INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2019

South Bend Community School Corporation

Book Picks

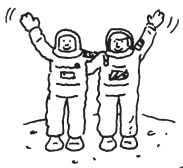
■ ***The Jigsaw Jungle*** *(Kristin Levine)*
Claudia's world changes when her father disappears. Desperate to put her family back together, she collects clues to solve the mystery of why he left home. The story is told through Claudia's scrapbook, which includes transcripts of conversations via email, text, and phone.

■ ***Beatrice Zinker, Upside Down Thinker*** *(Shelley Johannes)*

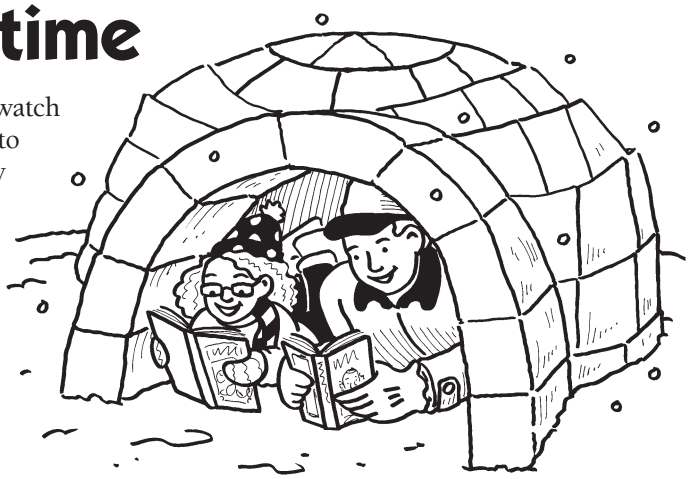
Thinking upside down is how Beatrice dreams up fantastic plans to carry out with her best friend, Lenny. But when Lenny finds a new friend and seems to have forgotten her, Beatrice needs all of her upside-down thinking to get things back on track. Book one in the Beatrice Zinker series.

■ ***The Kid Who Invented the Popsicle and Other Extraordinary Stories Behind Everyday Things*** *(Don L. Wulffson)*
This nonfiction book is full of interesting stories about how familiar toys, foods, and gadgets were invented. Your child will discover that ordinary people tinkered and experimented, leading to carousels, teddy bears, sandwiches, and more.

■ ***Astrotwins: Project Blastoff*** *(Mark Kelly)*
How did Mark Kelly and his twin brother Scott become astronauts? Facts about the twins and about space science are woven into the fictional tale of a group of kids who set out to build a rocket. The first book in the Astrotwins series.



Less screen time, more reading time



Amber would rather watch TV than read. Eric used to read at bedtime, but now he asks to play video games instead.

If your child prefers electronic devices to books, you're not alone. Use these ideas to set reasonable limits and motivate her to read more.

Create rules

Your youngster will be more tempted to pick up a book if screen time isn't an option. Decide how much time she's allowed each day—perhaps less on weeknights than on weekends. She could read to settle down at night rather than watch TV or play video games.

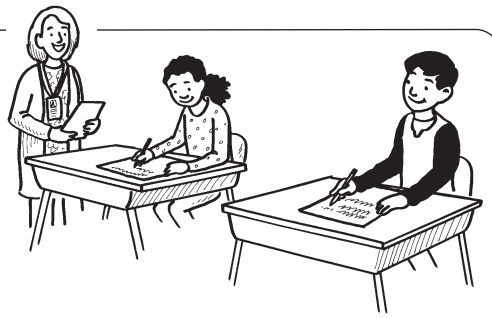
Make reading convenient

Think "out of sight, out of mind." Ask your child to put devices away when screen time is over. On the flip side, keep reading material in plain sight. She might fill a basket with library books and place it in the family room—next to the turned-off TV. And have her leave devices at home and read or listen to audio books in the car or waiting room.

Build on interests

Help your youngster find reading material related to her interests. For example, if her video games feature sports, animals, or outer space, she might enjoy books or magazines on those topics. Also consider having her read books that were made into movies she liked.

Note-taking 101



Taking good notes and using them will help your youngster learn and remember information. Here are suggestions.

Develop shorthand. He might use abbreviations like *w/* (*with*) or *b4* (*before*). He can make up his own and create a key that tells what they mean.

Double-space. Your child could leave a space between each line and use the blank lines to add details or examples as the lesson goes on.

Review. Have your youngster think of notes as a study tool. He might use them to explain the lesson to you or to create a practice quiz for himself.

Sound-it-out strategies

When your youngster comes across a new word in a book, sounding it out is one strategy that can help him keep reading. Share these sound-it-out tips.

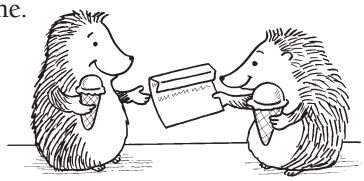
● **Find a part you know.** Your child may spot a familiar portion of a word, such as a vowel pattern or a shorter word within a longer one. Say he comes to the unknown word *feign*. He might think, "*Neigh* and *weigh* have *ei*, and that letter combination makes the *long a* sound. I think that word is pronounced *fayn*."

● **Break it into syllables.** Suggest that your youngster say each syllable separately. If he's not sure how to break up the word, here's a clue: Every syllable contains at least one vowel. For *emancipation*, he might say "e-man-ci-pa-tion" slowly, then read it again smoothly.

Once your child has sounded out a word, it's important that he reread the entire sentence with the word in it. If he can't figure out its meaning from the context, he could ask someone for help or look up the word in a dictionary.

Fun with Words — Write and pass it on!

Writing a story together will get your child's creative juices flowing. Try this back-and-forth writing game.



1. At the top of a sheet of paper, your youngster writes the opening line of a story ("There once was a little hedgehog who loved ice cream") and hands the paper to the person beside her.

2. That player reads the sentence silently, folds the paper to hide it, and writes a sentence that follows logically. ("Her favorite flavor was chocolate-chip cookie dough.")

3. Players continue passing the paper around, folding it so that only the last sentence written is visible.

4. When there's just enough room for one more sentence, the person with the paper writes an ending for the story.

5. Now let your child read the tale aloud.

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q&A — Young adult books?

Q *My daughter wants to read books that I think are too mature for her. She says "everyone" reads them. How should I handle this?*

A Luckily for both of you, there are plenty of books out there that your daughter will enjoy—and that are appropriate for her. Explain to your child that some stories can be confusing or upsetting. And while her friends might read a particular book, it may not be a good match for her maturity level or your family's values.

Ask a librarian to help you find books you and your daughter can agree on. She could suggest stories with popular themes (outdoor adventures, friendship) but without subjects that you might consider too mature (romance, horror).

Parent 2 Parent — Editing makes writing better

My son Kevin was working on an essay recently. He was supposed to write a rough draft, edit it, and write a final copy. But after he checked the spelling, grammar, and punctuation in his draft, he declared it error-free and said he didn't need to edit.

I used to work for a publishing company, so I explained to Kevin that there's more to editing than correcting errors—and that even professional writers edit their work.

Then I had an idea. I suggested that my son pick a paragraph from a favorite book and edit it. He made the writer's description of a castle more vivid and added a funny line of dialogue for the king.

He was surprised that he preferred his version. But I pointed out that if the writer reread the book, she'd almost certainly find changes she'd like to make, too. This helped Kevin understand that writing can often be improved.