

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2013

Paul Cuffee Charter School
Title I Department

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver*

Born into a family of slaves, Carver became a famous scientist who helped make peanuts popular. This biography by Aliko explains how Carver taught farmers to grow different kinds of crops and developed more than 100 uses for peanuts.



■ *Gone with the Wand*



Bernice Sparklestein's magic wand is broken, and she wonders how she can fulfill her duties as a fairy godmother.

Then, her friend the tooth fairy tries to help her find a new job as a different kind of fairy. A cute story by Margie Palatini.

■ *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes*

This cookbook by Mollie Katzen and Ann Henderson includes 20 kid-friendly recipes, such as Confetti Rice, Zucchini Moons, Hide-and-Seek Muffins, and Bright Pink Fruit Dip. Each recipe includes step-by-step picture instructions that make it easy for your child to cook with you.

■ *Bailey*

Bailey is a pretty good student. He does well in reading and math—but he paints with his tail in art class and eats his own homework. That's because Bailey is a dog! The first Bailey book, by Harry Bliss. (Also available in Spanish.)



Keep a reading journal

If your child could add lines to a favorite story or talk to a book character, what would she say? Let her turn a blank notebook into a reading journal and try one of these ideas. In the process, she will build reading comprehension and writing skills.

Add a page

Suggest that your youngster create a new page for a picture book. For instance, if she reads Bill Martin Jr.'s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, she could draw an animal in her journal and write a sentence. ("Silver lizard, silver lizard, what do you see?")

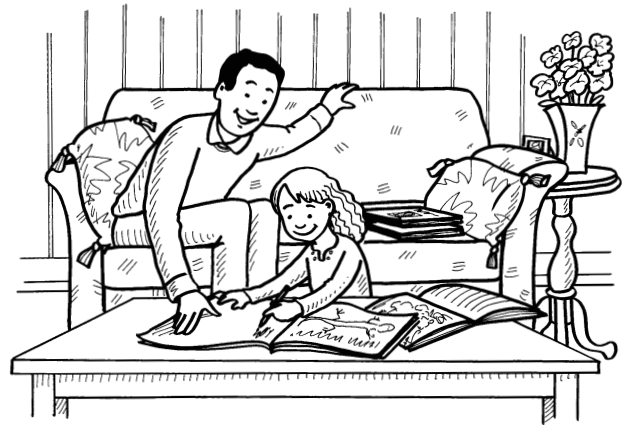
Interview a character

Encourage your child to think of questions she'd like to ask a character from a book. After reading a story like Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*, help her write questions in her journal. She may want to ask the Once-ler, "Why did you chop down the Truffula trees?" She can add

answers based on the book. ("Because I wanted to make money.") This will get her used to asking and answering questions as she reads.

Write to an author

Your youngster might use her reading journal to draft a letter to an author. She could write a sentence about her favorite part or ask the author why he made the main character a giraffe. If she's not writing yet, have her dictate her letter to you. *Idea:* Let her copy the letter onto stationery and mail it to the author (check the author's website for the address).♥



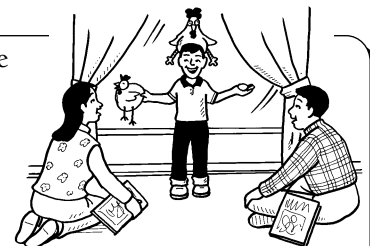
Poetry night

Reciting poetry can help your youngster practice speaking and improve his memory. Plan a family poetry night with these tips:

● **Choose.** Get a book of children's poetry from the library, and read poems aloud. Then, have each person pick a short poem to memorize.

● **Practice.** Post copies in various places. That way, you can read your child's poem for him to repeat, or he can read it himself. He might put his poem on his placemat at the table or on his nightstand, for example.

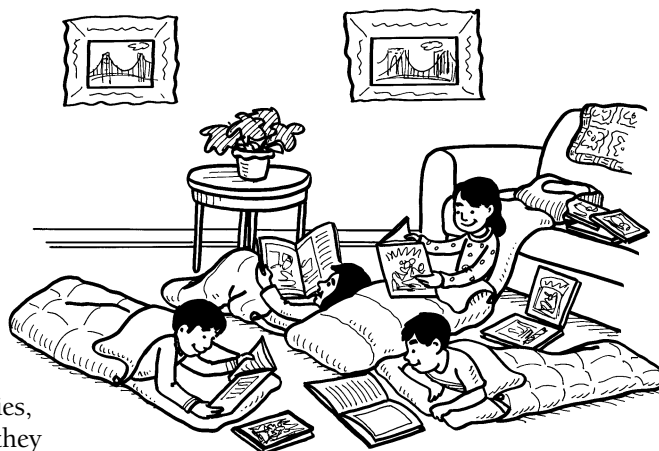
● **Recite.** Gather in the living room, and take turns saying your poems. Make the evening more fun by wearing costumes or using props.♥



Winter-break reading

Cold winter days are perfect for snuggling up with a good book. Motivate your youngster to read during the holiday break with these suggestions.

Match the event. Read a story about a snowman during the first snowfall. Or whip up a batch of cookies, and read *The Gingerbread Man* while they



bake. Book-related activities help your child make connections between what he reads and the real world.

Pack a book bag.

Encourage your youngster to read away from home. He could put a few books in a colorful gift bag and carry it along when you visit relatives or run errands.

Try "buddy reading." Your child will probably enjoy spending time with friends or cousins while school is out. They can share books and talk about them afterward—they'll have their own mini book club! ♥

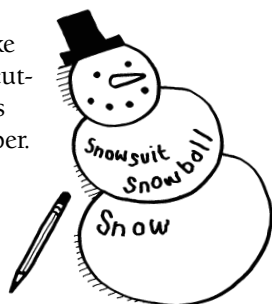
Fun with Words

Big words, small words

What do *snowman* and *evergreen* have in common? They're both *compound words*, or words made by combining two shorter words. Try this fun activity to boost your child's knowledge of compound words.

1. Have her make a snowman by cutting three circles out of white paper.

2. Ask her to write the word *snow* in several places on her snowman.



3. Help her think of compound words that contain *snow* (*snowsuit*, *snowball*, *snowflake*) and add the second part of each word. *Tip:* If you're not sure whether a word is compound or two separate words, look it up together in a dictionary.

4. Let her repeat the activity for other words. She could write *star* on each point of a star shape and add *-fish*, *-light*, and *-gaze* or draw a book with *bookmark*, *bookcase*, and *bookstore*. ♥

Parent to Parent

Build, read, and write!

My son James loves to play with blocks.

At our parent-teacher conference last month, his teacher suggested that we use blocks to fit in extra reading and writing practice.

We found books about things he could make, such as castles, skyscrapers, and monuments, and I put them with his blocks for inspiration. At first, I thought he'd just look at the pictures, but he has started pointing out facts that he reads, like how moats kept enemies away from castles. I also encouraged James to write signs to go with his buildings. When he made an airport, for example, he wrote *Tickets*, *Bags*, and *Taxi* on slips of paper and taped them to the blocks.

I've noticed that James's buildings are more creative—and I'm happy that he's reading and writing while he plays. ♥



Q&A

Ready for typing?

Q I know my daughter will be using a computer her whole life. Should I teach her how to type now?

A Your daughter will definitely use a computer for school assignments more and more as she gets older. But for now, it's important that she develop the hand muscles she needs for handwriting.

Sculpting with clay, finger-painting, stringing beads on a necklace, and scooping and pouring sand and

water are all fun ways to build strength and coordination in little hands. Also, forming letters with a pencil (rather than simply pressing keyboard buttons) helps your child remember what letters look like, which makes learning to read easier.

If your daughter shows an interest in typing, you might offer to help her type a story she has written. Then, print it out, and let her illustrate it. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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