

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2011

Holyoke Public Schools
Curriculum Department

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ Skip Through the Seasons

This nonfiction book by Stella Blackstone shows children enjoying the outdoors in each season. They ice-skate in winter, play in spring rain, build sand castles in summer, and rake autumn leaves. The final pages are filled with facts about the calendar and seasonal changes. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ Dixie

Emma and her dog Dixie are cast as Dorothy and Toto in the school play, *The Wizard of Oz*. At first, Dixie is excited. But then, he can't understand why Emma is too busy rehearsing to play with him. The first book in the Dixie series by Grace Gilman.

■ LMNO Peas

Peas are the stars of this ABC book. On each page, peas take on a different role—one for each letter of the alphabet. They are astronauts, quarterbacks, volunteers, and (of course) peas! A fun look at letters and sounds by Keith Baker.



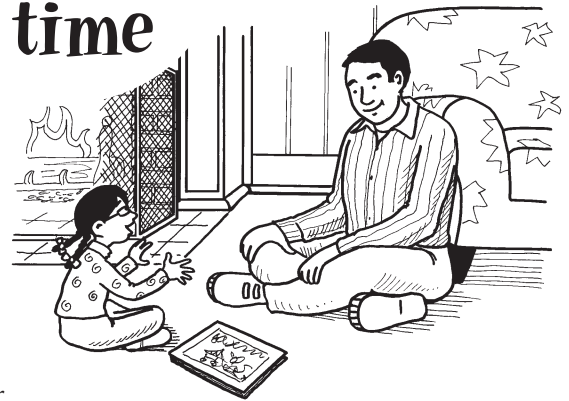
■ Music from the Sky

A little girl loves the sound a flute makes—it reminds her of a beautiful blue sky. So her loving grandfather finds the perfect branch and carves a flute from it for her to play. Denise Gillard's story includes instructions for making your own flute.



Storytelling time

Everyone's a storyteller! When you tell your youngster about the day she was born, she learns what an interesting story sounds like. When she retells a book from memory, she practices putting story events in order. And no matter who's telling the tale, she gets to enjoy spending time with you. Here are steps to help you and your child learn to tell stories together.



- 1. Start with a book.** Ask your youngster to choose a favorite book. Read it aloud, close it, and work together to tell it in your own words. Encourage her to add gestures and facial expressions. For example, she might smile and wave her hands during exciting parts or widen her eyes when things get scary. *Idea:* Have each family member choose a different story to read silently and then tell to everyone else.
- 2. Make it your own.** Try telling a story that's based on a book, but change some details. After reading *The Biggest Pumpkin Ever* (Steven Kroll), for instance, you might make up a story about a huge tomato your family grew. Or your youngster might

make up a tale about the tallest block tower ever.

- 3. Use a memory.** Family memories make wonderful tales. Your youngster will probably love hearing about your childhood (first day of school, biggest snowstorm) or the day she was born. Or she can tell a story about a shared memory, like the time a cow blocked the road on a family trip.
- 4. Explain nature.** Why do elephants have trunks? What causes a full moon? Some traditional stories (legends, folktales) offer clever explanations for things in nature. You and your child can try this, too. Ask her to choose something she has always wondered, such as why giraffes have long necks, and make up a story to explain it.♥

My book collection

It's exciting for your child to have his very own books at home. In fact, being surrounded by books can increase your entire family's interest in reading. Consider these free or low-cost suggestions for building a collection:

- Ask for hand-me-downs from relatives and friends who have older children. And when your youngster outgrows books, help him find younger children to give them to.
- Shop at library sales, which offer gently used books at low prices. Keep an eye out for announcements on the library bulletin board or website.
- Go to garage sales. Check newspaper listings for sales that include children's books.
- Visit stores that sell used books. You might find a local one that offers store credit in exchange for your books. Also, many online bookstores allow you to buy and sell used books.♥

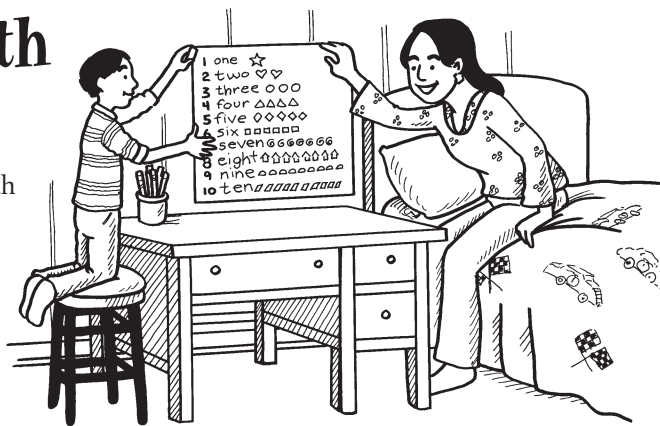


Reading + math = success!

What do the ABCs have to do with 1-2-3s? Plenty! These ideas can help your child do well in math *and* reading.

Number words

Suggest that your youngster make a poster showing the numbers 1–10. Next to each number, help him write out the word (*one, two*) and add an illustration (one star, two hearts). Let him hang the poster over his desk or on the refrigerator to practice recognizing the words.



Math books

You can find picture books about almost any math topic, from addition and subtraction to patterns and money. Read one to your child and try some of the math. For example, read *Pattern Fish* (Trudy Harris) and then look for patterns around the house together. Or try *Once Upon a Dime: A Math Adventure* (Nancy Kelly Allen), and let him sort coins.

Story problems

Your youngster needs good comprehension when he reads problems such as “Mary has 4 cookies. Tom has 3 cookies. How many cookies do they have altogether?” He should go back and underline words that tell how to solve it. For example, “How many altogether?” means to add, while “How many are left?” means to subtract. ♥



Secret messages

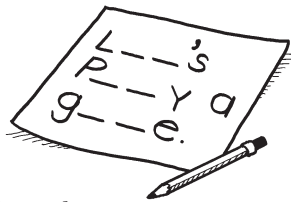
C_n y_u r_ _d th_s? Figuring out mystery sentences in this hangman-style game can call your youngster’s attention to the first and last sounds in words—an important early reading skill.

Give your child a message that includes only the first and last letter of each word. You might write “I l_ _e y_u” for “I love you” or “L_ _’s p_ _y a g_ _e” for “Let’s play a game.” If she’s stumped, have her go through the alphabet and try different letters that could work.

Remind her that the message has to make sense.

This will help her rule out possibilities. For example, if she figures out “Let’s play a...” she can think about what you might play that begins with “g” and ends with “e.”

When she solves the mystery, let her write a secret message for you. ♥



Let’s have a conversation

Striking up a conversation and keeping it going are two important speaking skills. They also make life more interesting! Here are two ways your child can practice.

Get started. Calling relatives on the phone can help your youngster get used to starting conversations. Before he dials, help him think of topics. *Idea:* Suggest that he start a conversation by asking about something that the other person is interested in (his grandfather’s fishing trip, his cousin’s dog).

Keep going. It takes two (or more) people to keep a conversation alive. When your youngster plays with stuffed animals or action figures, join in. You might have your animal say to his, “What do you eat in the rain forest?” or, “I like bananas, too!” Then, encourage him to follow up with a question or comment of his own. ♥



Q&A Backward writing?

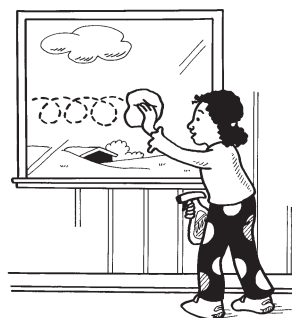
Q My daughter often writes letters, and sometimes even whole words, backward. Could she have a learning disability?

A It’s not unusual for young children to write backward occasionally, even after they have learned to write correctly.

Ask her teacher whether she does this frequently in class and whether you should be concerned. Most likely, she will not be worried if she feels your child is making steady progress

in reading and writing, writes backward infrequently, and has no other signs of a learning disability. But if the teacher suspects a problem, she may ask the reading specialist to do some tests.

In the meantime, your daughter can work on left to right at home. For example, you might have her sponge down tables or wash windows from left to right. Or put a sticker on the left side of a whiteboard or chalkboard and encourage her to use it as a starting point when she writes. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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