

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2007

 **Boulder Valley School District**
Department of Reading and Literacy

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ Brand-New Pencils, Brand-New Books

It's the first day of first grade for Gilbert

the hedgehog. Like many new students, he worries: Will my teacher be nice? When will I make a friend? Will I be sent to the principal? Diane deGroat's story will reassure youngsters starting a new year or going to school for the first time.

■ Math Curse

Math is everywhere for the girl in John Scieszka's story. She wonders how many quarts are in a gallon and whether tunafish + tunafish = founafish. But most of all, she wonders how she can stop seeing everything in the world as a math problem!

■ A Pocket Full of Kisses

This sequel is just as sweet as Audrey Penn's original, *The Kissing Hand*. Chester feels jealous when his mother kisses his new baby brother. But the little raccoon learns that Mommy has enough kisses to go around—he even gets an extra one to pass on to his little brother.



■ Charlotte's Web: New in the Barn

Catherine Hapka's shortened version of E. B. White's classic is a picture book for younger children. When Fern's pet pig Wilbur grows too big for her house, he moves to a barn. Wilbur misses the little girl but winds up being friends with a wise spider named Charlotte. (Also available in Spanish.)



Eager to read

Whether your child is enjoying a storybook, following instructions on a math worksheet, or looking online for information, she is reading.

In fact, reading is part of every school subject every day. As the new school year begins, you can use these ideas to get your youngster excited about books and reading:

- Sign her up for her own library card. While you're at the desk, have your child ask how many books she can check out and how long she can keep them. At home, help her find a special place to store library books.



Marni McGee. For a struggling reader or a little one who's anxious to read on her own, try *When Will I Read?* by Miriam Cohen.♥

- Surprise your youngster with a "first day of school" gift. You might give her a new book, a book light for her bed, or a canvas bag that she can decorate and use to carry books.

- Make sure your child has time to read for pleasure each day. Have her choose at least one book or chapter to read (when she gets home from school or right after dinner). Set aside time for weekend reading, too.

- Find stories about a love for reading. Here are a few to start with: *Wild About Books* by Judy Sierra, *Beatrice Doesn't Want To* by Laura Numeroff, and *Winston the Book Wolf* by

Little bits of reading

Like a magician with tricks up his sleeve, you can keep your pocket or purse stocked with reading tidbits for your youngster. You'll find it's easy to sneak in reading practice with items like these:

1. a fortune from a fortune cookie
2. a comic strip cut out of the newspaper
3. a greeting card or party invitation
4. a printout of a nice e-mail



When you have a free moment (before soccer practice begins or while waiting in line at the bank), announce, "Reading break!" Pull something out of your stash, hand it to your child, and ask him to read it to you.♥

Inspired writing

A great story often begins with a simple idea. But the challenge is coming up with that idea!

Try these tips for inspiring your young writer. You'll help him build creativity and also stretch his imagination.

▲ Encourage your child to use characters he knows. He could develop a new setting (Max from the series by Rosemary Wells visits his class). Or he might write a sequel—the little boy in Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* plants an apple seed from the original tree and befriends the new tree that grows.



▲ Discover an unusual writing spot. Take paper and pencil to a grassy hill overlooking a pond. Your youngster can make up a story about the turtles and frogs that live there.

▲ Sing a familiar song, such as "The Wheels on the Bus." Have your child write new words to the tune. *Examples:* "The

thunder in the sky goes rumble, rumble, rumble." "The rabbits in the yard go hop, hop, hop."

▲ Offer a writing prompt ("What would life be like if everything were free?"). Or suggest that your youngster invent a new ball game and write about the first time it's played. ♥

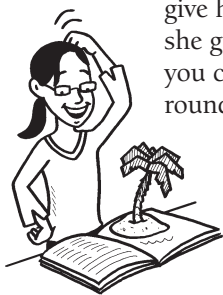
Fun with Words Guess the word

Here's a fun vocabulary guessing game that will keep your youngster coming back for more!

All you need is a list of words and their definitions. For example, use the geography terms from your child's social studies homework. Choose a word, and give her one-word hints until she guesses it. For "island," you could say, "water," "surrounded," and "deserted."

When your youngster gets it, have her pick a word and give clues to you. Whether giving or getting clues, concentrating on the words will help your child learn the vocabulary list quickly.

You can play this game with all kinds of school vocabulary words: science, math, and history. Or use it to improve your youngster's overall language. Keep a list of unfamiliar words from books she reads. When you have a dozen, look up the definitions, and start playing! ♥



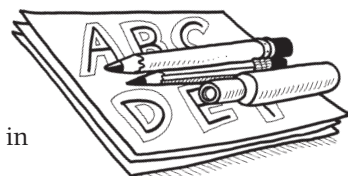
Q&A Handwriting help

Q My daughter's handwriting is a little rusty after the summer. How can she get it in shape?

A Try going back to basics. Your child's first handwriting lessons probably involved tracing letters. Try this: Write words with a highlighter, and have her write inside them with a pencil. You can also print out rows of letters in large type and let her trace over them with markers.

If your youngster's pencil grasp needs work, give her a thicker pencil to use for a while. Or slide a rubber grip onto her regular pencil to remind her to hold it correctly. If she's still having trouble, ask her teacher for help.

By working now to establish good habits, you'll make sure your child's schoolwork will be more legible. You'll also encourage a lifetime of neater writing. ♥



Parent to Parent Family comedy night

Our boys seem to have inherited my husband's sense of humor. The three of them really enjoy laughing and telling jokes. So we decided to schedule a family stand-up comedy night. We thought it would be fun, and we also felt it would help our sons be more comfortable giving presentations in school.

The boys were excited about the idea. They checked out riddle books from the library, surfed the Internet for kids'

jokes, and even made up a few one-liners of their own.

On Sunday night, we settled in the living room with popcorn. My husband went first. Although he was a tough act to follow, the boys did great. We encouraged them to look at us and to speak loudly and clearly.

Pretty soon, they each seemed relaxed to be "on stage," and they loved getting laughs. In fact, everything went so well that we plan to hold family comedy night once a month. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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