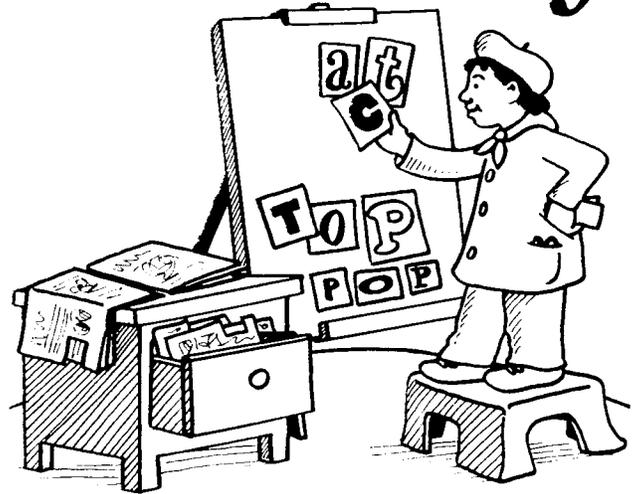


Building Blocks of Reading

Enjoy stories together... play with letters and words... do craft projects related to books. These are just a few ways you can help your child learn to read—and learn to enjoy reading! Try these fun ideas to help your young reader work on the skills she needs.



1. Letters and sounds

Learning to read is a lot like breaking a code. Each letter corresponds with a sound, and your child has to figure out those connections. Help him “crack the code” with these activities.

Add-a-sound

This activity can teach your youngster to hear the sounds that make up a word. Start by saying a beginning sound—either the sound of a single letter (*s*) or one made by a combination of letters (*ch*). Your child repeats the beginning sound and adds a middle sound (*s-u*).

Then, you come up with an ending sound that will make a word (*s-u-n*). Take turns starting a new word.



Around the house

Practice beginning sounds with this game. Have each family member write the alphabet down the left side of a piece of paper,

and look for objects that start with each letter (*apple, bowl, closet*). After 15 minutes, meet in the living room and read your lists aloud. Cross off words that anyone else has. The winner is the person with the most words left. *Note:* Your youngster can draw pictures of the items if he’s not writing words yet.

Nursery-rhyme time

Read from a book such as *Favorite Nursery Rhymes from Mother Goose* or *Mary Engelbreit’s Mother Goose*. Ask your child to make up his own version of a nursery rhyme. For instance, after reading “The Old Woman Who Lived in a

Shoe,” he might say, “There was a little boy who lived in a house. One day, he saw a little tiny mouse.” Learning about rhymes will help your child spell words with similar endings (when he can spell *house*, he’ll be able to spell *mouse*).

2. Vocabulary

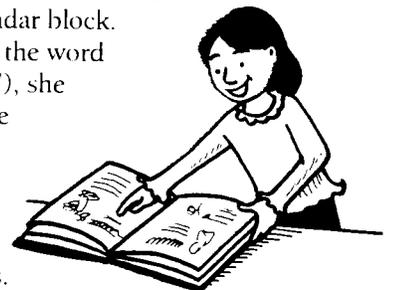
The more words your youngster can recognize, the easier it will be for her to read. These suggestions will help her discover new words every day.

Word art

Give your child a stack of old magazines, and ask her to cut out words from the headlines. Encourage her to choose words printed in different colors, styles, and sizes. She can glue them on poster board and illustrate something about each word. For example, if she cut out “camping,” she might draw a tent. This will help her visualize each word’s spelling and meaning.

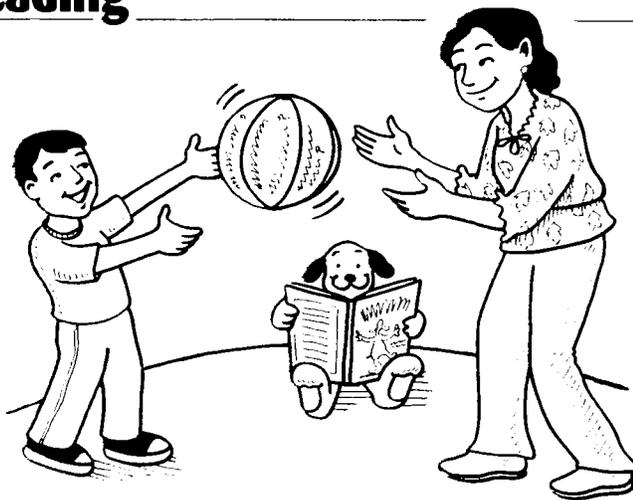
A month of words

Start a morning word ritual. Each day, let your youngster open a children’s dictionary to a random page and point to a word. Pronounce it, and read its definition. *Example:* “*Melody* is the tune of a song.” Then, have her write the word on that day’s calendar block. Whenever she uses or hears the word that day (“I like that *melody*”), she can make a tally mark. At the end of the month, she will have learned many new words. Ask her to read them and tell you which one has the most tally marks.



Mix and match

Here's an activity that can help your youngster learn longer words. Think of five compound words, such as *cupcake*, *basketball*, or *raincoat*. Write the two words that make up each word on separate index cards (cup, cake, basket, ball, rain, coat), and have your child illustrate them. Shuffle the cards, and let her put the compound words together. Can she read each one aloud?



3. Comprehension

Reading comprehension goes beyond understanding what is happening in a story. A good reader can talk, draw, and write about a book in many different ways. Your child can practice comprehension skills with these activities.

Beach-ball questions

Tossing a colorful ball can motivate your youngster to think carefully about a story. Start by reading a story together. Then, on each stripe of a large beach ball, write a different question about the story with a washable marker. *Examples:* "What would be another title for this story?" "How is the main character like you?"

Throw the ball back and forth, each time picking a question to answer when you catch the ball. The game ends when everyone has answered all the questions.

Book mobile

Use this hands-on way to help your child identify story elements.

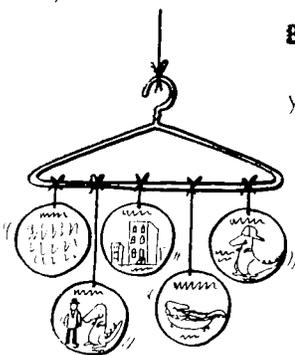
After reading a book, help him cut five circles from different colors of paper. Label them "Title," "Characters," "Setting," "Problem," and "Solution."

On each circle, your youngster can draw a picture and write a sentence to go with the heading. For

example, on the "Setting" circle, he would write where the story takes place (school, farm). When he's finished, help him hole-punch the circles and use yarn to tie them to a clothes hanger.

Scrambled story

Teach your child to put story events in order. First, read a short book. Then, help him write out the sentences from the story on strips of construction paper. Mix the strips up, and have him put them in order and read the story to you. *Tip:* He can practice keyboarding skills by typing the sentences on a computer. Let him print the sentences out and carefully cut them into strips.



4. Fluency

A fluent reader is one who reads accurately, with good expression, and at a nice speed (not too fast and not too slow). Improve your youngster's fluency with these ideas.

Listening station

Have your child follow along in a book while she listens to the recorded version. Hearing the speaker

read the book at a steady pace will help her learn to read fluently, too. The first few times she hears a story, ask her to follow along by sliding her finger underneath the words. Once a book becomes familiar, encourage her to read aloud with the recording. Borrow book-and-CD sets from the library, or buy low-cost sets through your school's book-club catalog. *Tip:* Keep the sets in a basket beside a CD player so she can listen any time.

Family newscaster

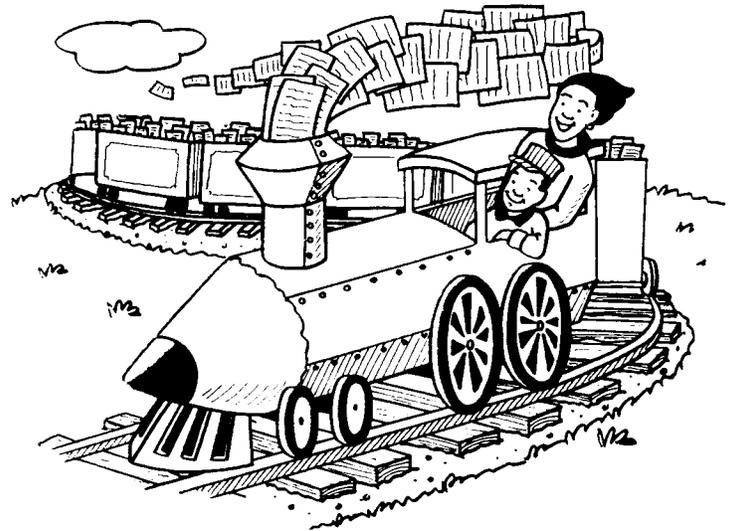
This activity will show your youngster how much fun it can be to use good expression. Post a sheet of paper on the refrigerator, and ask everyone to write down family news for a week ("The county fair opens this weekend," "Aunt Carly is coming to visit"). Give the "news script" to your child, and have her practice reading it in a "newscaster" voice. When she's ready, she can deliver her report to the family. *Idea:* Let her speak into a "microphone" (a paper towel roll covered in foil).

Team reading

Sharing responsibility for reading a book will give your youngster confidence in reading words accurately. Find a story that repeats the same phrase (for instance, *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman). As you read, stop to let your youngster read the refrain ("Are you my mother?"). Since she'll know the words, she can focus on using good expression. You can also alternate reading lines or pages. Or try "echo reading," where you read a line and she repeats it after you.



I'm an Author!



When your child writes his own books, he'll feel like a "real" author. Watch his confidence grow as he builds writing, spelling, and vocabulary skills with these creative suggestions for books.

Counting book

Ask your youngster to find items in your house that come in numbers from 1 through 10. Perhaps you have one refrigerator, two TVs, three clocks, and four kitchen chairs. Have him draw each set of items on separate pieces of paper. Staple them together into a book. Then, help him write a sentence on every page. *Example:* "We have four chairs for four people."

Autobiography



Suggest that your child write about a familiar subject: herself. Give her one sheet of paper for every year of her life, and talk about what could go on each page. For instance, remind her how old she was when she started school, when her baby brother was

born, or when you moved to a new home. She can draw a picture and write a sentence or paragraph about each event in her life.

Fill-in-the-blank story

Your youngster can write his own version of a favorite book with this idea. Read the story aloud to him. Then, write sentences from the book on sheets of paper, leaving blanks for the characters' names and places and objects mentioned. Ask him to fill in the blanks with new names, places, and things. He might use names of his classmates, places he has visited, and items he likes. When he's finished, have him read his version to you. He'll see how much a story changes based on the choices an author makes.

Riddle book

This lift-the-flap book is a clever way for your child to write riddles. Help her cut construction paper into quarters and staple the pieces together along one edge to make a small book. She can make flaps by carefully cutting four smaller squares from another sheet of paper and gluing the top of each square onto a page. Next, have her write a riddle on each flap and the answer underneath. You can help her come up with ideas by having her look around the room, choose an object, and think about what it does. *Example:* "I go up and down. When you look at me, you see outside" ("a window").

Publish it!

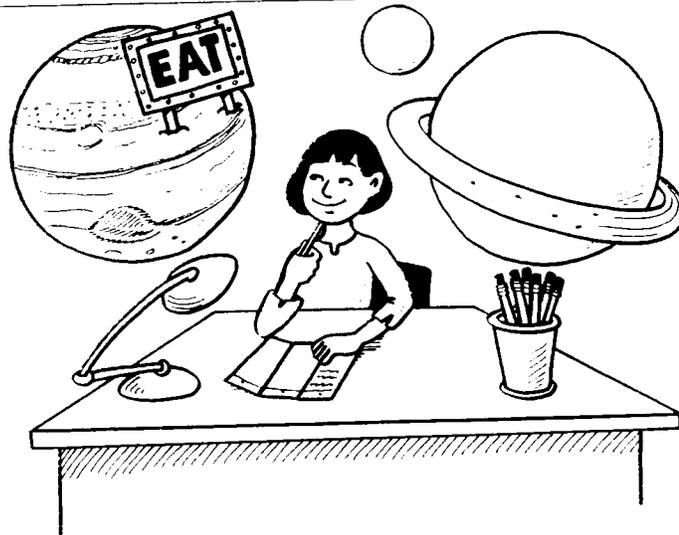
When your youngster completes a writing project, encourage her to share it using one of these ideas:

- Ask her to illustrate a story she has written. Help her frame it and hang it on the wall.
- Add your child's writing to your family's book collection. Let her display homemade books on top of a bookcase. Also, she can hole-punch stories and put them in a binder or slip them into pages of a photo album.
- Have an "author celebration" when she finishes writing a story or book. Choose a special chair where she can sit and read it aloud to your family.
- Help your youngster type a story and e-mail it to a relative or friend. Or she can write it neatly on paper and mail it.



Art project

With this giant book, your child can save his artwork and practice writing captions. Ask him to select several drawings and paintings that he did in school. Cut a few pieces of poster board in half, and have him glue a project on each half (leaving space on the bottom). Staple them together, and let your youngster write about each project on the space below it: "This is a sunset. I used red, yellow, and orange paint."



write something about each one on a separate index card. *Example:* "This leaf was in our front yard. It is red and pointy." Then, put each item and its index card into a separate zipper bag. He can write a title for his book on a card and put that inside a bag, too. Help him seal the bags and staple the left edges together to make a book.

the cover, where she can put a title ("Visit Jupiter!") and draw a picture. Help her write headings for the next four sections: "What to see," "What to do," "Where to stay," and "Where to eat." On those panels, she can draw and label pictures of tourist attractions ("Big Red Spot Museum"), activities ("High-Bounce Frampolines"), lodging ("Helium Hotel"), and restaurants ("The Ice Box"). On the back cover, she might add another illustration and a line encouraging people to visit ("Fly to Jupiter today!").

Tall tale

Read several tall tales to your child. You can find these at the library (try *American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne) or online (www.americanfolklore.net/tt.html). Explain that tall tales exaggerate something, often in a funny way. The story of Paul Bunyan, for instance, tells about a lumberjack who is enormous. Then, have your youngster think of something that would be funny to exaggerate. If she likes to sing, she might write about a girl who sings instead of talking. Or maybe she loves the color pink. She could write a tall tale where everything is pink. *Idea:* Let her write her story on narrow pieces of paper and tape them together end to end. It will be a tall tale!

Travel brochure

What kinds of restaurants would be on Jupiter? Your child gets to decide when she writes her own travel guide to any spot in the universe. After she picks a place, help her fold a sheet of paper into thirds lengthwise. The front panel is

Nature guide

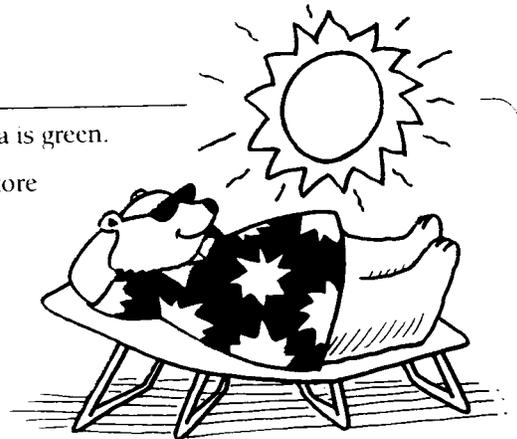
This 3-D book made of zipper bags is a fun introduction to nonfiction writing. Go outside and let your youngster collect a few small objects from the ground (leaf, rock, pinecone, twig). Have him

Story starters

"What should I write about?" When your child asks this question, suggest that he think of interesting or funny first lines he could use. Here are ideas to get him started:

1. One day, I discovered a secret room in my house.
2. Polly was a polar bear who didn't like snow.
3. At noon, we were still waiting for the sun to come up.
4. "It's time for your flying lesson," Mom said.
5. There were 10 seconds left in the big game.
6. I couldn't believe what I saw!

7. My new iguana is green.
8. The grocery store was dark and spooky.
9. "Class, we have a new student," the teacher said.
10. It was the best day of the year.



Books 2010 EDITION Kids Love



Reading with your child is one of the most important things you can do to help her succeed in school. This collection of books is full of laughs, information, and tender moments. Find a comfortable chair, snuggle up, and enjoy them together.

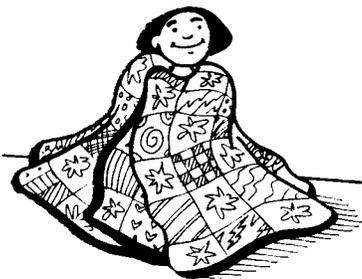
Tacky the Penguin by Helen Lester

Tacky is an odd bird. He wears Hawaiian shirts, has trouble walking in a line, and sings songs like "How Many Toes Does a Fish Have?" However, as his companions Goodly, Angel, Neatly, and Perfect learn, when the penguin hunters come, Tacky's differences make him a good bird to have around. (Available in Spanish.)

The Patchwork Quilt

by Valerie Flourney

Tanya's grandmother starts making a quilt using old clothing, Halloween costumes, and snips of fabric from special outfits the family has outgrown. When Grandma gets sick, Tanya asks her family to help finish the masterpiece. A touching story of family and traditions.



Our Earth by Anne Rockwell

From deserts, oceans, and rain forests to volcanoes, glaciers, and caves, this simple book introduces children to geography and geology. The illustrations will prompt youngsters to ask questions about the planet Earth.

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch

"I'll love you forever/I'll like you for always/As long as I'm living/My baby you'll be." A mother sings this song to her son—when he's a baby, a toddler, and a teenager, and when he grows up and moves away from home. (Available in Spanish.)

Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa by Erica Silverman

This is the first book in a series about Kate and her horse, Cocoa. As the two work on a ranch together, their friendship grows. Kate fluffs up Cocoa's straw and gives him carrots and water at bedtime. And Cocoa helps Kate count cattle and sings her a lullaby when she can't sleep.

A Very Important Day by Maggie Rugg Herold

Families from Mexico, Russia, Vietnam, India, and other countries are busy preparing for an important day—becoming American citizens. In spite of a heavy snowfall that morning, everyone makes it to the courthouse and takes the oath of citizenship. Beautiful watercolors portray different cultures.

Puff, the Magic Dragon by Peter Yarrow and Lenny Lipton

Little Jackie Paper and Puff embark on a magical trip in the land of Honalee, sailing on a boat and meeting royalty and pirates along the way. Children and parents will love this book that's based on the popular song by Peter (the book's author), Paul, and Mary.

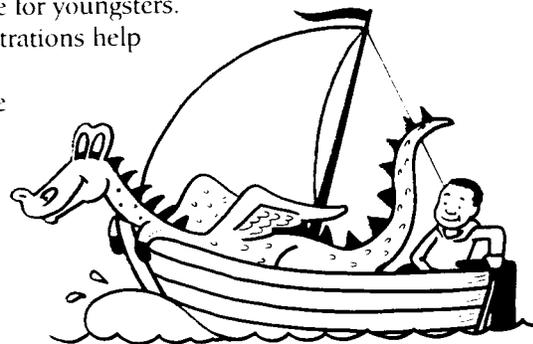
It's Spring!/It's Summer!/It's Fall!/It's Winter!

by Linda Glaser

Pussywillows, rainbows, colorful leaves, snow angels... these four books in the Celebrate the Season series make the seasons come alive for youngsters.

Cut-paper illustrations help tell the stories.

Includes nature activities such as creating a seed mosaic and looking for four-leaf clovers.



Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells
Nora, the middle child in a family of mice, is tired of waiting for her time with Mom and Dad. No matter how much noise she makes, she can't get their attention. But when the clatter stops, the rest of the family wonders what happened to Nora. (Available in Spanish.)

Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein
These hilarious poems have delighted youngsters for years. Read about a little boy who uses a toilet plunger for a hat, and learn how to give an armadillo a bath. Black-and-white drawings add to the book's appeal.

Trout Are Made of Trees by April Pulley Sayre
In this introduction to the food chain, a father and his two children explore a stream together. Beginning with a leaf falling into the water, simple words and collage-like illustrations follow the life cycle of a trout.



Tom by Tomie dePaola
Tommy is named after his grandfather, Tom. The two read, sing, and make up stories together, and Tommy helps his granddad in his butcher shop. Your youngster will enjoy laughing at their antics.

Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks
Monsters eat trees, cars, sharks, stop signs, and even rocket ships. But "Fum, foe, fie, fee, monsters don't eat broccoli." Could the trees they love to eat really be broccoli? A fun story with a lesson in nutrition.

Lost in the Woods by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick
When a baby deer roams around alone, the other animals assume he's lost and take turns watching him until his mother comes back. The book is filled with striking photographs of a tree frog, a red-winged blackbird, and other animals. Children will enjoy the animal-hunt activity at the end.

Johnny Appleseed by Stephen Kellogg
This book tells the story of Johnny Appleseed, combining facts from his real life with legends told about him. Life on the frontier is depicted through beautiful paintings of Native Americans, pioneers, and animals. A map helps children "see" his journey scattering apple seeds throughout the land.



Morris Goes to School by B. Wiseman
This I Can Read book will have your little one rolling with laughter when Morris the Moose starts first grade. Morris has a little trouble at first, but with the help of his teacher and classmates, he learns to read and count.

Mother Goose Numbers on the Loose by Leo and Diane Dillon
The nursery rhymes in this collection all contain numbers, including the well-known "1, 2, Buckle My Shoe" and the less familiar "Gregory Griggs Has 27 Wigs." Your child can practice rhyming while he counts people, animals, wigs, and more.

"What should I read?"

Children who know how to select good books are on their way to becoming lifelong readers. Help your youngster learn how with these ideas:

- When picking books, suggest that she look at the cover and read the description on the back. This will give her an idea of what the book's about. Then, she can flip through the pages and look at the illustrations. Does she think she would enjoy it?
- Tap into her interests. If she's excited about rocks or car racing, have her ask the librarian for help finding books on those subjects.
- Together, think of books your youngster has enjoyed, and make a list of the authors. Help her look for more of their stories at the library or a used bookstore.
- Encourage her to discuss books she likes with her friends—and to ask them what books they like. She'll get suggestions for new books or might even trade favorites with her friends.

