail? Opportunities for your youngster to read and write! Try these activities:

- Little ones love to get mail addressed to them. Encourage relatives to send your child letters, cards, and postcards. Read them together, letting him read the words he recognizes. Then, help him write back to each sender.
- Give your youngster catalogs and circulars that come in the mail. He could pick a category, such as clothes or food. Next, he can cut out pictures, glue them on a sheet of paper, and practice writing by labeling each item ("Pajamas," "Socks").♥

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Read-alouds boost imagination



Reading to your child can exercise his imagination and sharpen his comprehension. Consider these ideas.

Picture the scene. While you read a story, ask your youngster to close his eyes and imagine what the illustrations look like. He'll practice visualizing the characters, setting, and plot. After you finish reading, suggest that he draw some of the pictures he "saw." Then, let him look at the real illustrations to see what they have in common with his.

Create an ending. How would your child like the story to end? About halfway through, close the book. Have him use his imagination to make up the rest—just like when he writes his own stories. Now open the book, and finish reading. Which version does he prefer?

Think deeply. Pose questions that stretch your youngster's imagination as you read. You might ask what he thinks of a character's decision or how the story would be different if it took place in a city rather than in the country.♥

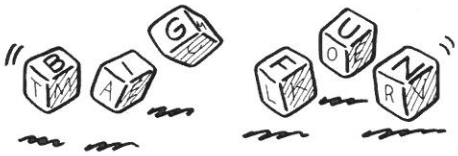


Fun with Words

Roll and spell

How many words can you and your youngster make from six letters? Play this spelling game to find out.

Materials: *six dice, masking tape, pen, timer, paper, pencil*



1. Cover the dice with bits of masking tape.

2. Use two dice for vowels (A, E, I, O, U, Y), writing one set on each. The remaining dice are for consonants. Your child should write a different one on each side of a die, leaving one side blank on each die.

3. Let your youngster roll all the dice at once. Set a timer for five minutes.

4. Work together to spell as many words as possible. (A blank can stand for any letter.) Say your child rolls I, O, C, B, L, and X. She might move the letters around to spell *cob*, *boil*, *oil*, *ox*, *box*, and *lox*. Help her write down each word you spell.

5. Roll the dice again, and play with the new letters.♥

Family writing games



Write a sentence—and pass it on. These games encourage your child to practice creative writing as you build stories together, one line at a time:

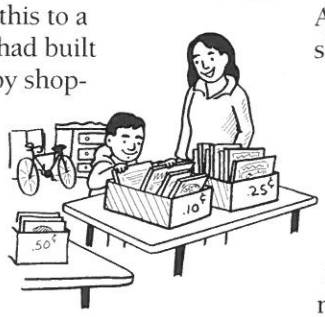
- Help your youngster write one sentence of a story on a sheet of paper, and hand it to the next player. That person reads the line silently, adds a sentence, and folds the paper so the first line is hidden. Keep passing the paper around, each time adding a line and folding the paper so only the new sentence shows. When the paper is full, let your child unfold the story and read it.
- Have your youngster pick two unrelated objects, such as a shoe and a carrot. Then, she starts a story about one of the items ("Last week, I got a new pair of shoes"), and gives the paper to the person beside her. The goal is to tell a story that makes sense and ends with a line using the second item. Your story might continue: "I put them on and went for a walk. I saw a vegetable garden. There was a cute bunny eating a carrot."♥

Parent to Parent

Our growing home library

I want my son Jason to have his own library of books at home, but we can't afford bookstore prices. When I mentioned this to a friend, she said her family had built a nice collection of books by shopping at yard sales.

So Jason and I started scanning yard sale ads for mentions of children's books. Our new Saturday morning ritual is going to these sales and browsing through the books together. Jason loves picking out his favorites. And I love that we can sometimes get a bag of books for a dollar!



At one yard sale, another shopper gave me a great tip. She said you can get good books for really low prices at library and church yard sales. Now we're shopping at those, too. Soon our problem won't be that we need more books—it will be needing more bookshelves!♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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