

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2017

Bells Elementary School
Mrs. Virginia Grier, Principal

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Just Itzy* (Lana Krumwiede)

A little spider named Itzy doesn't want to be called "bitzy" just because he's small. To prove he has outgrown his nickname, he plans to catch his own fly for lunch. Find out what happens to Itzy, and look for "guest appearances" from other familiar nursery rhyme characters.



■ *The Dot* (Peter H. Reynolds)

Vashti is stumped in art class and says she can't draw. When her teacher asks her to draw a dot, little does she know what inspiration will come from that plain dot. Follow Vashti as she blossoms as an artist and even inspires a younger child to be creative, too.



■ *Hanging Off Jefferson's Nose*

(Tina Nichols Coury)

This nonfiction book tells the fascinating story of how two sculptors carved four presidents' faces into Mount Rushmore. Gutzon Borglum came up with the idea and started the project. But when he passed away, his son, Lincoln, fulfilled his father's dream and completed the monument.



■ *Do Families Grow on Trees?/¿Crece en los árboles?* (Lauren Machta)

Eva is learning about family trees in school, and she thinks families actually grow on trees! Your child can follow along as Eva learns about her family in this tale told in English and Spanish. When you finish reading, help your youngster create her own family tree using the outline at the end.

A summer full of books

Every day is a good day when it includes reading! These ideas will help your youngster start his "reading summer" off on a fun note—and enjoy reading all season long.

Special reading days

From "Mystery Monday" to "Fairy Tale Friday" to "Science Fiction Sunday," every day of the week brings a new reason for your child to read. Help him write theme days on a calendar. Then, add surprise twists like hiding mystery books for your little detective to find or planting bean seeds after reading *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Your youngster will become familiar with a wide variety of reading choices.

A reading habit

Give reading a starring role all day. Try snuggling with your child for a "wake-up" story in the morning. Turn a vacation or day trip into a "reading voyage" by having everyone pack books in their suitcases or backpacks. And enjoy nice



weather by reading bedtime stories outdoors on the porch or on a blanket in the yard.

Portrait of a reader

Here's an artistic way for your youngster to practice writing his opinions. Suggest that he draw a portrait of himself on poster board. When he finishes a book, he could add a thought bubble. *Example:* "This book was exciting. The boy got stuck at the top of a roller coaster and had to be rescued." He'll want to read more so he can add more opinions to his poster. ♥

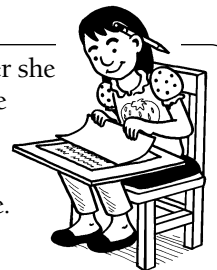
Edit—and shine

When your child writes a story in school or at home, tell her she can be an "editor" by improving and polishing it. Suggest these strategies.

Listen. Encourage her to read her tale out loud. That will help her hear if she left out a word or if a sentence doesn't make sense.

Ask. Offer to read your child's story to her, and ask questions about it. You will lead her to add more interesting details. *Examples:* "How old is the little girl?" "Was it a big school or a tiny one?"

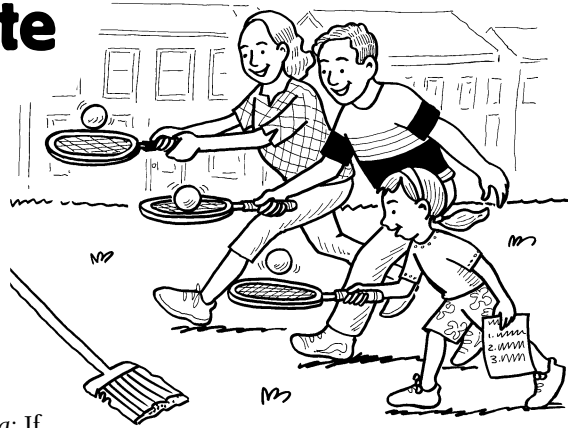
Look. Have your youngster hold a blank sheet of paper beneath each line and check to make sure each sentence has a capital letter at the beginning and a punctuation mark at the end. ♥



Fun reasons to write

What would your child like to do while school is out? Encourage her to plan summer fun and enjoy nonfiction writing at the same time. Here's how.

Design play spaces. Suggest that your youngster draw and label "blueprints" for indoor and outdoor places to play. She might redesign her room with a "science lab" where she can do experiments and a "construction zone" for building with blocks. A blueprint of your yard could show a "climbing tree" and a "cartwheel area." *Idea:* If possible, help her use her blueprints to set up each spot.



Make a to-do list. Perhaps your child wants to visit her grandparents, explore new bike trails, and learn to swim. Have her list her ideas and illustrate each one. She could hang up her list and check off each item she does.

Invent a game. Hula ball, anyone? Let your youngster use

outdoor toys like balls, hula hoops, or racquets to make up a brand new game. Help her write the instructions, listing the equipment and the steps for playing. Try the game together as you follow the directions she wrote. She can make additions or changes to be sure her game works!♥

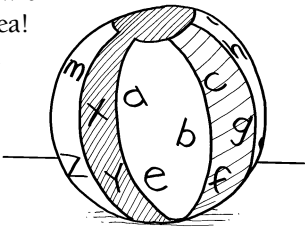


Now I know my ABCs

Whether your youngster recognizes a handful of letters or has learned most of them, these games will improve and reinforce his knowledge:

- Have a "ball" with this alphabet idea!

Help your child write his ABCs all over a beach ball. Toss or bat the ball back and forth.



When you catch it, call out the letter that's closest to your right thumb. *Bonus:* He'll work on recognizing left and right, too.

- Let your youngster use chalk to write the alphabet in random order on a sidewalk, driveway, or blacktop. Take turns tossing a beanbag (or a sock filled with dry beans and tied shut) onto the letters in alphabetical order. So the first player aims for A, the second for B, and so on. Continue until someone hits Z.

Variation: Your child can say a word that begins with each letter when you play either game.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A

Story hour and beyond

Q My son loves story hour at the library. How can we find other free reading-related events to try in our community?

A Great question! Your community probably has various "bookish" activities for your son to enjoy. For starters, bookstores may offer free story times or visits from local authors. Also, some farmers' markets, fairs, and festivals host storytellers or poetry readings for kids. And community theaters might put on plays based on children's books.

Here's another idea: Let your son host his own story times and other activities. He'll feel like a big kid as he leads story hour for younger siblings, cousins, or neighbors. Or he could invite friends over to read books together or to make up stories that they can perform for you.♥



Parent to Parent

See all the new words!

My daughter was excited about the "word wall" in her classroom this year. Her teacher wrote words the students were learning on colorful cards and posted them on a wall. Leah asked if we could make one at home, so we brainstormed categories to include.

She wrote our categories—"weather," "things you plug in," "buildings"—on separate sheets of paper and taped them to her closet door. Now, she listens and looks for new words

to add. For instance, she wrote *gust* after hearing a weather report and *incubator* from a nonfiction book we read on hatching chicks.

Leah also likes to ask visitors to put words on her wall. Her uncle recently added *yurt* under "buildings" and explained that it's a type of circular, dome-shaped tent. I love that she's learning, and using, new words. In fact, she's in the other room right now building a yurt for her doll to sleep in tonight!♥

