Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2020

Nativity Catholic School

Ms. Maria Kelly, Principal

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***Spend It!*** *(Cinders McLeod)*
Sonny Bunny has a big list of things to buy. But his allowance doesn't stretch very far—especially when he wants a bouncy castle that costs 100 carrots. With a little help from his mom, Sonny learns a lesson about money. This is the first book in the Moneybunny series.

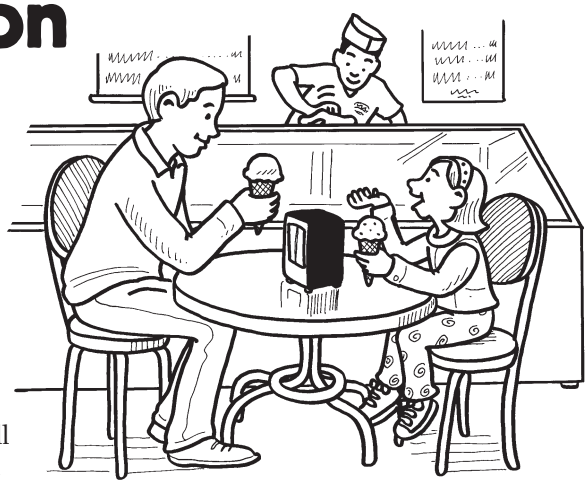
■ ***The World Is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid*** *(Jeanette Winter)*
Young Zaha Hadid loved designing clothes, furniture, and buildings. When she grew up, she wanted to be an architect, but her designs were so unusual that no one wanted to build them. This biography tells how Hadid's persistence helped her realize her dreams.

■ ***Moldylocks and the Three Beards*** *(Noah Z. Jones)*

The Three Beards aren't home when Moldylocks and her friend Princess drop by for a visit. So the girls enjoy some chili, test the chairs, and jump on the beds. What will happen when the Three Beards return? Book one in the Princess Pink series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***Book of Bones: 10 Record-Breaking Animals*** *(Gabrielle Balkan)*
This award-winning nonfiction book invites your child to explore animal skeletons. He'll get answers to questions like "Which creature has the most bones?" and "What has a skeleton but no bones?"

The give and take of conversation



A good conversation is a two-way street that includes speaking and listening—two skills your child needs to succeed in school. Use these ideas to help her practice.

Take turns

Sit on the floor facing your youngster, and roll a ball back and forth as you carry on a conversation. The person with the ball is the speaker, and the other is the listener. Your child will learn to listen and wait for you to roll the ball before it's her turn to talk.

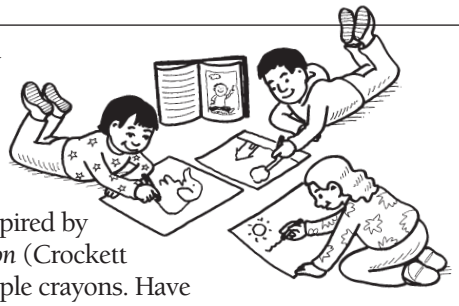
Ask questions

Let your youngster see how questions keep a conversation going and show interest in what the other person said. Make a statement and ask a question. *Example:* "I like cookie dough ice cream. What's your favorite flavor?" Then your child answers your question and asks a related one: "Strawberry. What's your favorite topping?"

Build on

Create a block tower to show your youngster that a conversation involves building on each other's ideas. Lay down a block, and start a discussion. ("Monopoly is a fun game.") Your child puts a block on yours and adds to what you said. ("It is fun, but it takes a long time.") Keep talking and adding to your tower until you run out of things to say. Now your youngster gets to start a new tower—and a new conversation.♥

Throw a book party



Celebrate reading with a party based on a book of your youngster's choice. You'll improve his comprehension by giving him fun ways to connect with the story. Here's how.

● **Play.** Let your child plan an activity inspired by the story. For *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Crockett Johnson), everyone might draw with purple crayons. Have your youngster imagine he's Harold—what might he draw that wasn't in the book?

● **Eat.** What party snacks would go well with *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (Judi Barrett), for example? Ask your child to think of foods mentioned in the story, like meatballs, dill pickles, and cherry tomatoes. If he lived in the town of Chewandswallow, what other foods would he want to rain down?♥

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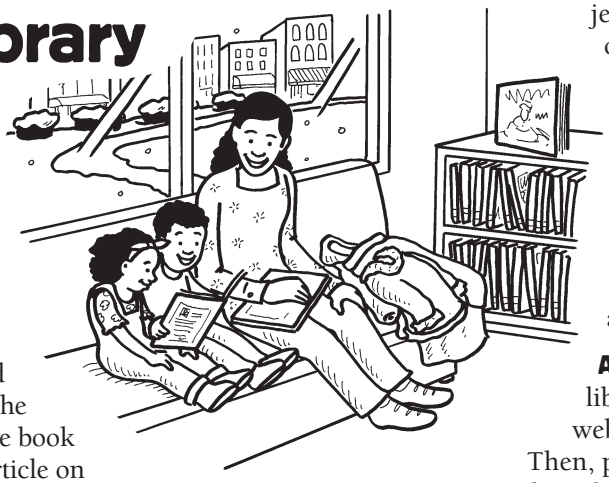
Winter at the library



Imagine a cold winter afternoon. You and your youngster are at the library. It's warm and cozy, and there are books everywhere!

Sound magical? Try these suggestions for making library visits special.

Explore different sections. Have your child name a topic that interests him, such as polar animals or engineering, and find related materials in various parts of the library. Your youngster might get a picture book about a seal family, a magazine with an article on jellyfish, or a biography of an oceanographer.

Enjoy family reading time. Walk around the library to select a perfect reading spot. Perhaps your child will pick a table by a window or a corner with beanbag chairs. You could each read your own book silently, or read aloud quietly to your child.

Attend special events. Ask a librarian or check the library's website for a calendar of events. Then, plan to attend one as a family. Maybe a children's author is coming to share her latest book or there's a family book club you could join.♥

Fun with Words: Move and spell

With this activity, your youngster will "spell" words by doing a series of movements—one for each letter.

Ask your child to write the alphabet down the left side of a piece of paper, one letter per line. Together, think of a different action for each letter. *Examples:* A = act like a chicken, H = hop on one foot, T = touch your toes.

Secretly choose a word from your youngster's spelling list or the dictionary. Spell it for her using the movements instead of the letters. For instance, spell *hat* by hopping on one foot, flapping your arms while squawking, and touching your toes. Can she figure out your word? Now she acts out a word for you to identify.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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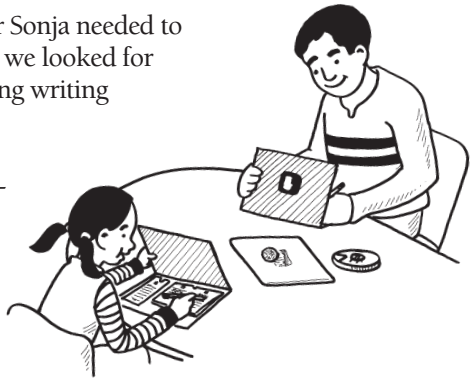
Parent to Parent: Writing + board games = fun!



When my daughter Sonja needed to work on handwriting, we looked for ways to make it fun. Our favorite was adding writing to our weekly family game night.

Some nights, we play games that have writing built in, like Hangman or Scattergories Jr. Other times, we have to use a little creativity. For example, we write down our guesses in Clue Jr., our answers to questions in trivia games, and our requests for cards in Go Fish. We've also made Sonja our official scorekeeper—she gets to write our names and the numbers for our scores.

This has been a great way to improve Sonja's handwriting, and it feels more like play than practice!♥

Q&A: Choose specific words

Q *My son is learning to pick more specific words when he writes stories. How can I help him with this at home?*

A Specific words create pictures in the reader's mind. For example, there are many ways to say *run* (*jog*, *sprint*, *scamper*, *race*). Each has a slightly different meaning, bringing to mind a different image.

After your son writes a rough draft, suggest that he use a highlighter to mark words to replace. If he can't decide, ask questions like "Which breed of dog is that?" or "What kind of house does the family live in?" He could replace *dog* with *poodle* or *mutt*, and *house* with *townhouse* or *cottage*.

Tip: If he can't think of a replacement, look in a thesaurus together. He can read his sentence aloud, substituting each new word to see which one sounds best.♥