

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

Landmark Academy

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Magic School Bus Lost in the Solar System*

Ms. Frizzle blasts her class into the solar system for some out-of-this-world science lessons. One of the Magic School Bus series by Joanna Cole. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Doctor De Soto Goes to Africa*

In this tale by William Steig, the famous mouse dentist travels to



Africa. But before he can repair the tooth of Mudambo the elephant, an unhappy monkey kidnaps him!



■ *The Whingdingdilly*

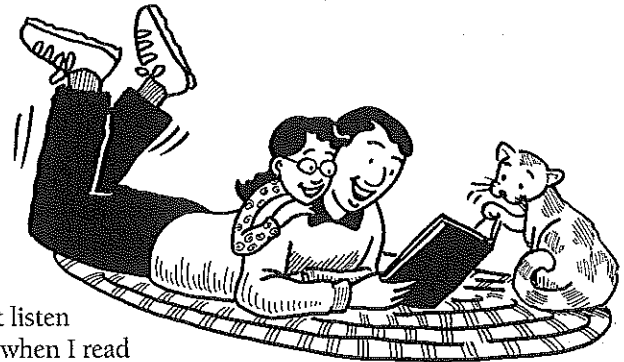
Scamp is bored with his life as a dog. Then Zildy the witch changes him into a Whingdingdilly. Life is anything but boring now—but is Scamp happy? Read this story by Bill Peet to find out.

■ *Babushka's Doll*

"It wasn't that Natasha was a truly naughty child." So begins the story of a little girl who needs some practice learning patience. The lesson begins when Natasha picks up her grandmother's doll. A magical story by Patricia Polacco.



Reading aloud



"I always stumble because I read too fast." "I'm afraid my child won't listen to me." "I was laughed at when I read aloud at school."

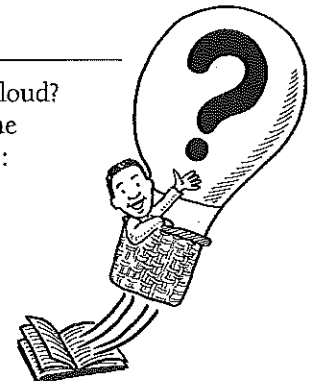
Do you have worries like these when you read aloud? You're not alone. Many parents avoid reading aloud to their kids. However, reading aloud is one of the best ways to help your youngster succeed in school. Keep these tips in mind:

- Everybody makes mistakes. If you make mistakes when reading aloud, your child will learn that it's okay for her to do so, too.
- Practice makes perfect. Find a book that you like and read it aloud by yourself until you feel comfortable.
- Involve your youngster in the story. Have her turn the pages. Or read one line and let her read the next.
- Take your time and don't rush the story. Your child can tell if you're in a hurry. Reading slowly will help you read clearly.
- As you feel more comfortable, try changing your voice to show the characters' feelings—joy, sadness, fear. These variations can make the story more exciting for both of you!
- Remember that you are helping your youngster learn to enjoy reading. Try different types of reading materials, such as comic strips and poetry.
- Above all, try to relax and enjoy the time you're spending with your child. ♥

Understanding stories

Does your child listen actively when you read aloud? It's a key to understanding what's happening in the story. Try these simple tips to build listening skills:

1. Ask your youngster to retell small parts of the story to you. Or ask him questions while you read. *Examples:* "What will happen next?" "Why do you think she did that?" Find the answers to the questions together.
2. After you've read a story together two or three times, skip a word or two. Ask your child to fill in the missing word or words. *Hint:* This works especially well with rhyming stories. ♥



Use what you know

Reading new words

Can your youngster read a word like “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious”? Maybe not! But did you know that your child can use words he already knows to read new words? Here’s how:

■ Start with your youngster’s name. Troy, for example, might have an easier time learning “tr” words such as “train.” You can use the “tr” consonant blend at the



beginning of his name to teach him other blends as well, such as “cr,” “pl,” and “st.”

■ Point out patterns in sight words your child recognizes. *Example:* If your youngster knows “they,” he can learn “then,” “this,” and “that.” “Could,” “would,” and “should” are three common sight words that also share a pattern.

■ Break down syllables in a longer word, such as “yesterday.” Cover the entire word with a small slip of paper. Then, slowly slide the paper to the right to show each syllable one at a time (yes-ter-day). This works especially well for words with several syllables, such as “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious”!♥

Fun with Words

Newspaper learning

With thousands of words in every issue, newspapers are a great way to build your youngster’s skills. Grab a paper, and try these activities.

Matching game

Have your child cut out several photographs and their captions separately. Mix them up. Matching the captions and the photos will improve her reading comprehension.



Scavenger hunt

List items in the newspaper (car ad, crossword puzzle, weather forecast), and ask your youngster to find and circle each one. She’ll build research skills as she looks through the pages.

ABC order

Together, find the names of 5–10 countries, states, and cities in headlines or stories. Let your child copy each one onto an index card and arrange the cards in alphabetical order. This will help her practice spelling and learn about geography.♥

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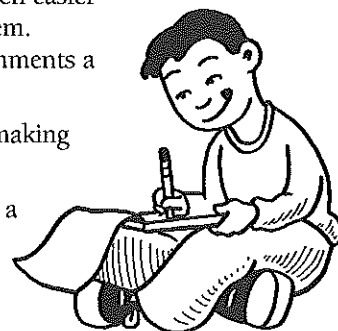
Q&A

Real writing

Q My son doesn’t enjoy writing. He will write a few words, such as his spelling lists. But when it’s time to write a paragraph or a story, he complains. Any ideas?

A Have your son try a few “real” writing tasks. It’s often easier for kids to write about things that have meaning for them. Encourage your child to give those longer writing assignments a try with ideas like these:

- ✎ Have him write what he remembers about the day (making a new friend, playing kickball, having pizza for lunch).
- ✎ Let him choose a cherished toy or animal and write a few sentences describing it. *Example:* “The bunny is soft. He hops fast.”
- ✎ Ask him to write lists of favorite songs, favorite characters in a movie, or ideas for his birthday.♥



Parent to Parent

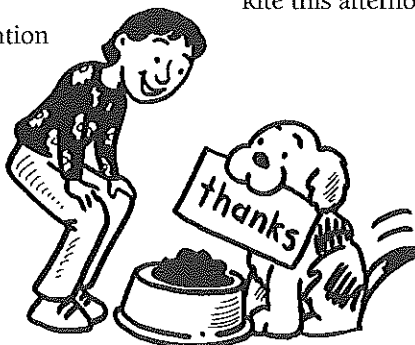
Simple reading practice

I’ve found a way to give my children reading practice—and improve their behavior at the same time. I write short notes to my kids and leave them around the house.

Sometimes I’ll mention my youngsters’ good behavior (“Thanks for helping with the dishes!”) or write reminders (“Please hang me up. Signed, Your towel”). Sometimes the notes are about

not-so-good behavior. (“I was disappointed when you yelled at me. Can we talk about it?”) I make sure to leave notes for treats, too (“Let’s go fly your kite this afternoon!”).

I look for unique places to put the notes, such as on their pillows, in front of the dog’s water bowl, or pinned to the shower curtain. The kids enjoy discovering the notes and reading them aloud.♥



Home & School

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Landmark Academy
School Counselor



SHORT NOTES

Picture this

Good readers form

mental pictures as they read. To improve your child's comprehension, read a book without letting him see it. Then, ask him to guess what the illustrations look like. *Examples:* How are the characters dressed? Is the setting bright or gloomy?

Raising good sports

You can teach your youngster to be a good sport by being one yourself. When you attend a game, clap and cheer for players who try hard, even if they're on the other team. You'll help your youngster learn to be gracious to everyone in the game.

Line them up

Sometimes kids get math problems wrong simply because they haven't lined up the numbers correctly. Try this. Have your child work problems on graph paper, using one box per number. Once she gets used to this system, she'll be able to transfer her lining-up skills to regular paper.

Worth quoting

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Study smarts

Sarah, a fourth-grader, takes a history test at the end of each month. Evan, a first-grader, has a spelling quiz every Friday. Studying is a skill these youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Help your child study effectively with these tips.

Start a habit. Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something she does the evening before a test. For example, she might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After she finishes her regular homework, she can spend a little time reviewing her notes and handouts.

Tackle textbooks. When your child has a chapter to study, have her "preview" it to increase her understanding. She should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words. *Tip:* If she finds a section hard to grasp, she could read a picture book on the



topic. For a science unit on matter, for instance, she could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

Mix it up. If your youngster reviews information in several ways, she'll be more likely to remember it. She might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, she can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that she spell each word or recite each fact aloud.♥

Parent power

There are many ways you can support your child's learning and school. Here are a few ideas:

- Spend a few minutes every evening looking over handouts your youngster brings home. Fill out forms to return the next day.
- Tell your child's teachers if you can help them out at school or home.
- Make sure teachers know you appreciate their efforts. From time to time, send a thank-you note or an e-mail.
- Contact your youngster's teacher immediately if you see a problem. Working together will help your child succeed.
- Attend conferences, parent meetings, and school events regularly.♥



Let's behave!

Did you know that getting your youngsters to behave can be fun? Try these ideas to encourage better behavior—and cut down on everyone's frustration.

Distract. Being playful can stop misbehavior, especially if it's caused by boredom. *Example:* You're stuck inside on a rainy day, and your kids begin to get cranky. Say, "Freeze! Splash time!" Fill the bathtub, cover the floor with towels, and let them play in the water with cups and boats. (*Note:* Never leave children unsupervised near water.) Or call out, "Pillow time,"



and have everyone gather in the family room for a gentle pillow fight.

Celebrate. With your children, pick a few behavior goals (get ready for bed without complaining; say "excuse me" when someone is talking). Then, get out a small jar and some marbles. Tell your youngsters they will earn a marble each time you catch them working toward a goal. When the jar is full, celebrate with an extra story every night for a week.

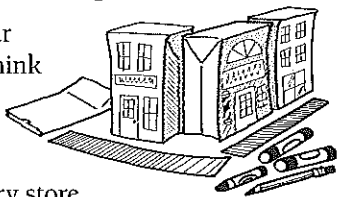
Note: Children often act out to get your attention. Try to spend a few minutes a day playing a game or talking with each child, and you're likely to see better behavior.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Paper bag city

Let your child create her own 3-D community. She'll practice map skills and learn about urban planning as she decides where to put the buildings in her town.

Materials: paper lunch bags, newspapers, crayons or markers, black construction paper, scissors, tape

Have your youngster think of buildings to include, such as a bank, grocery store, school, library, and houses. She can make them by drawing doors, windows, and signs on flat bags (on the side without the flap). For every bag she decorates, have her stuff a second one with newspaper. Then, she should open each decorated bag and slide it over a stuffed bag so her "buildings" will stand up. For the roads, she can cut black construction paper into strips and tape them together.



Finally, have your child lay out her roads and arrange her buildings alongside them to make her very own town.♥

Q & A Bullying: The bystander's role

Q: My child came home from school upset because kids were picking on a classmate and wouldn't let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?



A: Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she has the power to help stop it!

There are several things she can do. She could start by standing up to the bully and saying something like, "That's not nice." Then, she might ask the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.

Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: "Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee."♥

PARENT TO PARENT Thinking games

Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"

My son came up with a game he named "Three Favorites." Someone picks

a category (outfits, movies), and we all tell our top three choices. My daughter thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out and why. The kids especially like this game because there can be more than one "right" answer. For example, when I named "owl," "ostrich," and "eagle," my daughter said, "Ostrich, because it can't fly." My son's answer was, "Owl, because it hunts at night."

Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas.♥



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