

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

May 2020

Birmingham Public Schools

Book Picks

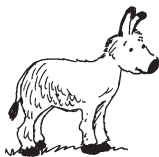
■ *Straight Talk: The Truth About Food* (Stephanie Paris)

This book explores food from many different angles. Charts, diagrams, and detailed photos combine with entertaining facts to help your child learn about and choose nutritious foods. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Saving Winslow* (Sharon Creech)

When Louie's dad brings home a sick baby donkey, Louie takes responsibility for nursing his new buddy Winslow back to health. Then, the tables are turned when Winslow winds up being a comfort to Louie after the boy's older brother leaves home to join the military.



■ *Clang! Ernst Chladni's Sound Experiments* (Darcy Pattison)

In 1806 the scientist Ernst Chladni went on the road with his sound experiments to raise money for his research. In this nonfiction book, learn how Chladni entertained his way through Europe, popularizing science and exploring acoustics along the way.

■ *Home Sweet Motel* (Chris Grabenstein)

P.T. and his friend Gloria want to do everything they can to save P.T.'s family business, the Wonderland Motel. The duo combines P.T.'s creativity and Gloria's business ideas to try to keep the Wonderland open. The first book in the Welcome to Wonderland series.



Reading all summer long

For some kids, summer reading comes naturally. Others need a little motivation. Either way, you can use these tips to make reading a big part of your child's life while school is out.

Take books along

Encourage reading on the go. Help your youngster fill a backpack with things to read. Along with novels, tuck in joke books, brainteasers, and comics. Complete the package with a word search or crossword puzzle book and a pencil. Taking the backpack on the road will make it easy for your child to read and play word games anytime.

Go outside

Find opportunities to read outdoors. Borrow nature books from the library, and take a neighborhood hike. Your child might start a leaf collection or list all the different bugs he can identify using a field guide. Read books about constellations and the solar system, and



stargaze together at night. Your youngster will see that books can help him enjoy and learn about nature.

Plan events

Show your child how reading makes it easier to plan summer fun. He can check newspaper listings for upcoming events or read your town's website to find places to visit. When you go to the pool or community center, have your youngster scan the bulletin boards for interesting flyers. ■

The power of persuasion

Advertising a summer business can help your youngster practice persuasive writing. Share these secrets for creating eye-catching ads:

- Have her look for convincing words in magazine ads and make a list for her business. For example, "ice cold" and "refreshing" are good choices for a lemonade stand.
- Teach your child persuasive techniques, like using logic or appealing to emotions. ("Don't have enough time to play with your cat or guinea pig? My pet-care service provides the attention your pets need!") *Tip:* Help her post flyers around the neighborhood to advertise her business. ■



Writing to communicate

The more your child writes, the more easily her words will flow. Try these activities that will encourage her to communicate with you and other family members on paper or via email.

Start a conversation journal.

Begin by writing a sentence or two in a notebook (“Guess who I saw at the store today”). Pass the journal to your child or leave it in an agreed-upon spot (kitchen counter, coffee table). She can respond (“Was



it one of my teachers?”) and give it back to you. Continue the discussion as long as possible. Encourage her to start your next conversation on a new page.

Have a pen pal. Invite relatives to participate in a family pen-pal exchange. Your youngster could put names in a hat and each month draw one to be her pen pal. In her letters, she can ask about what’s going on in the person’s life (“Are you going to play hockey this year?”) and share her own news (“I have my first piano recital this week”).



Parent & Parent

Play and read

My wife and I recently discovered a way to give our children extra reading practice. We let them take turns choosing a board game and being the official reader.

For example, when we play Trivial Pursuit Family Edition, the reader is in charge of asking the questions. In Apples to Apples, the reader reads the green apple cards aloud.



Playing games together has also inspired us to add to our collection. We shop at yard sales, flea markets, and thrift shops. And when we play a new game, the reader has a big job: reading the rules to the rest of us. Now I look forward to hearing one of the kids shout, “It’s my turn to read!”

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

Think critically about books

Q My son loves reading, but he struggles when he’s asked to do things like “analyze” or “evaluate.” How can I help him with this at home?

A When the teacher asks your child to analyze or evaluate what he reads, she’s asking him to think critically. For instance, he might have to give his opinion and back it up with details from the text. Or he may need to consider an article’s purpose and how the author’s viewpoint influenced his own thinking.

Over the summer, talk with your son about things you’re reading, and encourage him to do the same. Another idea is to suggest that he join a book club at the library. As he discusses books with others, he’ll work on reading critically.



Fun with Words

Bowling for words

This homemade version of bowling will boost your child’s vocabulary and sentence-building skills.

Have your youngster cut 10 strips of masking tape. Then, he can flip through a book, pick 10 random words, and write one on each strip. *Examples: bear, mysterious, garden.* He should stick the strips to the bottoms of half-filled water bottles. Then, let him set up the bottles like bowling pins.

Take turns “bowling” with a tennis ball or softball. Read the words on the pins you knock down, and try to say a sentence that includes as many of the words as possible. (“The bear discovered a mysterious new vegetable growing in his garden.”) Score 1 point for each word you use, and set up the pins for the next player.

After five rounds, the person with the highest score wins. Write new words, and play again!

