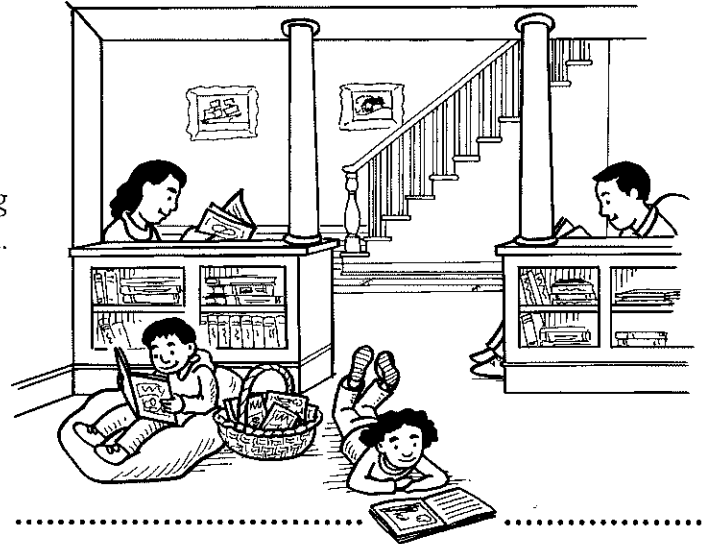


Family Reading Routines

Your child's teacher knows the secrets to turning little ones into readers. She probably fills classroom shelves with inviting books, reads aloud to the children, and sings songs with them. At home, you can use reading routines to boost your youngster's skills, too. Here are some suggestions.



Sing-alongs

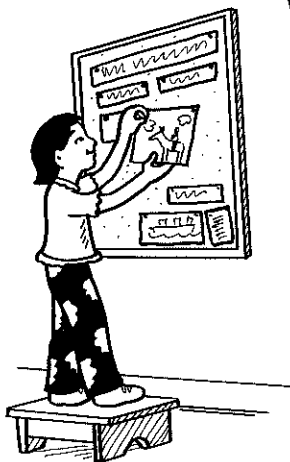
Sing together in the car, during walks, and while you do chores. The rhymes and rhythms of music will help your child notice different sounds in words and make her a better reader. She might like to create silly songs by making up new words for familiar tunes. For example, "I've Been Working on the Railroad" could turn into "I've Been Playing on the Playground." And at the library, look for illustrated songbooks such as *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* (Iza Trapani) or *Five Little Speckled Frogs* (Nikki Smith). You can sing the song with your youngster as she looks at the pictures. After you finish, ask her to point to words that rhyme and tell you which letters they have in common (*frog* and *log* both end with *og*).

Read-aloud time

When you read to your child, he learns to associate books with special time with a loved one. Read to him every day as part of an after-school or a bedtime routine. Some nights you might have him choose the story, and other times you can decide. Don't be surprised if he wants the same book over and over—it's comforting for youngsters to hear familiar stories. Plus, he may discover a new word or notice a detail in the story that he overlooked the first or second (or sixth!) time.

What we're reading

Make a bulletin board called "What Our Family Is Reading." As each person reads a new book, she can write the title and the author's name on a slip of paper and add it to the board. Your child might draw a picture showing what happened in her story. Then, show interest by asking her



questions such as "Which character would you like to be?" or "Which one would you want for a friend?" Be sure to tell her about your book, too.

The nonfiction habit

Does your child like lizards? Is he curious about knights? During each trip to the library, explore the nonfiction section as well as the fiction area. Your youngster will see that nonfiction is fun, and he'll learn to read for information. At home, let him take his time turning the pages and looking at the different features. You might find that he wants to read every fact box and graphic—that's great! He'll delve into the book's subject, and the habit will help him get ready for textbooks when he's older. *Tip:* Biographies are nonfiction, too, and they're usually in their own section of the library.

Reading together

Set aside time each evening for silent family reading—you'll help your youngster see reading as a relaxing activity that she can enjoy all her life. You could read a magazine or novel while your child reads a picture book or chapter book. Or listen to an audio book together (you can find these at the library). Gather around a CD player, and encourage your youngster to follow along in the book while everyone listens to the recording.



continued



for her, such as *The Mini Page* or the comics. Or hand her the sports or arts page, and ask her to find words that she recognizes. She will probably enjoy looking at the pictures, too. Let her describe them to you, and help her read the captions.

A houseful of books

Putting books in every room of your house shows your child how important you think reading is, and it ensures that there's always something available to read. Have your youngster pick out books to keep beside his bed. These might include favorite bedtime stories, chapter books he can read by himself, and volumes of nursery rhymes and poems. Also, place a basket of books near the kitchen table for reading during snack time and another in the family room to enjoy after school or dinner. *Tip:* Just as you might change household decorations with the seasons, switch the books, too. In autumn, for instance, your child can pick out library books about harvest time or football.

Word of the day

When your youngster reads a book, have her try to find a word she doesn't know. Together, look it up in the dictionary. Then, ask her to write the word and its definition on an index card to hang on the refrigerator. Encourage family members to use the word during conversations. As your child posts a new word, she can put the old one in a jar. At the end of the month, take turns pulling words out of the jar for each other to define and use in a sentence.



Author talk

Before you read a book to your child, read the author's name. Then, try to comment on the person's writing. You could say, "This author picked interesting words" or "I wonder why she told the story from the elephant's point of view." Thinking about the choices an author makes can teach your youngster techniques to use in his own writing. *Idea:* Suggest that your child check out several books by the same author. He may notice ways the stories are similar and perhaps discover a favorite author or two.

The daily news

Here's a routine that will make your little one feel like a grown-up reader. Bring the newspaper to the breakfast table, and give your youngster a section that you think is appropriate

Let's spell f-u-n

No matter where you are, it's fun to play word games—and they can make your youngster a better reader. Consider these.

Menu mix-up

At a restaurant, use this tasty activity to encourage your child to read the menu. Challenge each person to invent dishes by mixing and matching ingredients from menu items. Your youngster might make up combinations that he thinks sound yummy (chicken nuggets topped with melted cheese and spaghetti sauce) or silly (sweet potato fries dipped in hot fudge).

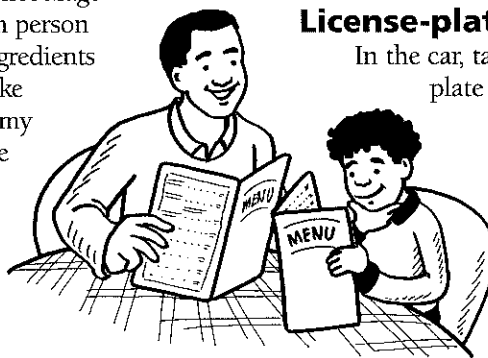
Hoop letters

Your child can practice shooting hoops and spelling with this variation of HORSE. Each person thinks of a five-letter word

(*beach, apple*). Pick a spot to shoot from—if you make the basket, say the first letter in your word (*b*), and then the next player shoots from your spot. If she makes it, she gets to pick a spot and say the first letter in her word (*a*). The winner is the first person to spell her word.

License-plate words

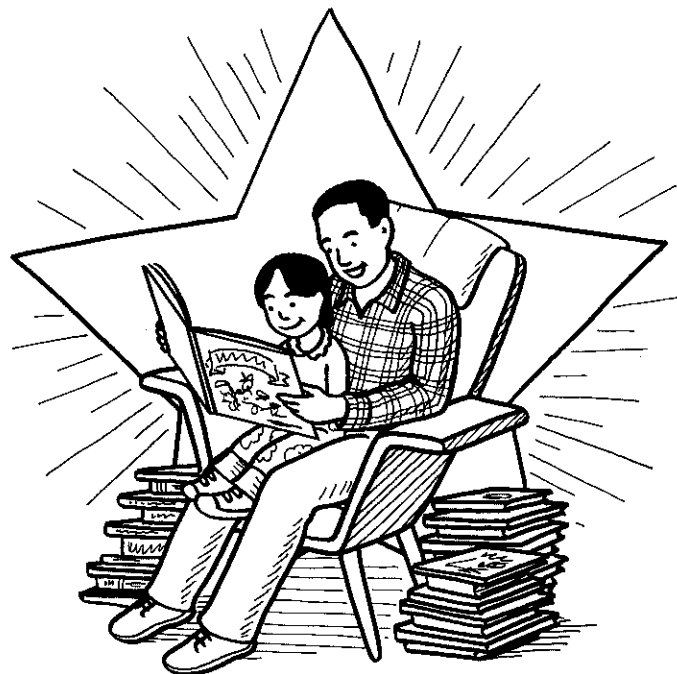
In the car, take turns saying the letters on a license plate you see (REH). Together, think of words that contain all of those letters (*her, there, herb*). *Tip:* If you say a word your youngster doesn't know, build his vocabulary by explaining what it means ("An *herb* is a plant we use to add flavor to our food"). Spot a new license plate, and play again.



Be a Reading Star

Reading a wide variety of books with your youngster can help him become an avid reader. Share this list of titles sure to get him excited!

Then, let him use the star-studded log on the back of this guide to keep track of his reading. Help him write in each title that he reads or that you read aloud to him—he can fill up the whole page to become a reading superstar!



From Head to Toe

Eric Carle's book encourages readers to move along with the animals pictured. On each page, your child will learn how a different animal moves (the giraffe bends its neck, the buffalo raises its shoulders). Watch your youngster wiggle, stomp, bend, and more while he reads! (Also available in Spanish.)



Amazing Grace

The school play is coming, and Grace wants to be Peter Pan. But her classmates think she's wrong for the role because she's African American and a girl. Inspired by her mother and grandmother, Grace learns to go after her dreams in this story by Mary Hoffman.

The Scrambled States of America

What would happen if all the states got together and decided to change places? Author Laurie Keller explores the outcome in this tale that combines humor with geography lessons. Your child will learn facts about the 50 states, including their capitals, nicknames, populations, and sizes.

Gooney Bird Greene

Second-grader Gooney Bird Greene arrives at school with a wild name, a colorful personality, and a whole bunch of "absolutely true" tall tales to tell. Her knack for exaggeration inspires classmates to make up stories of their own in this laugh-out-loud book by Lois Lowry.

Stuck

When Floyd's kite gets stuck in a tree, he throws one thing after another at it to try to get it down. Pretty soon, his kite isn't the only thing that's stuck. Will he ever get his kite back? A silly rhyming story by Oliver Jeffers.



Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie

In 1856, a little girl named Abbie takes care of her family's lighthouse while her father goes for supplies. When a storm keeps him away for four weeks, Abbie courageously keeps the lighthouse lit and protects her home. Peter and Connie Roop's book is based on a true story.

Roscoe Riley Rules #1: Never Glue Your Friends to Chairs

First-grader Roscoe Riley wants to make sure his class's singing performance goes perfectly. But his use of permanent glue to make his fellow students stay in their seats has hilarious results. The first book in Katherine Applegate's Roscoe Riley series.



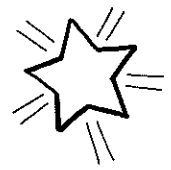
Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

Wilfrid loves the people in the retirement home next door—especially Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper, who has four names like he does. When the little boy hears that Miss Nancy has lost her memory, he's determined to find it. But what is a memory? Everyone has a different opinion in this tale by Mem Fox. (Also available in Spanish.)

continued



My Reading Log



1	_____	_____
	Title	Author
2	_____	_____
	Title	Author
3	_____	_____
	Title	Author
4	_____	_____
	Title	Author
5	_____	_____
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	Title	Author

_____ is a
Name



Budding Writers

Where do stories come from? You can help your young writer turn a seed of an idea into a story in full bloom with this step-by-step guide to the writing process.



Pick a topic

A great story grows from a great idea. That's where *pre-writing* comes in. You can explain this to your youngster as "getting ready to write." Have him try these activities to come up with story topics he likes.



Idea bubbles

On a large sheet of paper, let your child trace around a cup with crayons to make different-colored "bubbles." When he finishes, ask him to think of his favorite things (pet goldfish, baseball). He can write the words or draw a picture for each topic in the bubbles.

Phone-a-friend

Talking to another person may help your youngster come up with a story idea. Have him call a friend or relative for inspiration. A minor incident from the person's day, like getting caught in a downpour, could turn into a nice story for your child.

Newspaper art

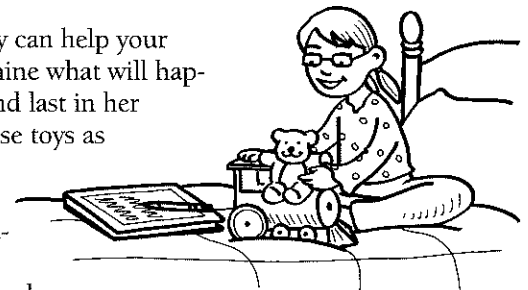
Suggest that your youngster cut pictures from newspapers or magazines. One of them might spark an interesting tale. For example, an airline ad could lead to a story about traveling to the North Pole or the Australian outback.

Write a rough draft

Once your child decides on her topic, the next step is to get her thoughts on paper. Let her use one of these strategies to get her story rolling.

Play acting

Imaginary play can help your youngster determine what will happen first, next, and last in her story. Have her use toys as characters and props to act out the scenes. *Example:* "Once upon a time, there was a bear who loved to ride trains." Offer to write down her story as she tells it, or help her write it when she's finished.



Coloring-book tale

Ask your child to choose a few pages from different coloring books, or print coloring pages from the Internet. She can color the pictures and put the pages in any order she likes. Then, she could use the pictures to write a rough draft. Combining pages from a variety of coloring books will encourage her to make connections among people or items that don't seem similar at first.

Sticker stories

Does your youngster like stickers? Let her use them to make a *rebus* story—a story where pictures replace some words. Give her a few sheets of stickers, like bugs, animals, and stars. She can choose some to include in her story. For instance, she might use bee, flower, and kitten stickers in the following sentence: "The [bee] buzzed to the [flower]. Then the [bee] buzzed to the [kitten]. The [kitten] got scared and ran away."

continued



work three times—once for each kind of mistake. If he spots a misspelled word or a missing period, he can circle it in red ink or mark it with a highlighter so he'll remember to correct it when he rewrites his story.

Publish it

It's fun for your youngster to see her words in print. Let her neatly write a final draft of her story and illustrate it. Or she might type the story on a computer, leaving space for illustrations, and draw pictures after she prints out the pages. Staple the pages together to create an easy homemade book. Or suggest one of these creative ideas for "publishing" her work.

Poster sentences

Have your child count the number of sentences in her story. Then, help her draw lines to divide a poster board into sections—one for each sentence. She can write a sentence in each box and illustrate it. Hang the poster on a wall in her bedroom or in your basement. *Note:* For a longer story, she may need to add another poster board.

Coffee-table book

Make a book jacket by cutting off the front and back of a cereal box. Your youngster can decorate the plain sides with crayons. Next, help her hole-punch the covers and the pages of her story. She could thread ribbon or yarn through the covers and the pages to bind her book. Finally, ask her to leave her book on the coffee table for family members and visitors to read.



Slide show

Take a digital photo of each page of your child's story, and upload the photos to a computer. Or scan the pages using a scanner. She can share her tale by emailing the photos to friends and relatives. If she writes a longer story, take a picture of each page, and help her use a free slideshow program like smilebox.com to create an e-book.

Tip: Some publications print stories, poems, and jokes by young writers. Find a list at katyisd.org/students/Pages/Student_writing.aspx. You can also look for writing contests at pbskids.org/writerscontest/parents-and-teachers.php, and on websites of children's magazines, such as owlkids.com/contests, spidermagkids.com, and askmagkids.com/contest.

Make improvements

After your child finishes his rough draft, it's time for him to try to make it better. Have him read it aloud to see how it sounds. Are there things he wants to change? Encourage him to add details and make revisions with these ideas.

Detail dice

Details make a story more specific and interesting. Suggest that your youngster roll a die three times. Each time, he should add a detail to his story based on the number he rolls. 1: Size or shape ("The *gigantic* ship sailed across the ocean"). 2: Color ("The dog wore a *blue* collar"). 3: Time ("We moved *in the spring*"). 4: Place ("My team played soccer at a field *behind the school*"). 5: Emotion ("She was *sad* when she dropped her ice cream cone"). 6: Anything goes! Let your child add any type of detail he wants.

Repair shop

A pad of sticky notes is a good tool for rearranging a story so it flows logically. If a sentence seems out of place, your youngster can write it on a sticky note, put it in a new spot, and try reading the story with it there. Still doesn't sound right? He could move it and read again. Tell him to leave the note in place to use when writing his final draft.



Last check

Your child's story isn't finished until he has checked spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Ask him to look over his