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www.TeachingK-8.com

The Parent Connection

A Monthly Newsletter for Parents

"Read It Again!"

Even if you are tired of it

Children are known for latching onto a book and wanting to hear it read over and over again, until you don't even need to turn the pages to see the words anymore. Why is that? Actually, it is for some of the same reasons that adults like to see the same movies several times: We see different things each time. The first time a child hears a story, the plot line has his or her attention. But the next time, a particular character or action may be noticed. Perhaps the 11th time you read the story, your child will notice something in a picture that he or she didn't see before and will want you to explain it.

Repeated readings and literacy

Children need to hear new vocabulary words as many as 14 times before that word is familiar enough to become part of his or her working vocabulary. Hearing you use new words in the context of the story will help them to make sense. Repetition of a story will also help a child understand how the structure of the story works. What comes first? What reaction does that cause?

Help Put on a Show

Many students get an opportunity to take part in a musical production of some kind throughout the year. How can parents help? You can now receive a FREE booklet of the "A through Z" process of staging, auditions, publicity, etc. Write to: Music Theatre International "Family Matters Give-Away," 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019.

After your child gets comfortable with a story, read a section and then stop and ask your child to fill in the next section. Or, try to decide together what might happen if the story were to continue beyond its current ending. Favorite books and stories can be acted out or illustrated.

Take time to introduce your children to new stories and books all the time, but don't fuss when the old favorite is asked for again. Think of it as a comfort story and enjoy your time together.

Anti-Bullying Programs

Can they actually endanger your school?

Parents in Anchorage, AK, were awarded \$4.5 million last year in a lawsuit against their son's school. The parents asserted that the school's anti-bullying policy did not protect their son, whose attempted suicide – or "bullycide," as bullying-related suicides are being called – resulted in severe brain damage. There are many other lawsuits going on right now around the country where parents are winning judgements of hundreds of thousands of dollars because a child had been bullied in school. While an anti-bullying program will not be able to stop bullying from taking place, it will may bankrupt a school district.

Victim to victor

Izzy Kalman, a school psychologist and expert on the topic of bullying, warns
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Books to Read Aloud

There are many wonderful holiday books just waiting to be shared.

Horrible Harry and the Holiday by Suzy Kline (Puffin, 2004). Harry and his classmates study many different traditions of this time of year.

The First Thanksgiving Feast by Joan Anderson (Clarion, 1984). This book includes photographs from Plymouth Plantation.

The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski (Candlewick, 1995). A redemption tale of a Scrooge-like wood carver.

Santa's Book of Names by David McPhail (Little, Brown, 1997). Edward must learn to read to help Santa deliver his presents.

Lots of Latkes: A Hanukkah Story by Sandy Lanton (Kar-Ben, 2003). A lighthearted, educational K-3 book.

The Kwanzaa Contest by Miriam Moore and Penny Taylor (Hyperion, 1996). Kids compete for a prize by sharing African stories and crafts.

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant (Atheneum, 2001) This story warmly tells what can happen at any gathering of family members.

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schools that bullying is not the real problem. Bullying occurs anywhere there are people. The real problem is the flip side of bullying, the “victim mentality.” The only reliable way to stop bullying is to teach our kids how to stop thinking like victims, he claims. In his book *Bullies to Buddies* (Wisdom Pages, 2005), Kalman teaches how to, “without anyone else’s help and without getting anyone in trouble,” handle things like name-calling, physical attacks, rumors, racial insults and insults about disabilities “not by beating [bullies] up or sending them to jail, but by turning them into buddies.”

Protecting your school

Find out if your school has an anti-bullying policy. How did it come about? Should it be amended or eliminated? Work with your district guidance department to find out what kind of training is being undertaken for your student in dealing with bullies.

Review Izzy Kalman’s book and website, www.bullies2buddies.com, with your children. Do they exhibit bullying behavior? Could they be demoralized by a bully? What actions will they take if bullied? Talk with them about your own experiences as a kid with this subject, as well as how you handle grown-up forms of bullying and rudeness. Like every other part of their lives, your child will need to learn to make his or her own decisions on handling this topic.

How’s Your Holiday Plan?

Things to keep in mind...

Take a deep breath at the beginning of November and realize that you are still in control of your own life. However, some serious and creative planning may be called for to keep it that way for the next two months. Holidays can be a blessing or a

Helpful Parent Sites

- Games Just for Kindergartners can be found at www.wacona.com/kindergartengames/kindergartengames.html
- Current events for students can be found at www.nytimes.com/learning/students/index.html
- Kids’ Turn helps kids working through divorce: www.kidsturn.org/index.html
- Learn how to correctly avoid injury with the Beginner Course – Your First Snowboarding Lesson at www.abc-of-snowboarding.com/learninghow.asp

bane, especially if you have school-aged children. Realistically, you cannot attend all of the holiday parties, functions, dinners, plays, programs and reunions that will come your way. Rather than running from one concert to another until everyone is sick, how are you going to decide which to attend and which to opt out of?

Tonight, after the kids are in bed and asleep, watch them for awhile. Calculate how long they will be living with you before going to college. Think about what kind of memories you want to build right now, that both you and they will carry forever.

Building memories

Making this a conscious act may take time and forethought, but, wow, it’s worth it. Do you want your children to remember your parents well? Then plan quality time with them. Are books and reading important to you? Then build that into the holiday with trips to the library or bookstore and longer evenings of reading together in front of the fireplace when there isn’t homework to be done. Do you have your own memories of making holiday cookies? cards? Creating these items together helps your kids learn the traditions that are important to your family. Teach them that the holidays are the best time to slow down, celebrate what counts and wrap your arms around each other.

Skill-Building at Home

Many skills can be practiced at home often since they are skills used in everyday life.

Read Everyday. Set aside a special time every day to read, uninterrupted, for at least 15 minutes. Young children can be read to or can read one page while you read the next. Create a fun setting, like a tent pitched inside.

What Time? Children should practice telling time on clock faces as well as on digital clocks. Make practice clocks out of paper plates, a brad and some arrows. Talk about how long until something happens and then for how long it will last.

Fine Motor Coordination can be developed through many crafts that include cutting, coloring, tracing and gluing. Help kids make their own holiday cards and decorations.

Patterns can be created using pieces of yarn and bags of colored pasta or beads to make necklaces for friends, babysitters and aunts.

Skit Time. Use dress-up clothes and act out parts of favorite stories or make puppets out of socks and hide behind the kitchen table while acting out the story.

Newscasters can give a concise report of the day at school in a fun way while at the supper table or in the car on the way to sports practice. Listen to the “news” and help them learn to summarize. ↓