

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2012

Holyoke Public Schools
Curriculum Department

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *A Pocket for Corduroy*

During a visit to the laundromat, Corduroy realizes his overalls are missing something: a pocket. So the stuffed bear decides to search for one. Just like in Don Freeman's first *Corduroy* book, a little girl named Lisa saves the day by fixing his overalls. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *That's What Leprechauns Do*

No one has ever found the end of a rainbow, so it's a great place for leprechauns to hide their pots of gold. In Eve Bunting's story, three little leprechauns almost miss a rainbow—and lose their gold—because they're busy making mischief.

■ *Swirl by Swirl*

Nature is full of things with spiral patterns: a chipmunk curled in its den, an elephant's trunk wrapped around its mother's tail, a wave crashing on the shore. Your child will enjoy searching for all the swirls in Joyce Sidman's nonfiction book.



Nature is full of things with spiral patterns:

■ *The Incredible Book-Eating Boy*

It appears that a bite has been taken out of this book by Oliver Jeffers. Once your child reads it, she'll understand why! It's about a little boy who can't stop eating books. At first, he gets smarter, but then he feels sick. How can he break his habit?



Storybook games

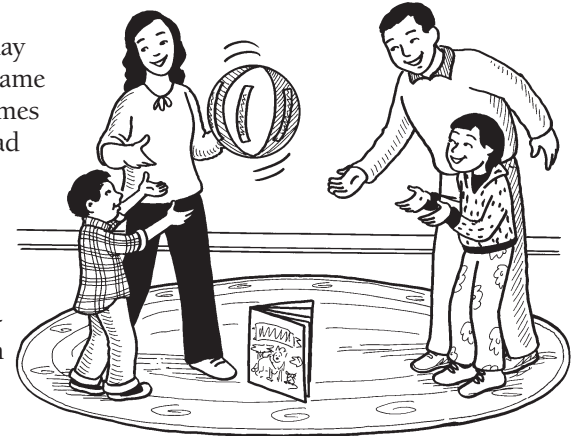
It's fun to read, and it's fun to play games. Why not enjoy both at the same time? Here are three book-based games that can encourage your child to read and help improve his reading comprehension skills.

Storybook match-up

Read three short books together. On separate cards, have your youngster write or draw the following from each book: two characters (teacher, monkey), two settings (school, zoo), and two events (drove a magic bus, ate bananas). Shuffle the cards, deal three to each player, and put the rest facedown. On each turn, draw one card, and choose one from your hand to discard. The winner is the first person to collect one character, setting, and event from the same story.

Sketch and guess

Secretly think of a book that your family has read. Then, hang a blank sheet of paper on the wall, and begin drawing a picture that will help others guess the title. For *The Cat in the Hat* (Dr. Seuss), you could sketch a cat and a tall, striped hat. Continue drawing until someone



figures it out. The first person to name the correct title gets the next turn. When you're finished playing, pick one of the books for everyone to read together.

Beach ball toss

Start by reading a story aloud. Then, use a permanent marker to write discussion questions on strips of masking tape. Stick each one on a different-colored section of a beach ball. (Examples: "What word best describes the mood of the story?" "What is another way the story could end?") Have everyone stand in a circle and toss the ball. When you catch it, answer the question that's facing you.♥

Sorting letters and sounds

Noticing differences among letters and sounds is an important key to reading. Your child can practice with these activities.

Shape. Put out magnetic letters or alphabet flash cards. Ask your youngster to sort lowercase letters by whether the "stick" is on the left (b, p) or right (d, q). Or she could sort uppercase letters by whether they have curves (C, S), straight lines (K, L), or both (R, G).

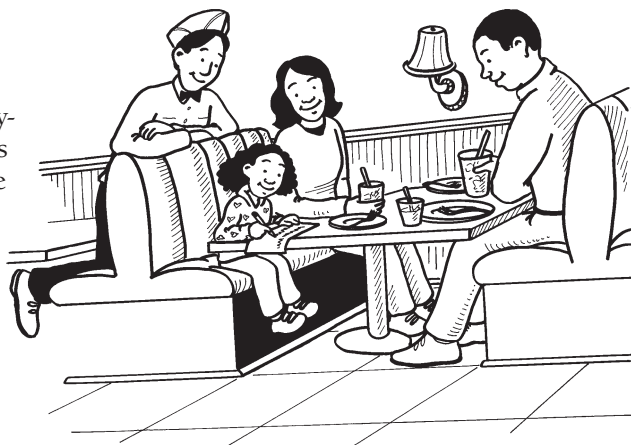
Sound. Give your child old magazines, and help her cut out pictures of objects. Then, have her spread out the letters and sort the pictures by their beginning sounds (a fork and a fence with F, a girl and a glass with G). *Variation:* Let her sort pictures based on their final sound.♥



On the scene

Where is the best place to write? Anywhere your child goes! When she writes about something as it is happening, she can capture details and impressions. Here are three ideas for writing “on location.”

- Suggest that your youngster take notes at a sporting event—just like a real sports reporter. Help her write down the names of players who get a home run or make a touchdown, and have her record the score. At home, let her use her notes to write a story or tell someone about the game.



- Encourage your child to write a story that’s set in a spot you’re visiting. If you stay at a relative’s cabin, for example, she might make up a tale about getting lost in the woods or finding an underground cave. During a picnic, she could write about finding a new friend or learning a trick on the monkey bars.

- Your youngster can pretend to be a restaurant critic. The next time your family goes out or orders in, help her write observations on a paper napkin or placemat. (“Burger: delicious. Broccoli: mushy.”) Afterward, she can refer to the napkin and write a review.♥

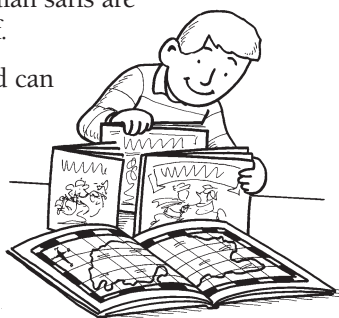
Stamp your passport



Reading is a great way for your child to learn about the world. Try these suggestions for helping him discover cultures and places:

1. Give your youngster a closer look at an unfamiliar item from a book. After reading *Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto, show him *masa* (dough used for tamales) at a grocery store. Or if he reads *Mama’s Saris* (Pooja Makhijani), visit a fabric store or flea market to look at material Indian saris are made out of.

2. Your child can learn about a story’s setting by locating it on a map. Help him see what countries, oceans,



or rivers it is near. Then, find a weather map in the newspaper or at weather.com to see what the weather is like.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Parent to Parent

Reading to siblings

My older daughter, Alyssa, didn’t like to read out loud in school or answer questions in front of the whole class. Her teacher suggested that we help her get more comfortable with this, since she’ll need to read aloud or speak in front of others throughout her school years.

One of the teacher’s ideas has turned into a family tradition that’s helping both of our children. Alyssa started reading to her little sister, Claire, at bedtime. She’s getting practice reading aloud, and Claire is even learning to read a few words. I guess she has decided that if her big sister can read, so can she!

Last week, Alyssa came home and told me that when it’s her turn to read, she just pretends she’s reading to her little sister. And she said that now she feels better reading aloud in school.♥



Fun with Words

Words I know

When your youngster learns new words in class or during conversations, help her remember them with these ideas.

Treasure box

Give your child a shoebox “treasure chest” for storing new words. Help her cut several colors of construction paper into two-inch circles or diamonds to make “jewels.” She can write a word on one side (“tempo”) and add its definition to the back (“speed of music”).
Idea: Suggest that she write words from

different subjects on different types of jewels. Social studies words might go on diamonds, for instance.

Vocabulary quilt

Let your youngster cut poster board into four-inch squares. She can write new words on the squares and decorate each one with crayons to show its meaning. For example, if she learns the word “translucent” in science, she might decorate its square like a stained-glass window. When she has a dozen words, she can tape them together to make a “quilt.”♥

