

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2008

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

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Sam and the Lucky Money*

Bright, bustling Chinatown is the setting for Karen Chinn's book. Sam's grandparents have given him money to celebrate the Chinese New Year, but he has a hard time finding something he can afford. When he sees a homeless man, Sam winds up learning the true meaning of giving. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *100 Days of School*

"If you go to school for 95 days, and then go 5 more days, what do you get?" Trudy Harris's book about the 100th day of school teaches youngsters the many different ways to get to 100. Count the toes of 10 children or the legs on a centipede. It all adds up to 100!



■ *Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant*

Each poem in Jack Prelutsky's collection features an animal combined with an object. Cross an alarm clock and an armadillo, and you get an "alarmadillo." A clock and an octopus make a "clocktopus." Your child will giggle at the poems—and at the illustrations of these funny creatures.

■ *In My Family/En mi familia*

Author Carmen Lomas Garza shares fond memories of growing up in a Mexican-American community. In beautiful pictures and stories, she tells about times like the warm summer nights when her whole family danced outside. Written in English and Spanish.



Motivated to read

The more time your child spends reading, the better a reader she will become and the more she will enjoy books. Use these tips to encourage your youngster to read every day.



Complete the puzzle.

For each book your child reads, give her a piece of a 12-piece jigsaw puzzle. When she finishes 12 books, she'll be able to complete the puzzle.

Hold a "sleep-in." On a weekend, have a family reading night in the living room. Leave the lights on and let everyone read themselves to sleep. Or read aloud by flashlight as they drift off one by one.

Make a quilt. Cut poster board into 6-inch squares, and have your youngster use each one to draw a picture about a book she reads. When she has decorated 9 squares, help her connect them with wide, clear tape. Then, display her "reading quilt" on her bedroom wall.

Spend special time. If you have more than one child, spend time reading with each one of them alone. Pick a regular time (Saturday morning, Tuesday afternoon), a special place (an oversized chair, outside on the lawn), and even a name ("Casey's Book Time").

Read to others. Visit a nursing home and have

your youngster read aloud to residents. Or record her as she reads stories, and donate the tapes to a shelter. The thanks she'll get will boost her reading confidence and inspire her to read more.♥

Brr! Chilly writing

Polar bears and sledding and snow days—oh my! Cold weather means lots of fun things for your youngster to write about. Try these ideas:

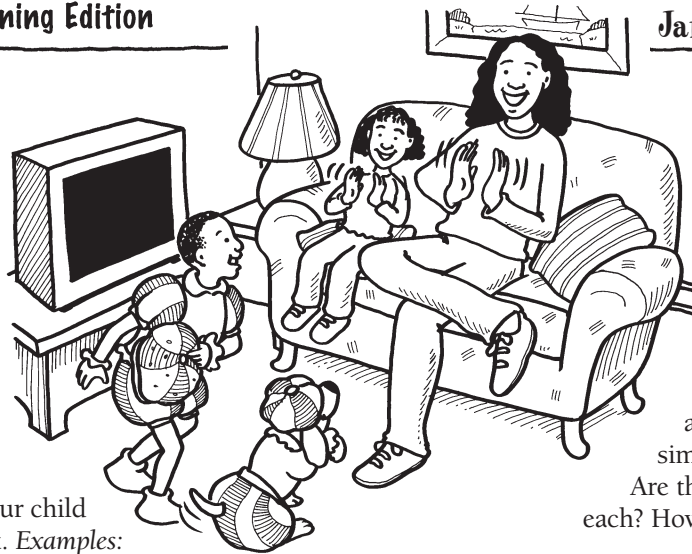
1. Serve chili or hot apple cider, and have your child use his five senses to write a story describing it (spicy, steamy, dark).
2. Give him a calendar where he can note a word about the weather each day (icy, windy, sunny).
3. Together, watch snow fall. Ask your youngster to jot down 10 words that come to mind (soft, silent, cotton) and write a paragraph using the words.
4. Have your child pretend he's taking a trip to the North Pole and make a packing list (three coats, five sweaters, ear muffs).♥



TV thinking time

Did you know that you can use television time to work on your child's comprehension and thinking skills? While you don't want your youngster watching too much TV, you can turn the time he does watch into learning time. Here are some suggestions:

▲ Watch programs together and ask your child questions about the characters and plot. *Examples:* "Which character would you like to have as a friend?" "What do you think will happen next?" "How would you have solved that problem?"



▲ Suggest that your youngster create his own show by acting out his favorite book. Since television programs often include music, he might want to play background music while he pretends.

▲ Read a book based on a program, and discuss the similarities and differences.

Are the characters the same in each? How are the settings different?

▲ Turn off the sound during part or all of a show. Have your child tell the story in his own words as it happens.

Note: Experts recommend that young children watch no more than an hour of TV a day.♥

Fun with Words

Reading clues

After hearing the Gingerbread Man story, your youngster might wish she could chase the cookie herself. Let her pretend to do just that with this hide-and-seek reading game.

Read aloud Jim Aylesworth's *The Gingerbread Man*. Encourage your child to join in with the repeated lines: "Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me—I'm the gingerbread man."



Then, cut out 10 gingerbread characters from brown construction paper. (*Tip:* Trace around a cookie cutter.) On each one,

write a clue about where to find the next one: "behind the couch" or "on the bookshelf."

Hide the cutouts, and give your youngster a hint to find the first one. Ask her to read each clue out loud as she finds it. On the last one, you could lead your child to a real gingerbread cookie!♥



Q&A Word recognition

Q My daughter needs to work on reading smoothly. How can I help her?

A Knowing how to read common words—called sight words—will help your youngster read without stumbling. You can find these words by looking through some of her books and jotting down words that appear often (*examples:* are, the, said). Also, your child's teacher might be able to give you a list of sight words.

To help your daughter notice the words, have her keep track of a different one each week. She can make a tally mark on scrap paper whenever she sees the word (on a sign, in the grocery store, on a book cover).

Then, make a chart to celebrate your youngster's progress. List the words down one side of a large piece of paper. Place a star sticker next to each one when she can read it easily.♥



Parent to Parent

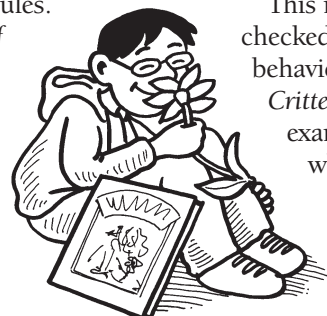
Books and behavior

My son Martin loves to read. When I decided his behavior could use some improvement, I turned to storybooks to help him learn to follow rules.

I found a great book, *If Everybody Did*, by Jo Ann Stover. It shows what would happen if everyone slammed doors, jumped in the mud, or squeezed the cat. I loved that the book gave alternatives to breaking the

rules (you can smell a flower instead of pulling off the petals). The story seemed to help Martin understand why rules are important.

This idea worked so well that I checked out some books with good behavior role models. *The Little Critter* series by Mercer Mayer, for example, has a cute character who learns to say he's sorry and deal with anger. Now Martin associates his favorite characters with good character!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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