

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2008

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

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *On the Night You Were Born*

Animals dance, the moon plays a saxophone, and stars shine to celebrate a baby's birth in Nancy Tillman's beautiful story. The book's poetic language and warm message—that each child is unique—make it perfect for reading aloud.



### ■ *Pinkalicious*

A little girl eats so many pink cupcakes that she turns pink. Her doctor's cure? Green foods! When too many treats finally turn her pink skin red, Pinkalicious takes his advice and devours Brussels sprouts and grapes until she's back to normal. A funny story by Elizabeth Kann.



### ■ *No One Saw*

Bob Raczka shows readers how artists see ordinary things in unusual ways. He explains, "No one saw flowers like Georgia O'Keeffe" and "No one saw music like Marc Chagall." The book also introduces youngsters to the work of René Magritte, Joan Miró, and other 20th-century painters.

### ■ *Abuelita Full of Life*

When his grandmother moves in, José struggles with a few changes. She sleeps in his room, speaks Spanish, and cooks new dishes. But José soon realizes she has a lot to share, too. A bilingual story by Amy Costales about appreciating family and accepting differences.



## Poetry writing made easy

Maggie loves to write stories and wants to try something new. Alex is just learning to write and finds it hard to make up a story. Whether your child is a strong or struggling writer, she can build skills and learn about poetry by creating simple verses.

### Rainbow verse

Help your youngster cut strips from several different colors of construction paper. On each, ask her to describe things of that color. For blue, she might write:

*Juicy blueberry pies*  
*Bright skies*  
*Grandpa's eyes.*

Have her glue the strips onto a sheet of paper to make her poem. The colorful verse will teach her about imagery, the descriptive language that poets use to help readers picture words.

### Story haiku

Use a fairy tale as inspiration for a haiku, a three-line Japanese poem. These poems have five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the last line. For example, a haiku based on "Cinderella" might be:

*The poor stepdaughter*  
*Danced with a prince at*  
*the ball*  
*And they got married.*

Writing about a story in 17 syllables will help your child learn to summarize events, an important skill for writing reports.



### Word collection

Encourage your youngster to browse through books and choose three interesting words (*swirls*, *twilight*, *suspense*). She can turn each one into a line of a poem:

*Swirls of ice cream*  
*Baseball games at twilight*  
*Stories with suspense*  
*All these things are fun.*

Watch her vocabulary improve as she gathers words and learns their meanings. ♥

## Book pals

What's more fun than reading alone? Sharing a book with a friend! Enjoying stories with a pal can increase your youngster's enthusiasm for reading. Here's how:



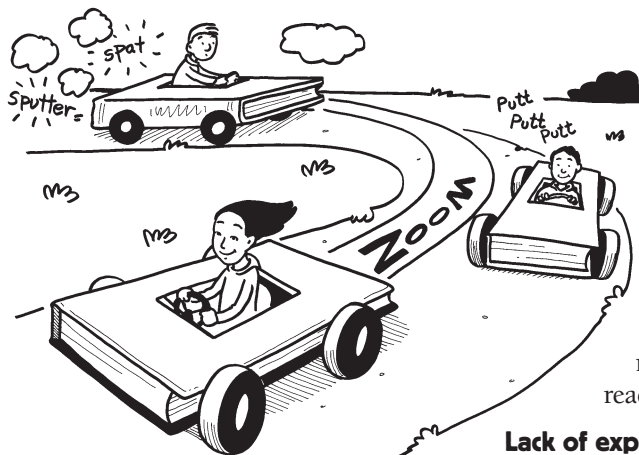
- Have him ask a friend to come over with a book. Your child should choose one, too.
- Show the children ways to share reading. For example, they could read silently and then swap books. Or they might take turns reading aloud from one book.
- When they finish, suggest that they discuss their books. You can help them get started by asking, "What did you like best about the story?" ♥

# Polished reading

Your child probably loves listening when someone reads a story at just the right speed and with just the right expression. Help him learn to read like that by fixing three common reading problems.

## Too slow

A youngster who reads slowly may be working hard to sound out each word. Try writing down five words that appear often, and have him find them in the book. Being



familiar with the words will let him pick up his pace. If he still has trouble, choose an easier book.

## Too fast

A speed reader may not have time to understand what he's reading. He will probably skip over or mispronounce words. Slow your child down by having him hold a ruler under each line and lower it as he reads.

## Lack of expression

Reading in the same tone makes a story sound flat. Have your youngster practice expression with a book that has a repeated line, such as *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman or *The Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle. First, he can read the refrain in a monotone. Then, ask him to read it as if he's scared, surprised, and excited. He'll see the difference he can make with his own voice. ♥

## Fun with Words

### Invent a snack

What's crunchy, salty, and shaped like Saturn? An imaginary "space cracker." Encourage your child to make up a new snack and design a box for it. She'll build reading and writing skills while learning a little about package design.

Start by looking together at boxes in your pantry. Point out brand names, product descriptions, and pictures. Some boxes might also feature characters or activities like word searches and connect-the-dots games.

Then, have your youngster cover an empty box with construction paper and decorate it with markers or crayons. For space crackers, she could create a rocket logo and draw snacks shaped like planets, suns, and stars. The back of her box might feature a maze through the solar system. When she's finished, set her project on the counter for everyone to admire. ♥

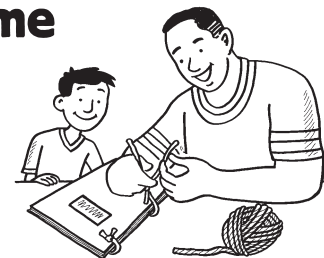


## Q&A Volunteering from home

**Q** I'm a store manager, and I can't visit my son's school during regular hours. Is there any way I can still be involved?

**A** Talk to the teacher about your availability. She's sure to have some ways you can help from home. For instance, she might ask you to cut out letters for a bulletin board display or to bind student-made books. Or you could check out books from the public library for the teacher to read during upcoming class units (stories about summer weather or Memorial Day, for instance).

Remember that being involved means helping your child as well as his teacher. Reading your youngster's writing assignments, listening to him practice for an oral presentation, quizzing him on spelling words, and making sure he has enough pencils and other supplies are all important ways to participate in his education. ♥



## Parent to Parent

### Home library

I wanted to add to my daughter's book collection, but I didn't have a lot of money to spend. I noticed that her teacher sent home a book catalog with paperbacks for as little as \$1 or \$2, so I started ordering a few each month.

I also found a used book shop that gives store

credit for donated items. Together, we looked through Brooke's room for books she hadn't read in a long time, such as her baby board editions, and we traded them for titles she would like now.

Finally, I always keep an eye on the newspaper for library book sales or yard sale ads that mention books or children's items. Since I've started making an effort to buy books, Brooke's little library has nearly doubled! ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630

540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com

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