

August/September 2016  
**Reading Connection**



Providing parents with reading strategies, resources, and facts to support reading at home

**SCHOLASTIC**  
**Parent & Child**

**Boost Your Child's Reading Confidence** By Margaret Hargrove

Some kids take to ~~curious~~ **George** to trouble. But even for them, learning to read can be pretty daunting. After all, putting letters and sounds together and deciphering their meaning is tough.

**1. Make it a game.** Cuddling over a book shows your child that you're his biggest fan. But it's hard not to step in quickly when he struggles. What to do instead? Talk to him about the story to help him work it out, says Richard Gentry, *Reading Confidence Readers*. Discuss the pictures, hunt for words he knows, or ask him if the story reminds him of an event that's happened to him. Also help your child pinpoint where he's gone wrong — see if he can spot the little word inside the larger one ("at" inside "hat").

**2. Go to the dog(s).** Sounds crazy, but reading to a dog can help boost a child's skills. How so? Because dogs are nonjudgmental — they can't criticize and they can't correct — so kids feel safe reading aloud to them. If you don't have a dog, ask a friend if you and your child can dog-sit or see if your local library offers a program where kids can read to specially trained therapy dogs. "Kids learn best by teaching someone else," says Michele Borba, Ed.D., author of *Lutions*. "So whether they read to the puppy, the guinea pig, or Grandma over Skype, the unconditional positive feedback they receive will make them feel better about themselves." (Same goes for baby sibs! See our picks here for books they'll both love.)

**3. Get crafty.** Add a few books you make together to the reading rotation, suggests Gentry. Your DIY book can be about trucks, pets, or another interest. Start with a few words on a page ("My cat is in the basket"), a favorite photo on each page, and a simple title (My Animal Book). You can even publish it on websites like [Storyjumper.com](http://Storyjumper.com) (hardcovers start at \$25).

How does homemade hone fluency? Reading about the familiar is fun, says Gentry. Plus, repetition builds up the brain's reading circuitry. "Every time you point to a word in the story, it reinforces the connection between symbols on the page and the sound and meaning of the word." For instance, once your child recognizes the word bunny, and you show her that the b makes a buh sound, look for other words that begin the same way with the same sound to help build up her sight words.

**4. Shorten sessions.** New readers can easily get overwhelmed. To figure out how long your child can last, compare his attention span when he does similar activities, like coloring, says Borba. Once you've got a clue, use a timer to gradually lengthen the session so that your child is reading for longer and longer stretches. "It's like gently stretching a rubber band without snapping it," she adds. "If your child knows he only has 15 minutes to read, he'll be more focused and engaged — and the spurts will be more productive."

**5. Look past books.** No need to limit reading adventures to books — trips to the grocery store can be great teaching experiences, says Borba. Your kiddo can create a shopping list and find those items at the store. Little sports fans can use trading cards to discover more about favorite players. "And don't overlook the obvious, like word games on the back of the cereal box. Kids won't even realize that they're learning while they eat," says Borba.

## Let Us Introduce Ourselves!

We are Fairfield's Reading Specialists. We work with students in grades K-3 to help improve their literacy skills! It is our goal to promote a love of literacy amongst all students and to help families foster that love and growth at home as well. Each month we will create a "Reading Connection" newsletter as a resource to families. Please don't hesitate to contact either one of us throughout the year!



### **Ms. Corryn Smith**

I am wild about books and reading! It is always my goal to encourage my students to love reading as much as I do. This is my 4th year as a Reading Specialist at Fairfield. Previously, I taught 2nd grade for 7 years, 3rd grade for one, was a Reading Specialist at Union, and worked as a State test tutor.

My many experiences have helped me better understand how students' reading develops. I have been able to use this as I work with the K-3 students here. Remember the most important tool you can give your child to make them a success is the joy of reading.

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### **Mrs. Laura Keifer**

Reading is one of my favorite hobbies and I feel very lucky that my job gives me the opportunity to share my love of reading and books with children. This is my 4th year as a Reading Specialist at Fairfield. Before that I taught 1st Grade for 5 years and 2nd grade for 5 years too! Through my teaching experience and professional development, I've learned a lot about helping young readers grow. I believe reading is the foundation for learning and I love helping students become more confident and enthusiastic readers!

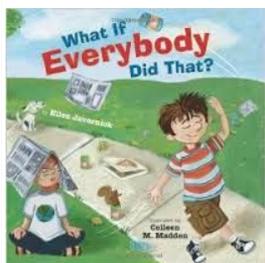
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### **Book of the Month:**

#### What if Everybody Did That?

By Ellen Javernick



This book helps demonstrate the importance of many behavioral rules by depicting what would happen if everyone did it. Many things may seem like they aren't a big deal until you imagine everyone doing it. This is a great book to read and discuss

with your children at the beginning of the school year, as they are learning about appropriate school behavior.

### **Technology Connection**

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Keifer both have websites that are designed to be helpful resources for parents and students. Check them out!

[keiferreading.weebly.com](http://keiferreading.weebly.com)

[digintoreading.weebly.com](http://digintoreading.weebly.com)