

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2011

Batavia City School District  
Reading Department

## Book Picks



### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *A Circle Is Not a Valentine*

In this story by H. Werner Zimmermann, Alphonse can't seem to paint the right shape on his friend's valentine. After trying a square, a circle, and a triangle, he discovers that a heart is the best shape for showing his feelings.

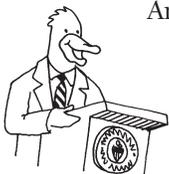


#### ■ *A Spoon for Every Bite*

A wealthy man makes fun of a poor family for owning only three spoons. But in his quest to become so rich that he uses a new spoon for each bite, he learns an important lesson. A folktale by Joe Hayes. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ *Duck for President*

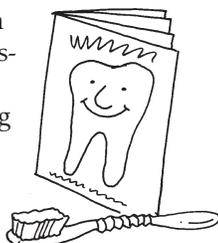
An ambitious duck starts out as a farmer, then becomes governor, and finally president. He thinks each job will be easier than the last. But to his surprise, he finds that big responsibility means hard work. Doreen Cronin's story will give your youngster a clever lesson in politics.



#### ■ *The Tooth Book*

Encourage your children to learn how to take good care of their teeth with this colorful nonfiction book by Edward Miller.

They'll get tips on brushing and flossing, visiting the dentist, and eating healthy foods. The book also explains how cavities form.



## Little publishers

How does a story become a book? Your youngster can learn what goes into creating a book by "publishing" his own. Here's how.

**1. Explore books.** Show your child how every book has a cover with a title and the author's name and usually a picture. Flip through several books together, and point out other features, such as the title page, the author's photo and biography on the back cover, or a page listing other books the author has written. Your youngster can get ideas for things to include in his own books.

**2. Write and illustrate.** Encourage your child to make up a story. It might be about a favorite topic (scouts, planets) or a recent event (birthday party, basketball game). Have him write (or dictate to you) at least four or five sentences, putting each one on a separate sheet of paper. Then, suggest that he draw a picture to go with each sentence.



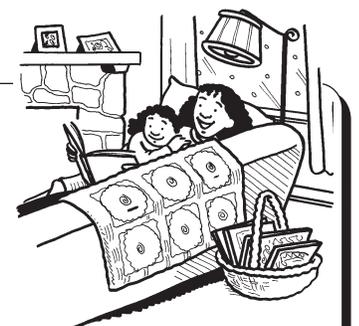
**3. Design a cover.** For the front, he can write a title ("The Best Camping Trip Ever") in large letters and add an illustration. To make the back, help him write "About the Author" with a few sentences about himself.

**4. Put it together.** Have your youngster glue the pages of his story onto separate sheets of construction paper and his front and back covers onto cardboard. Finally, stack everything in order, punch three holes along the left edge, and tie his book together with yarn. ♥

## Winter reading rituals

Raise a child who loves to read with these family traditions:

- Fill a basket with wintry titles from the library or your own collection, such as *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. Set it in the living room or family room for reading anytime.
- Create a ritual by reading a special book each time it snows. A fun choice is *Frosty the Snowman* by Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins.
- Invite another family for a cozy "read-in." One person can read aloud to the group, or each person can curl up with her own book.
- Read a book and follow up with a winter craft or activity. For instance, try *Gingerbread Baby* by Jan Brett, and then make gingerbread cookies. ♥



# Fact finding

Turn your child into a reading detective! These ideas will build her research skills and help her become a whiz at reading for information.

**Discover details.** Almanacs and trivia books can show your youngster how much fun it is to discover facts while she reads. Ask a librarian to help you find several. Then, see who can find the most interesting or outrageous fact. (“The world’s smallest dog is only six inches long!”)

**Gather background information.** Before a school field trip or family outing, help your youngster read about the destination.



For instance, if her class is going to a history museum, browse its Web site together to see what’s on display (portraits of presidents, antique cars). She’ll learn more from her trip if she knows what to look for or expect.

**Look for answers.** List 10 pieces of information to find in a newspaper or magazine.

*Examples:* the highest and lowest temperatures on a weather map, the name of a local restaurant, today’s date. Then, go through the newspaper or magazine pages together looking for the answers.♥



## Word of the day

Your child can learn new words and practice using the words he studies in school with this activity.

### Choose

Have family members take turns picking a word of the day. When it’s your youngster’s turn, he can choose one from a vocabulary or spelling list or from a book he brings home. On your day, try to pick a new word for him to learn.

### Use

Look for opportunities to say the word often throughout the day. For example, you can ask him to pour the *liquid* when he wants a glass of milk. Or mention the *transportation* you’re taking when you go someplace. At bedtime, have your child write the word on a slip of paper to add to a “Vocabulary Jar.” *Idea:* After a month, he can pull out the words to see all the ones he learned!♥



## Recipes for writing

Here’s a fun way for your youngster to practice reading and writing instructions.

Together, look at recipes in cookbooks or on Web sites. You can explain that they give step-by-step directions for making food. Point out measurements ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, 2 tbsp.) and action words (add, stir, mix).

Then, give your child recipe cards or index cards to write instructions for her favorite snacks (trail mix, peanut-butter-and-banana toast). Help her think through each step and then write it or dictate it to you. *Example:* “Toast 1 slice of bread. Spread with 1 tbsp. of peanut butter. Peel and cut a banana into pieces. Put the pieces on top of the peanut butter.” It may help if you make the snack as she writes so she won’t miss a step. When you finish, enjoy the treat together.♥



## Q&A Reading to siblings

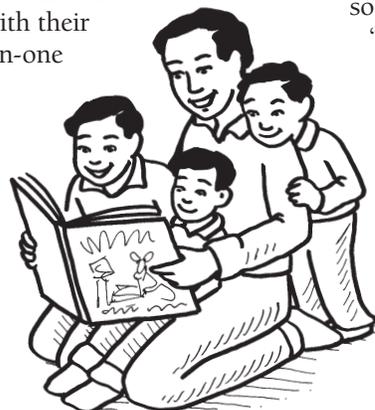
**Q** My husband and I have three boys, ages three, five, and seven. Should we read to them together or separately?

**A** Both! Your youngsters will benefit from sharing books with their brothers *and* from one-on-one story time.

Reading together as a family can help all your children become better readers. Choose a mix of easier and harder books—your youngest will hear advanced vocabulary, and the older ones can build comprehension skills by

explaining the plot to him. You might read together after dinner or on weekend mornings. *Tip:* Take turns reading bedtime stories on different beds so everyone has a turn to be “host.”

Try different combinations for individual story time. You might read to the two youngest while your husband reads to the oldest, and then switch the next night. One-on-one reading lets each child hear books that are just right for him.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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