

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

February 2019

Beginning Edition

Veterans Memorial Elementary School  
"Home of the Patriots"

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks: And Other Funny Family Portraits* (Hanoch Piven)

A little girl decides that the portrait she drew in school doesn't show how special her family is, so she gets creative. See how she shows her dad is "as fun as a party favor" and her baby brother is "as sweet as candy."



### ■ *About Birds: A Guide for Children/ Sobre los pájaros: Una guía para niños* (Cathryn Sill)



Most birds fly, but others swim or run. This nonfiction picture book, with both English and Spanish text, lets readers discover the

lives of different birds. It's also a handy field guide for identifying birds.

### ■ *Pedro, First-Grade Hero*

(Fran Manushkin)

First grade is full of fun for Pedro. These four short stories describe Pedro's exploits as he collects bugs for science, competes to become a soccer goalie, starts a mystery club, and runs for class president. The first book in the Pedro series.

### ■ *Me Counting Time: From Seconds to Centuries* (Joan Sweeney)

In one second, your child could blink her eyes. And in one minute, she might be able to write a party invitation. This book presents examples that tie measurements of time to concepts that young readers will understand. Your youngster can follow along as the narrator describes ways she measures time.



## A love of nonfiction!

Where can your child explore favorite topics like animals and outer space, find fascinating facts, and learn new vocabulary? In the pages of nonfiction books! Try these ideas.

### Compare fiction and nonfiction

Together, read a nonfiction book about a storybook character your youngster loves (say, a sloth). Then, ask her which parts of the story are realistic or unrealistic, based on what she learned from the nonfiction book. She might say that real sloths do look like they're smiling, but she couldn't actually have one as a pet like the girl in the story does.

### Collect facts

"A day on Venus is longer than a year on Venus!" Suggest that your child fill a special binder with interesting facts like this from nonfiction books. She could label

each page with a topic ("Outer space," "Sports"). As she reads more nonfiction, she'll add more and more facts.

### Discover new words

As you read nonfiction with your youngster, she'll find words that are fun to say—and build background knowledge in history, science, and other subjects. Point out unfamiliar words like *galaxy*, *pueblo*, or *vertex*, and encourage her to say them aloud and try to figure out what they mean.♥



## Pasta punctuation

A macaroni noodle makes a cute comma, and a penne noodle plus a wagon wheel is a good exclamation point! Use this pasta-licious activity to help your youngster practice using punctuation correctly.

On a big strip of paper, write a sentence for your child in giant letters, leaving out the punctuation (I love macaroni and cheese said Sam). Now have him glue uncooked noodles where the punctuation marks should go. He could use one macaroni noodle for the comma after "cheese," two pairs of ziti noodles for the quotation marks before "I" and after "cheese," and a wagon wheel for the period following "Sam."♥



# Write stories together

When you and your child write stories together, that's called *interactive writing*. It's also called fun! Try these two suggestions. They'll help him write more complex stories and use bigger words than he might by himself.

**1. Create a board game.** Ask your youngster to call out random events (meet a robot, find a treasure, visit a farm). Write each one on a separate sticky note, and let him arrange the notes to make a game board path. Take turns rolling a die and moving a token along the path—using the events you land on to write a story. (“Once upon a time, Kevin met a tall green robot.” “The robot led him to a secret



treasure.”) Have your child write down the story as you go and then read it to you!

**2. Hang a story string.**

Help your youngster cut a dozen photos from magazines, catalogs, and advertising circulars. Hang a piece of string along a wall, and have him tape the pictures to it. Now make up a story based on the photos. If the first photo shows a toy pirate ship, your child could write, “Nate the pirate set sail with his purple parrot.” If the next picture is of a lemon, you might add, “They landed on a beautiful island with lemon trees.” Finish the story using the last picture.♥

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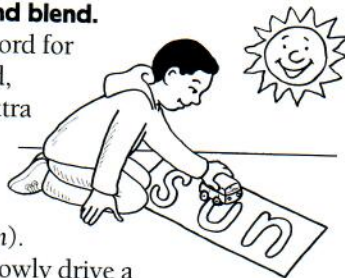


## What's that word?

Breaking words into sounds and putting them back together is one strategy your youngster can use to decode words. Help him practice with these tips.

**• Drive and blend.**

Write a word for your child, leaving extra space between the letters (s u n). Let him slowly drive a toy car across the word, stopping on each letter to say its sound (“s-uh-n”). Next, have him race the car across the word, blending the sounds as he goes (“sun”).



**• Listen and write.** Say each individual letter sound in a word. For flag, you would say “fl,” “a,” and “g.” Your youngster can write each letter as he hears its sound. Can he blend the sounds of the letters he has written and figure out your word? Now swap roles.♥

## Q&A Is it dyslexia?

**Q** My kindergartner often says animal instead of animal, or pasghetti for spaghetti. My friend says that's a symptom of dyslexia. What should I do?

**A** Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that leads to reading difficulties. Struggling with spoken language, such as mixing up syllables in longer words, can be an early symptom of dyslexia that shows up before a child learns to read. But it could also be a normal part of your child's language development.

Tell her teacher what you've noticed, and ask whether your youngster has other symptoms of dyslexia. These include difficulty with rhyming, learning the alphabet, and making the connection between letters and sounds.

Also let the teacher know if you have a family history of dyslexia, since the condition is sometimes inherited. If the teacher is concerned, she will refer your child to the school's speech-language pathologist or another appropriate specialist on the staff.♥



## Fun with Words

### Over, under, and through

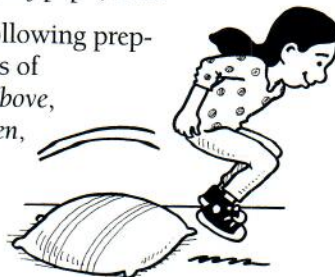
Play this game of Simon Says to help your child understand common prepositions like *over*, *under*, and *through*.

**Materials:** pencil, slips of paper, bowl

Together, write the following prepositions on separate slips of paper: *around*, *against*, *above*, *behind*, *on*, *beside*, *between*, *over*, *under*, *inside*, *outside*, *with*, *up*, *down*, and *through*. Mix up the slips in a bowl.

Pull slips from the bowl, one at a time, and use them to tell your youngster how to move. Say “Simon says” before some instructions. *Examples:* “Simon says, ‘Hold your right knee with your left hand’” or “Simon says, ‘Jump over the pillow.’”

The round ends when you run out of slips or your child does something Simon didn't say to do (“Put your hands between your knees”). Then, return the slips to the bowl, and let her be Simon.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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