

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2016

Martinsville City Public Schools
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Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *The SheepOver* (John and Jennifer Churchman)

When an orphaned lamb named Sweet Pea gets sick, her owners help her recover—and write this picture book about her. Based on a true story, the book tells how the Churchmans threw a “sheepover” party for the lamb and her “friends” to celebrate her good health.



■ *Peter's Chair* (Ezra Jack Keats)

Peter is unhappy because his parents are painting his baby furniture pink for his new sister. His little chair isn't pink yet, so he runs away with it—to the sidewalk in front of his house. There, he discovers he can't fit in the chair anymore, and he knows just what to do with it. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Museum Mayhem* (Carolyn Keene)

After an expensive sculpture is smashed to pieces during an art museum field trip, Nancy Drew and her classmates become suspects. Now Nancy must use her detective skills to prove their innocence. Part of the Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew series.

■ *Henry Builds a Cabin*

(D. B. Johnson)

Author Henry David Thoreau's love of nature inspired this story. A bear named Henry builds a tiny log cabin in the woods. Like the real-life Henry, the bear believes in living simply. When the other animals tell him to make his home bigger, he shows them how it's fine the way it is.



Fairy tale adventures

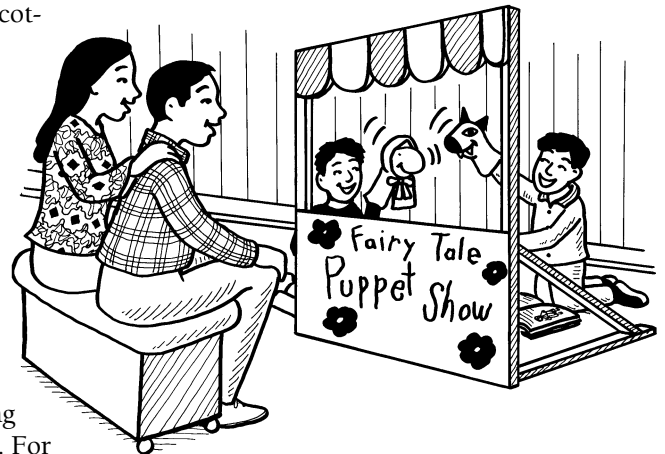
Big bad wolves, candy cottages, gleaming castles—your child's favorite fairy tales are full of magical characters and places. Here are activities that tap into his love of fairy tales to build reading comprehension skills.

Explore the world

Ask a librarian for fairy tales from other lands, and read them along with the familiar versions. For instance, pair *Little Red Riding Hood* with *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* (Ed Young). What details show that the stories are set in different countries? *Example:* The Chinese children call their grandmother Po Po instead of Granny.

Stage a puppet show

Performing a fairy tale with sock puppets will help your youngster think about what came first, next, and last in a book. Let him draw characters' faces on old socks and use props to remind him of story events. He might build a Lego



bridge for the sock puppets to cross in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, for instance.

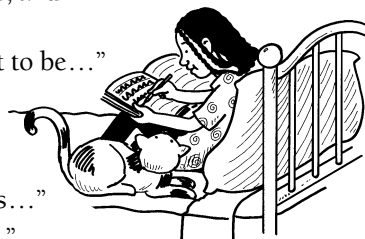
Make an ABC book

Suggest that your child collect fairy tale words and write his own book. As you read fairy tales, he should pick out a word to match each letter (*apple* for A, *beast* for B). Have him write the words on separate squares of paper, illustrate them, and staple the pages together. Now he can read his fairy tale book to you and explain how each word fits into the story it came from. ♥

Journal writing: Get started

Encourage your youngster to write regularly by keeping a journal. Together, put “prompts” like these at the top of pages in a notebook. She can complete them with words, sentences, and drawings.

1. “When I grow up, I want to be...”
2. “The most surprising thing that happened today was...”
3. “My very first memory is...”
4. “Last night, I dreamed...”



5. “My favorite hobby is...”

6. “If I were invisible, I would...”

7. “The best place in the whole world is...”

8. “If my pet could talk, he would tell me about...”

9. “My family is special because...”

10. “I want to invent a...” ♥

Outdoor vocabulary

Spring has sprung! As the weather warms up, use the great outdoors to help your youngster learn new words. Try these ideas.

- **Nature ID.** Your child may be familiar with *bird*, *tree*, and *flower*, but does she know *cardinal*, *magnolia*, and *daffodil*? Expand her nature vocabulary by taking a field guide to the park. When she spots a colorful bird or an interesting plant, look it up in the guide, and read its name and description aloud.
- **Motion words.** Streams *flow*, squirrels *scamper*, and leaves *rustle*. Look around, and think of fun verbs to describe the



action you see. Let your youngster mimic the movement and say the word—she'll discover new verbs as she gets silly! For example, she can pretend she's a worm and announce, "I'm *wriggling* on the grass."

- **Color match.** Carry along a box of crayons, and have your child discover color words by matching them with colors in nature. She might choose *apricot* for the sunset and *cerulean* for a pond. Help her read the label as she chooses each crayon. Can she find something to go with every crayon in the box?♥

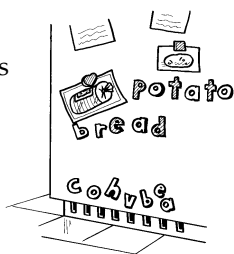
Fun with Words

Phonics in the kitchen

The kitchen is a fun place to explore letters and sounds. These tasty suggestions can boost your youngster's phonics skills.

Picture labels

Cut food pictures from grocery circulars or magazines, and post them on the refrigerator along with magnetic letters. Encourage your child to sound out the food names and spell them with the letters. *Idea:* Spell part of a word on paper, leaving off the first and last letters for him to fill in. *Examples:* _ r e a _ with a photo of a loaf of *bread* or _ o r _ below a picture of a *corn*.



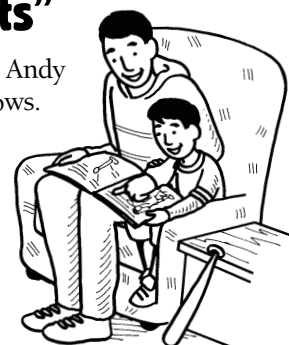
Parent to Parent

"Readable moments"

During a recent hailstorm, my son Andy was fascinated by the tiny balls of ice hitting our windows. He asked how there could be ice when it wasn't freezing outside—and I didn't know the answer.

We went to the library and checked out a non-fiction book about weather. The librarian called the storm a "teachable moment," but when we sat down to read, I told Andy it was a "readable moment." We learned that hail forms high in the sky where it's very cold, and it falls quickly before it melts.

Now, we look for more readable moments. When Andy started T-ball and had a hard time hitting the ball, we read a book with tips. And when I was wondering about the best way to paint a room, I got a how-to book—I wanted to show Andy that grown-ups have readable moments, too. We're finding reasons to read nonfiction almost every day, and Andy is learning how useful "real-life" books can be.♥



Snack combinations

At snack time, challenge your youngster to find two or more foods that begin with the same consonant or combination of consonants. He can read packages or say the words aloud to hear their sounds. *Examples:* *muffins* and *milk*, *cheddar cheese* and *cherry tomatoes*. While you eat, brainstorm more foods that start with those letters (*macaroni*, *chicken*).♥

Q&A

Learning with playtime conversations

Q I've heard that kids learn language skills when they play. How can I help my daughter with this?

A You're right! Children learn many things from play, and communication is one of the most important. Join your daughter sometimes when she plays, and carry on conversations with her.

You might describe what you're doing as you play house or store and ask questions to get

her talking, too. For example, say, "I'm going to dress the baby now. What should she wear?" or "Welcome to our office. How may I help you?" Or hold conversations from a doll's or stuffed animal's point of view. ("Hi, Gator. I just got back from school. What did you do today?")

Your child will enjoy—and get practice in—asking and answering questions, making conversation, and taking turns speaking.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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