

Cook's Corner

February

A Language-rich Home

Good News: Strong language skills can make your youngster a better reader, writer, and all around student.

Great News: You can build those skills just by talking to your child. Try these ideas:

- ♥ Narrate everyday activities like driving or cooking. Hearing unfamiliar words in conversation will help your child understand words in books (“Please hand me the colander so I can drain the spaghetti”). **TIP:** If he/she doesn’t know the word, explain: “This is a colander. Water drains through the holes.”
- ♥ Encourage your child to join family conversations. Ask him questions to help him expand his answers. (“Why do you think so?” “What else happened?”) He/she will learn to talk about events and give their opinions.

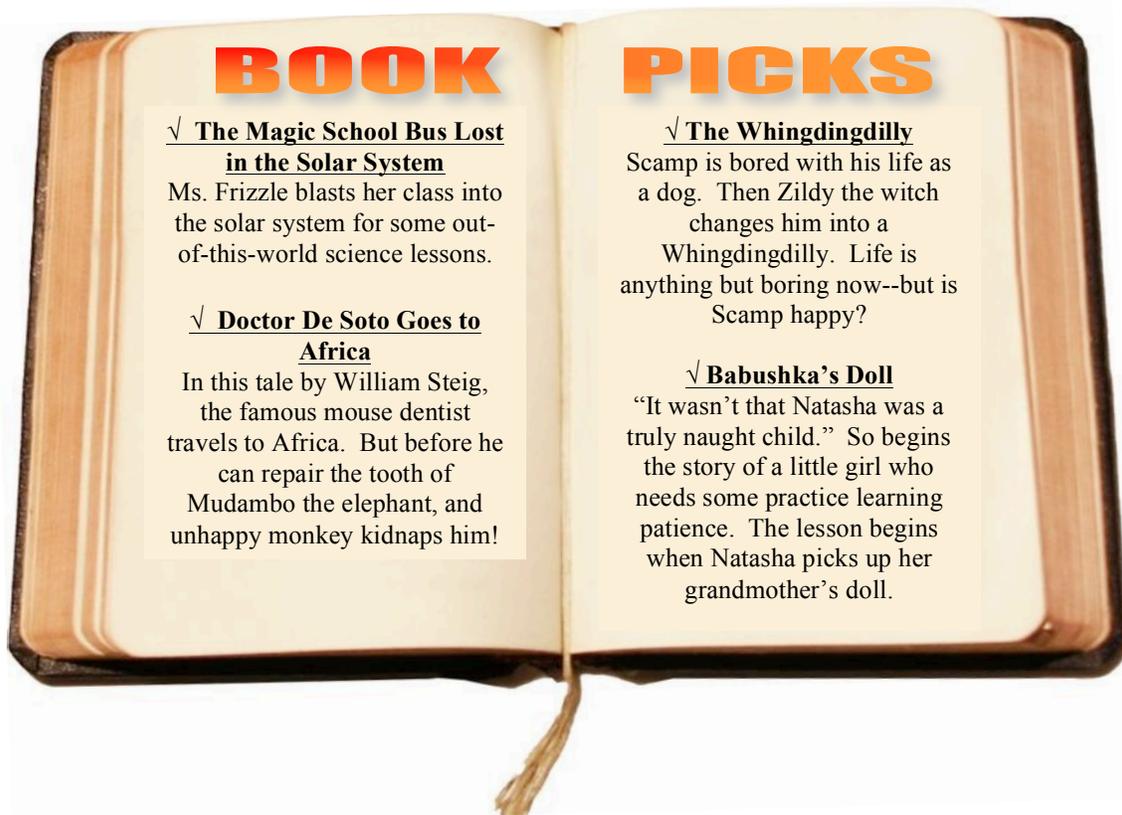
Story Time:

Want to spend time with your child, build reading skills, and help them learn? What parent doesn’t? You can do all three when you read aloud to him/her. See the tips below to find ways to do all three:



- ♥ **Read Regularly:** Try to read to your child every day. You might aim for 10-15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to the day. Tuck read-alouds into the time when dinner is in the oven. Or curl up together with a book when you get home from work. Being a parent can be stressful and there are a ton of things to do but taking a few minutes everyday will establish a love of reading in your child for a lifetime.
- ♥ **Take Turns Choosing Books:** Your youngster may want to hear old favorites again and again. Use your turn to introduce new titles and a variety of genres (nonfiction, poetry, historical fiction...).
- ♥ **Let Him/Her Participate:** Ask your child to turn the pages while your read. Also, they can finish sentences that rhyme or fill in words they know. Go slowly so he/she has time to understand the story and look at the illustrations. They’ll enjoy read-aloud time more if they play an active role.
- ♥ **Be Playful:** You can use different voices for different characters (a high, squeaky voice for a chicken or a deep, booming voice for a horse). Substitute your youngster’s name for the main character’s name, and use family members’ names for other characters.

Note: You don’t have to be an expert reader--your child will love it when you read aloud because it’s you! *The time spent with you is precious!*



BOOK

✓ The Magic School Bus Lost in the Solar System

Ms. Frizzle blasts her class into the solar system for some out-of-this-world science lessons.

✓ Doctor De Soto Goes to Africa

In this tale by William Steig, the famous mouse dentist travels to Africa. But before he can repair the tooth of Mudambo the elephant, and unhappy monkey kidnaps him!

PICKS

✓ The Whingdingdilly

Scamp is bored with his life as a dog. Then Zildy the witch changes him into a Whingdingdilly. Life is anything but boring now--but is Scamp happy?

✓ Babushka's Doll

"It wasn't that Natasha was a truly naught child." So begins the story of a little girl who needs some practice learning patience. The lesson begins when Natasha picks up her grandmother's doll.

NEWSPAPER LEARNING

With thousands of words in every issue, newspapers are a great way to build your youngster's skills. Grab a paper, and try these activities.

- ♥ **Matching Game:** Have your child cut out several photographs and their captions separately. Mix them up. Matching the captions and the photos will improve her reading comprehension.
- ♥ **Scavenger Hunt:** List items in the newspaper (car ad, crossword puzzle, weather forecast), and ask your youngster to find and circle each one. They'll build research skills as he/she looks through the pages.
- ♥ **ABC Order:** Together, find the names of 5-10 countries, states, and cities in the headlines or stories. Let your child copy each one onto an index card and arrange the cards in alphabetical order. This will help them practice spelling and learn about geography.

