

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2014

Dutton Elementary School

Title I

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Back to School, Mallory*

(Laurie Friedman)

Mallory and her music teacher mother are starting at a new school—together.



At first, the little girl is unhappy about being a new student *and* bringing her mom along. Will she change her mind? Part of the Mallory series of chapter books. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *The Boy Who Loved Math: The Improbable Life of Paul Erdos*

(Deborah Heiligman)



The son of two math teachers, Paul loved numbers. In fact, he counted and did math all day long. This biography shows how he grew up to be a famous mathematician and travel around the world to share his knowledge.

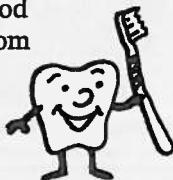
■ *Ball* (Mary Sullivan)

Everyone knows that dogs love to play fetch. This picture book, in which the only word is “ball,” shows an adorable little girl and her dog enjoying the game. The dog’s only problem is how to occupy himself while the girl is at school.

■ *Open Wide: Tooth School Inside*

(Laurie Keller)

If teeth were students, what would their school day be like? In this cute story, the 32 teeth learn about brushing and flossing, have a food fight, and get a visit from the tooth fairy. Your youngster will enjoy the fun lesson on dental hygiene.



A reading-friendly home

Your child learned to talk by listening to people talk. Everywhere he went, he heard words, and he probably repeated lots of them.

Learning to read is kind of like that, too. If your youngster sees people reading and is surrounded by letters, words, and books, he’ll naturally pick up reading skills. Here’s how to make your home a great place to raise a reader.



Words, words everywhere

Stick magnetic letters on your refrigerator, and arrange them to make a different word each day. Use index cards to label objects in your house (“wall,” “chair,” “table”). Seeing the words regularly will help your child learn to read them.

Front and center

Put books on the coffee table, in the car, and on nightstands. Leave the cereal box on the table during breakfast. Place

takeout menus in your youngster’s toy kitchen. He will get the message that reading is part of life, and he’ll always have something to read within arm’s reach.

Readers all around

If your child sees people he loves enjoying books, it can make him want to read, too! And the more he reads, the better he’ll be at it. You could set aside a regular family reading time—say, every evening after the dinner dishes are done. ♥

“What did you read in school today?”

When you ask your child what she did in school today, be sure to ask about what she read, too. Showing interest in school—and in reading—is an important way of helping her succeed. Here’s how:

● Have your youngster tell you the title and author of a book her teacher read aloud or that she read by herself. Encourage her to summarize by asking, “What was it about?” Or help her pick out information and give opinions by saying, “What was your favorite fact in the book?”

● If your child mentions a book she particularly liked, visit the public library to check it out. She’ll take pride in showing you a book she’s familiar with, and reading it again will deepen her understanding. ♥



B is for button

Recognizing letters paves the way for reading and writing. Make learning about the alphabet extra fun for your youngster with these ideas.

A BC "magic"

Here's a "magical" activity that will result in a handy alphabet chart for your child. Help her print the alphabet (uppercase and lowercase) on white paper using a white crayon. Then, let her use watercolors to paint over the letters—they will show up! Ask her to identify the letters as they appear so she can practice naming them.



B utton letters

This ABC activity is cute as a button. Have your youngster glue buttons, beans, or other small objects on index cards to form letters, looking at her chart to make them correctly. This will help her feel the letters' shapes so she learns them more quickly. She could hang her alphabet cards in order on a wall.

C lothespin matchup

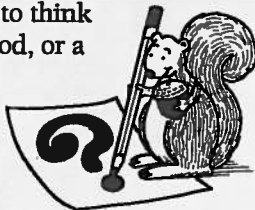
Encourage your child to match uppercase and lowercase letters. First, work together to write the uppercase alphabet around the edge of a paper plate. Then, use a permanent marker to print each lowercase letter on a clothespin. Your youngster can pair them up by clipping the lowercase clothespins on the correct uppercase letters. *Hint:* She can use her alphabet chart as a reference if she gets stuck.♥

Fun with Words

What am I?

Writing is fun with this guessing game that lets your youngster practice using facts.

1. Ask your child to think of an animal, a food, or a place that could be the answer to a "riddle." Then he can work backward to write the riddle itself.



2. Have him write facts about the answer. For *squirrel*, he might list, "Eats nuts, has a bushy tail, can be gray or brown." (Let him dictate facts to you if he isn't writing on his own yet.)

3. Help your youngster use his list to write the riddle: "I eat nuts. I have a bushy tail. I can be gray or brown. What am I?"

4. Now he can read his riddle aloud to someone else. Can that person figure out the answer?

5. Once your child has the hang of it, take turns writing riddles for each other.♥

Q&A

Story time: Listen and draw

Q My son told me his teacher said that good readers "make movies" in their heads as they read. How can I help him do this?

A Your son's teacher is right—*visualizing* is an important strategy for understanding books. Strengthen your son's reading comprehension with this idea.

When you read him a story, give him paper and crayons. As you read, encourage him to draw what he imagines. If his picture doesn't have much detail, ask questions like "What expression does the main character have on his face?" or "What does his house look like?"

Also, have him look at the book for information to help him fill out his drawing. ("Oh, it says the zebra looked unhappy, so I'll give him a sad face.") He'll practice visualizing the scenes so that he does it naturally—even when he's not drawing.♥



Parent to Parent

Family announcements

At my daughter's school, older students read morning announcements over the school's public address system. Caroline wants to be a school "newscaster" when she's older, and in the meantime, she asked if she could make family announcements at home.

I suggested that she write down important information throughout the week and announce it to us before bed on Sundays. Now every week,

she makes notes about things like her brother's upcoming strings concert, an award I won at work, and a reminder for everyone to rinse recyclables before putting them in the bin. Then on Sundays, she reads her notices aloud in her best announcer's voice.

Even if Caroline doesn't get to be a newscaster, she's having fun. Plus, she's getting public speaking practice at home!♥



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Read-aloud favorites

■ *Gaston* (Kelly DiPucchio)

Gaston, a bulldog, and Antoinette, a poodle, get mixed up at birth and are living with the wrong litters. But both dogs fit in with their new families, not even realizing how different they are. This cute story shows the meaning of family.

■ *Eric and Julieta: En el museo/ At the Museum* (Isabel Muñoz)

In this bilingual Spanish and English book, siblings Eric and Julieta go on a field trip to a museum. Julieta believes dragons are real, and her brother can't convince her otherwise. Will Julieta see dragons at the museum after all?



■ *The Way I Feel* (Janan Cain)

Here's a rhyming story that can help your child use words to express his emotions. He's sure to relate to many of the characters on the colorful pages, whether it's the one who feels silly and wears a goofy hat or the one who feels disappointed when a friend cancels a play date.



■ *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? The Story of Food* (Chris Butterworth)

From sandwich bread to apple juice, this book shows how food gets from the farm to the grocery store and into kids' lunchboxes. For example, bread starts as wheat, and apples grow in orchards before being pressed to make juice. Includes tips for healthy eating.



Read, write, and stay active!

Children love to run, jump, and climb. So why not link reading and writing to your youngster's physical activities? She'll get exercise and practice literacy skills at the same time. Try these ideas.

Get inspired

Does your child like to tap dance, swim, or play soccer? Whatever her passion, use it to get her interested in different kinds of books. You could read her a story about a little girl who takes dance classes, a nonfiction book about Olympic swimming, or a biography of a soccer star. She might even discover a different style of dance or a new swim stroke to try.

Keep an activity log

Your youngster can work on writing by tracking her active play. Encourage her to record it in a notebook, including how long she does each activity. For example, you might help her write, "Recess, 20 minutes. Family walk, 30

minutes. Tag, 10 minutes." (Experts recommend 60 minutes of daily exercise.)

Play games

Get index cards, and work together to write instructions for games like badminton or hopscotch. You could read game rules aloud from a book or online. Then, your child can write or dictate them in her own words. Store the cards in a box, and pull one out each day. Help her read the instructions aloud before you play together. ♥



Meet the librarian

A librarian knows a lot about books and is a wonderful resource for little readers. Here are questions she can answer for your child.

Where is it? If your youngster is looking for magazines or audio books, the librarian can steer him in the right direction. She'll help him get comfortable so he can find his own way the next time.

What should I read? A librarian will recommend books your child might enjoy hearing or reading. If he visits frequently, she'll get to know his tastes and suggest books selected just for him.

What's happening? Have your youngster ask for a calendar of events. Together, you can find out about story hours and other fun library events to attend. ♥



What poems are made of

Poetry is full of rhythms, rhymes, and interesting words. Get some volumes of children's poetry, and encourage your youngster to consider what poems are "made of."

● **The perfect word.** Your child can learn about word choice with this idea. Pick a poem (say, "My Brother's Bug" by Jack Prelutsky), and read two lines, leaving out a word. ("My brother's bug was [blank] and plump, / It did not run, it could not



jump.") Ask your child to think of a word to go in the blank that lets him clap a steady rhythm. *Example: Big or cute would work, but not creepy or crawly.* Then, tell him which word the poet chose (*green*). Which does he like better—his word or the poet's? Why?

● **My poetry collection.** Suggest that your youngster collect poems that he likes. He can use colored pencils to copy each one on a piece of paper and illustrate it. He might write rhyming words (*night, bright*) with the same color or circle all the describing words (*yellow, crunchy*). Let him keep his poems in a binder. He'll love reading them with you over and over, and soon he'll be able to read them himself.♥

Fun with Words

Guess my sorting rule

Sorting words can help your child notice all kinds of things about them. She might pay attention to a word's vowels and consonants, its length, or its part of speech, for instance. Play this game to build her knowledge of words.

1. Let her get a favorite book and a stack of index cards. Help her pick at least 10 words from the book (*pizza, cow, love*) and write each one on a separate card.



2. Have your youngster sort the words according to a secret rule. For example, she might arrange them according to how many letters they have or whether they start with a vowel or a consonant. Your job is to guess her rule.

3. Next, you sort the words using a different rule, and she has to figure it out.

4. Then, ask your child to get another book, pick 10 more words, and play again.♥

Parent to Parent

Read nonfiction aloud

My son Shane isn't as interested in hearing me read stories as his sister was at his age. I mentioned this to his teacher, and she suggested that I try reading nonfiction.

Mrs. Rose explained that some children prefer books about "real things." And that's a good thing, she said, since kids are expected to read more and more nonfiction as they get older. She also said many kids love fact books like almanacs, volumes of trivia, and world record books.

The teacher was right. My son enjoys listening to me read from *National Geographic Kids Almanac* and *Time for Kids Big Book of Why*—and he's learning new facts all the time.♥



Q&A

Be a good audience

Q When we go to puppet shows or concerts, my daughter fidgets and talks. How can I help her become a better listener?

A Explain to your daughter that listening is easier if she also watches, so suggest that she keep her eyes on the show.

Encourage her to listen "actively" by thinking of comments or questions she might want to say or ask after the performance. If you go to her brother's band concert, for instance, she could

think of a compliment to give him. Or if you attend a reptile program at a nature center, she can come up with a question to ask the presenter.

At home, talk about what she heard.

You could tell her your favorite instrument and find out which one she liked best. Or ask, "What did you learn about turtles?" She'll get used to being asked questions—and she may listen harder so she's able to answer them and give you her opinions, too!♥



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■ *Big Red Lollipop*

(Rukhsana Khan)

Rubina is excited about going to a birthday party.

But then her

mother insists that her little sister Sana tag along, and Sana eats Rubina's party favor! Later when Sana is invited to a party, she makes it up to Rubina. Based on a true story from the author's childhood.



■ *My Mexico/México mío*

(Tony Johnston)



These poems, printed in both English and Spanish, will help

your youngster picture the beautiful fields and villages of Mexico. She'll also get a taste of daily life there and learn a little about the country's history.

■ *Bones and the Big Yellow Mystery*

(David A. Adler)

A school bus is missing, and young detective Jeffrey Bones is going to help the driver find it. You and your child can put together the clues and try to solve the mystery. The first book in the Bones series.

■ *Dear Deer: A Book of Homophones*

Your youngster will laugh out loud while he learns about homophones—words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings. The zoo in this story is full of homophones, from the horse that's hoarse to the hare with no hair to the moose who ate eight bowls of mousse.



Predicting what comes next

When your child reads, he can strengthen his comprehension by thinking about what might happen later in the story. Encourage him to make predictions with these suggestions.

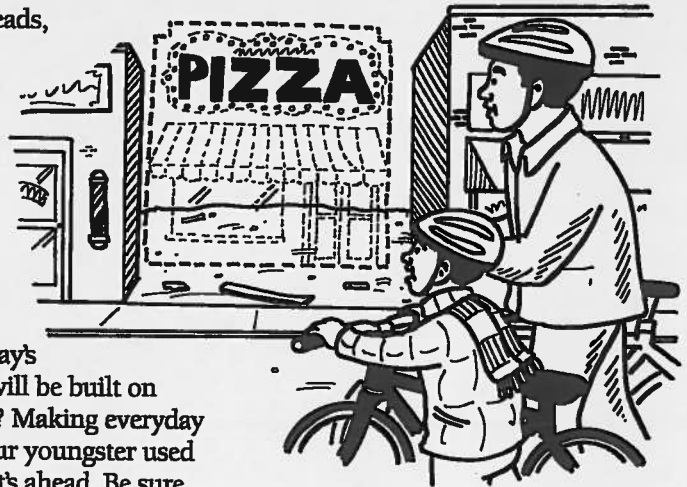
In real life

Who will win Sunday's football game? What will be built on your street's empty lot? Making everyday predictions can get your youngster used to thinking about what's ahead. Be sure to have him back up his guesses. For example, maybe one team has a better record than the other, or perhaps your town could use a pizza parlor.

Your child is allowed to change his prediction at any time! If the team's star quarterback gets hurt, he might decide that he thinks the other team will win. **Tip:** Ask him to find the real outcome. Was his prediction accurate?

In books

While reading, your youngster may make predictions based on evidence in



the book, his own experiences—or both. As you read to him, let him hear you predict what might happen (“I bet a bear is going to eat their food”) and why (“The book said the campground is full of hungry bears,” or “When we went camping, the ranger told us food attracts bears”).

Then, have your child share his predictions and his reasoning. He could let you know if his ideas change as you continue reading. After you finish, let him compare his predictions to what really happened. ♥

Car conversations

What's that outside of the car window? A conversation starter! Turn driving time into talking time to improve your youngster's thinking and language skills. Consider these ideas:

- If you pass something interesting (say, an unusual truck or tree), ask questions that will spark a conversation. *Examples:* “What do you think that truck is used for?” “Where have we seen a tree like that before?”
- Have your child search outside for something she is learning about in school. She may notice leaves changing color or your state flag, for example. Encourage her to tell you what she knows, and use questions to keep the conversation going. (“What does the star on the flag stand for?”) ♥



Fun lists to write

Making a list is an ideal writing opportunity for a beginning writer. Lists let your little one practice spelling, vocabulary, handwriting, and organizing her thoughts. Here are five she might enjoy.

- 1. Stuffed animals.** Suggest that your youngster list her animals and the names she has given them (“Ellie the Elephant,” “Snappy the Crocodile”).
- 2. My favorite things.** Encourage your child to make her own Top 10 list. She could write down the 10 books, foods, or songs she likes best, for instance.



3. Rainy-day activities. This list helps your youngster plan ahead so she always has something fun to do. *Examples:* “Make up a dance,” “Build a fort.” Post her list so she can use it when it rains.

4. Storybook characters. Frog and Toad, Clifford, Peter Pan...how many book characters will your child think of?

Have her write down as many as possible. Then, she can add to her list as she discovers new characters.

5. Ice cream flavors. Your youngster could probably come up with a lot of flavors, which means a lot of writing practice. Her mouth-watering list might include mint chocolate chip, strawberry swirl, and butter pecan. ♥



Hands-on vocabulary

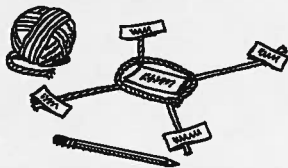
When your youngster brings home vocabulary words, have him use activities like these to learn them.

Illustrated words

Suggest that your child draw a picture to represent a word. The images will stick in his mind and help him remember what the words mean. For example, to illustrate social studies words like *consumer* and *producer*, he might draw a person buying corn at a farm market.

Word web

It's easier to learn new words if your youngster can link them to ones he already knows. Have him write a word he's learning (*cocoon*) on a slip of paper. Then, help him brainstorm related words (*caterpillar*, *butterfly*) and write each one on a separate slip. He could put them in a ring around the main word, talk about how they connect, and lay down pieces of yarn to join the words. Save his web by letting him take a photo of it. ♥

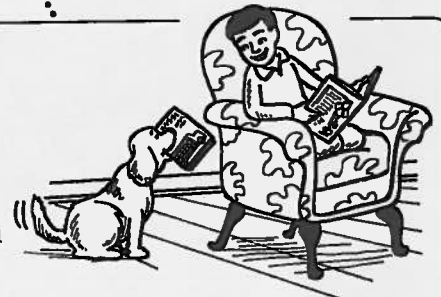


Q&A Read it again?

Q My son likes to read the same books over and over. How can I get him to try new ones?

A Reading the same book repeatedly is actually good for your son. Each time, he'll notice new things about it. For example, a word he didn't know the first time might become clear on the second reading. Or a part he didn't understand before may make sense when he reads the book again.

At the same time, reading new books will expose him to different genres, authors, and information. Try helping him find books that are similar to those he already likes. If he can't get enough of *Click, Clack, Moo* (Doreen Cronin), look for other funny animal stories, such as *Bark, George* (Jules Feiffer) or *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* (Mo Willems). He may find new favorites that he likes just as much as the ones he reads now. ♥



Parent to Parent

A reading volunteer

After I went back to work this year, I really missed volunteering to read aloud in my daughter's class. I mentioned this to her teacher, and she thought of a way I could still “read” to the kids.

Mrs. Ross wants to build a classroom collection of audio books, so she is sending home books with my daughter, along with an MP3 player and a microphone. My job is to record myself reading each one. It doesn't

take me any extra time because I make the recordings while I'm reading the books to my child at bedtime.

I like helping my daughter's school—and I love knowing that she gets to hear my voice reading aloud when she's in class.

Now she has asked me to make recordings of her own books so she can listen to them at home, too! ♥



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■ *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* (Jen Bryant)

As a little boy, Horace made art with anything he could find, like left-over house paint and scraps of charcoal.

This picture-book biography shows how he grew up to become a famous painter without ever taking art lessons. A true story about perseverance.



■ *Pinduli* (Janell Cannon)

A little hyena named Pinduli is teased about her looks by the other animals in the African savanna. Pinduli tries to hide her flaws and ends up accidentally teaching the zebra, the lion, the wild dogs—and herself—an important lesson about bullying.

■ *We the Kids* (David Catrow)

This book illustrates the preamble to the U.S. Constitution with pictures of three kids and a dog camping in the backyard. Using the ideas in the preamble, the campers follow rules and stay safe. An introduction to the Constitution that young readers can understand.



■ *I Wish I Had Glasses Like Rosa* (Deborah Hembrook and Kathryn Helig)

Glasses are cool!

That's the message in this story about friends Abby and Rosa. Abby thinks Rosa looks beautiful in her glasses, so she finds ways to wear glasses, too—from safety glasses for building a birdhouse to goggles at the pool and even "glasses" she makes out of clay. (Also available in Spanish.)

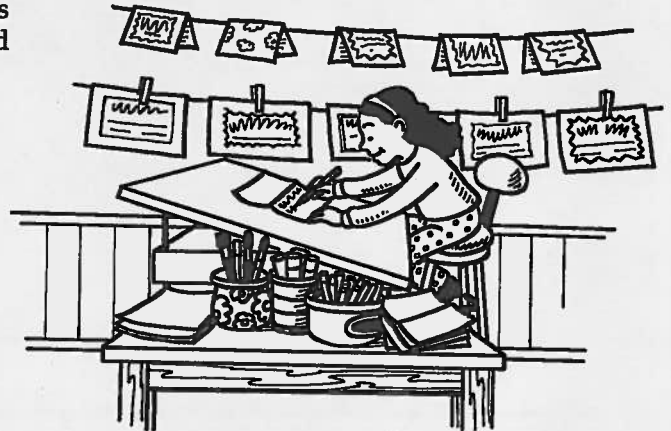


Design and write

Playing "print shop" is a great way for your child to practice writing. Try these ideas to encourage her to write for different purposes.

Greeting cards

Suggest that your youngster make a supply of birthday and holiday cards to give friends and relatives throughout the year. On the front of each, she can write a greeting ("Happy Birthday," "Happy New Year") and draw a picture. Then, help her write a sentence or verse inside ("I hope your birthday is fun!"). A more experienced writer might include a rhyming verse: "Roses are red, violets are blue. I'm excited to spend the New Year with you."



Award certificates

Let your child make certificates in honor of family members' accomplishments. Getting a promotion, completing a 5K race, performing a violin solo...all of these are cause for celebration. Write

"Certificate of Achievement" at the top of a piece of paper. Your youngster can fill in the person's name, the date, and the accomplishment. She could illustrate the award and hand it out at dinner.

Signs

Ask your child to create signs to hang around the house. She can start with her bedroom door ("Emma's Room") and your door ("Mom and Dad's room"). Next, she might post "Cool stuff" on the refrigerator, "Knock, please" on the bathroom door, and "Children playing" in the family room. ♥

Share reading

Has your youngster ever read aloud to a baby? How about to a goldfish? Consider these suggestions to help him gain confidence—and have fun—reading out loud.

● **Younger kids.** If you attend a family gathering, encourage your child to take along favorite books. Younger cousins and siblings will love story time led by your youngster.

● **Animals.** Your child will get a kick out of reading to his pet, whether it's a dog, cat, guinea pig, or goldfish. If he doesn't have a pet, he might be able to read to one at a relative's or neighbor's home. Also, some animal shelters and libraries have programs where kids can read to dogs or cats. ♥



Supporting a new reader

It's exciting when your child first begins to read. In addition to reading with him, here are three things you can do to help him make progress.

1. Talk about reading. Tell your youngster what you read today, whether it was a memo for work, instructions for a sewing project, or a magazine for pleasure. This shows him that reading is something grown-ups do, too.



2. Team up with teachers. Kids succeed with reading when parents and teachers work together. Find out whether your child is reading at the level his teacher expects this time of year. If he's below where he should be, ask what you could do at home to help.

3. Read, then write. Writing will help your youngster with reading, and vice

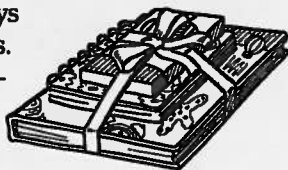
versa. After he reads a book that he likes, suggest that he write and draw about his favorite part. You might help by giving him a fill-in-the-blank sentence to complete: "My favorite part was _____ because _____." ♥

Q&A Gifts that teach



Q A few relatives have asked for suggestions of gifts to give my daughter. Can you recommend gifts that would help her with reading and writing?

A Books always make great gifts. You could mention an author or a series that your daughter enjoys.



Other ideas include a picture dictionary for looking up spellings and definitions, journals and colorful pens to inspire writing, and board or card games that teach her about words. Small, portable family games are a good bet, too. They might try Spot It! Alphabet, Pairs in Pears, or Scrabble Slam. There are also board games based on favorite books, such as Good-night Moon Game and The Very Hungry Caterpillar Game.

Finally, toys that encourage creativity and language can help her read and write. Consider asking relatives for items like finger puppets, flannel board sets, and storytelling dice. ♥

Fun with Words

All about alliteration

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." This familiar tongue twister is an example of *alliteration*—all of the words begin with the same sound. Encourage your youngster to make up her own tongue twisters. She'll practice hearing beginning sounds in words and pronouncing words carefully.

First, have her pick a name—she'll probably want to start with her own. So Beth could use B. Then, ask her to think of a verb, or an action word (*bouncing*), and related words (*basketball*, *basket*). Together, arrange the words to make a tongue twister: "Beth bounces basketballs beneath the basket." Who can say it the most times without messing up?

After she finishes laughing, let your child choose another name and make up another silly tongue twister! ♥



Parent to Parent

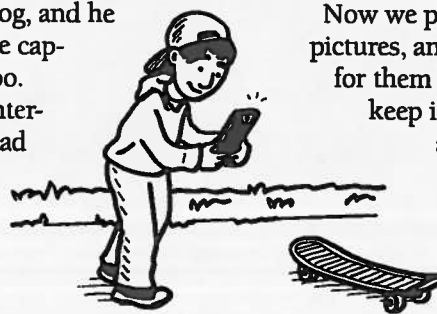
Take a picture, write a caption

My son, Lionel, loves to take pictures with my phone. One day, he saw me type a caption for a picture I posted on my blog, and he said he wanted to write captions for his photos, too.

I was glad he was interested in writing, so I had a few of his pictures printed at a local store. I let Lionel glue each photo on a sheet of paper, and

then he wrote a caption beneath it. For the one showing our yard after a big snowstorm, he wrote, "We got four feet of snow!"

Now we print Lionel's favorite pictures, and he writes captions for them in a photo album. We keep it under our coffee table along with our other albums—Lionel is proud to show his pictures and his writing to friends who visit. ♥



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