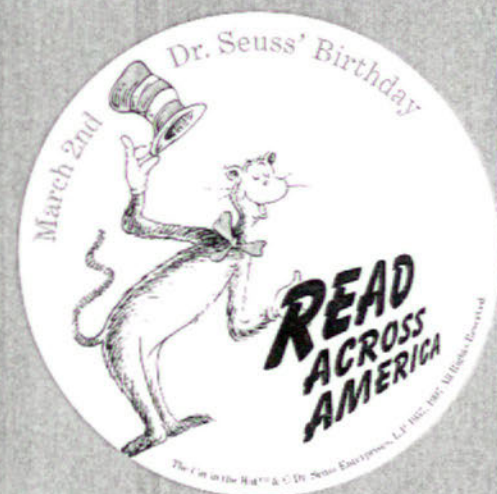


LITERACY

INCLUDES:

Read to Your Bunny Often
Dr. Suess' Read Across America
Local Media Coverage

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



Parents and family members are children's first teachers. And they are educators' most valuable allies in teaching children to read. Families lay the foundation for readers long before children enter school. Schools build on that foundation.

Each year, however, fewer and fewer children enter kindergarten ready to learn to read. For many reasons, they simply do not have a strong base on which educators can build. As a result, too many are failing to keep up in class.

It's time to take aggressive steps to ensure that all children master this most basic of skills. By the time they leave third grade, all children must be able to read on their own and read well. Reading is the foundation for their success—not just in school—but in life.

Here are several ideas families can use to help children become readers. They are intended for children from birth through preschool, kindergarten, and children in first through third grades.



Work With Schools and Teachers

1. Make sure school-age children attend school every day. Frequent absence from school is one reason children fall behind in reading.
2. Send children to school ready to learn. Make sure they are well-rested, are dressed comfortably, and have had breakfast before class begins.
3. Establish routine time for reading, meals, bed times, and getting ready for school so children know what to expect each day. Make reading part of the daily routine.
4. Have children spend more time reading and less time watching television. Limit television viewing to 10 or fewer hours per week. Participate in programs your child's school may sponsor to turn television off for a week to encourage more reading.
5. Set a regular time for homework. If a child is too young to have homework, use this time to talk about schoolwork. In this way, when the child begins to get homework, there will already be a time set aside for it.
6. Talk to children's teachers often about what they are learning in reading class. Ask about children's progress, the skills being taught, and the stories and books used in class. Find out what you can do at home to support children as readers.

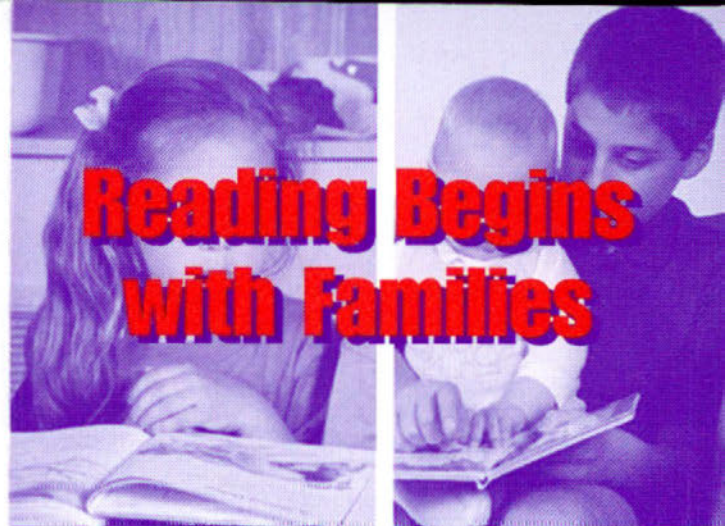
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Reading Begins with Families



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Build a Foundation for Reading

1. Talk with the children in your family as much as possible. In day-to-day conversations, speak in complete sentences and encourage children to do the same. Encourage them to ask questions, tell stories, and discuss ideas.



2. Talk to children about what they did that day. This will show your interest, help you keep in touch with what they are learning, and provide another opportunity for children to express themselves.

3. Teach young children the names of items they see

each day, such as the clothing they wear and objects around the home.

4. Teach young children nursery rhymes and songs. Recite and sing them together.
5. Take children to visit interesting places in the neighborhood such as parks, playgrounds, grocery stores, libraries, bookstores, and historical sites. Discuss these places or read about them with children.
6. Ask friends and family members who do not live close by to write to your child. Children enjoy reading cards and letters they get in the mail. Encourage them to write back.

Read, Read, Read

1. Read with children every day (or as many days per week as possible). Begin reading to them when they are still babies. Read stories and books aloud to toddlers and preschoolers. Don't wait until they enter school.



2. Give children something to look forward to each day. Read to them every day at the same time. Let them choose the book or story they'd like you to read. Don't hesitate to read favorite stories again and again.

3. Even after children can read on their own, keep reading to them so they can enjoy stories and books that interest them but are still too hard for them to read.

4. When you read with a child:

- Let the child choose which story or book to read.
- Find a comfortable well-lit place.
- Cuddle or sit close, and make sure you can both see the book.
- Read aloud with expression.
- Have the child turn the pages of the book.
- Draw the child's attention to the pictures.
- For young readers, move your finger from word to word as you read.
- After you finish reading the story, spend a few minutes talking about it.
- Ask if the child enjoyed the story.
- Be prepared to read favorite stories many times.
- Make reading time fun for both of you.



5. Involve other family members in reading. Ask an older brother or sister, or a grandparent, to read with a child.
6. Take children to reading circles, storytelling hours, or other activities at the local library, community association, or children's center.
7. Set a good example as a reader. Read every day at home. If you have little time for reading books, read the newspaper, a magazine, or the mail each day. Let children see that reading is a daily part of your life. Let them know why you read and how much you enjoy it.
8. Have children read to you. Listen carefully. It's just as important as reading to them. Take turns reading paragraphs or pages. And make sure to praise children's reading.

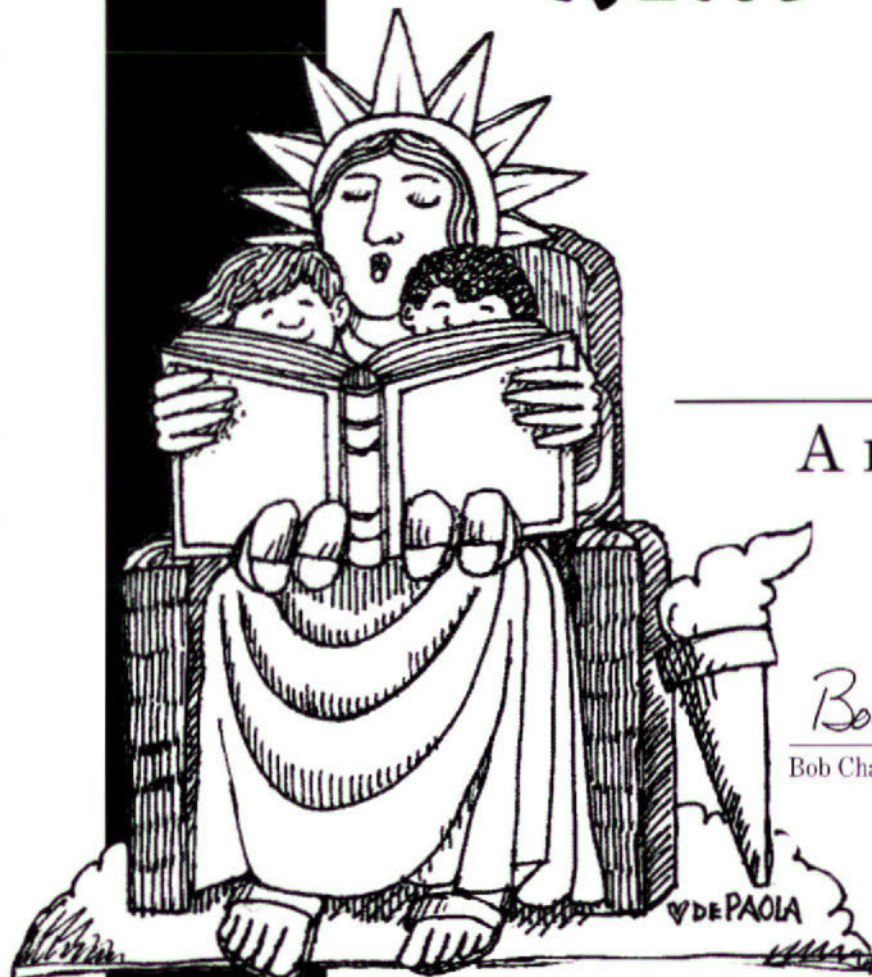


Create a Home Library

1. Have lots of books and magazines available for children. Young children "read" books and magazines by turning pages and looking at pictures.
2. Visit the library at your neighborhood school. Meet the librarian and ask about books you can read with children at home.
3. Visit a local public library and get each child in your home a library card. Visit the library often. Don't hesitate to ask the library staff about books children enjoy.
4. If possible, give children their own special bookshelf or bookcase at home.
5. Ask other adults, particularly parents, to name books their children enjoy reading. Read the book section of the newspaper for reviews of new children's books.
6. Shop for low-price books at garage and yard sales, swap meets, and used bookstores. Have children shop with you and have them select their own books.
7. If a child has a favorite videotape, movie, or television show, ask the school or community librarian for books on related topics.
8. Help children create their own books. Write captions for pictures young children draw and assemble the pictures into a book. Older children may enjoy keeping a daily journal. Most children enjoy reading their own writing.
9. Encourage relatives and friends to give children subscriptions to magazines, or books, as gifts. If they are unsure of what might interest a child, a gift certificate at a local bookstore is a good alternative.

READ ACROSS AMERICA

Certificate of Participation



_____, a reader on March 2, 1998.
A reader every day. Congratulations!

Bob Chase

Bob Chase, NEA President

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

*1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-3290 (202)822-7200***ROBERT F. CHASE**

President

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Robert F. (Bob) Chase, a leading advocate for public education, was elected president of the National Education Association at NEA's 1996 Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C.

Since assuming his role as the head of the 2.3 million-member organization, Chase has focused his efforts on recreating the NEA as the champion of quality teaching and quality public schools in the United States. Chase describes these efforts as "a new unionism," in which the traditional industrial union roles between labor and management are broadened to include the pursuit of an aggressive agenda of excellence for the nation's school children.

A long-time Association leader, Chase served three terms as NEA vice-president from 1989 to 1996. He served on the nine-member NEA Executive Committee from 1985 to 1989, and represented Connecticut on the NEA Board of Directors from 1982 to 1985.

A middle school social studies teacher from Danbury, Connecticut since 1965, Chase began his Association activism as negotiations chair and became vice-president and then president of NEA-Danbury, his local affiliate in Connecticut. In 1979, Chase was elected to leadership of the Connecticut Education Association, serving as vice-president and later president. During his term as president, he directed the development of CEA's award-winning curriculum that exposed the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan.

Chase serves on the executive board of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. He has represented the NEA before

the U.S. Congress, and with numerous groups, including the Educational Testing Service's Teacher Program Council, the United Nations, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Work in America Institute.

Chase's educational interests are global. He was a delegate to the 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1995 conventions of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and Education International. In 1985, Chase led the NEA delegation that was arrested at an anti-apartheid demonstration at the South African embassy in Washington.

Chase also has devoted considerable attention to the needs of special education students. While on the NEA Executive Committee, he chaired the Special Committee on Organizational Streamlining and the Special Education Advisory Committee, which dealt with the issue of inclusion.

Soon after assuming his role as NEA president, Chase outlined his ideas for a "new unionism" in an address before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. His remarks generated wide attention in both the local and national media throughout the country, and continue to make him much in demand as a speaker.

A bona fide newsmaker, Chase has appeared on numerous television and radio programs and conducted dozens of interviews with print reporters. He has appeared on CNN *Crossfire*, CNN *Inside Politics*, ABC's *Good Morning America*, NBC *Nightly News*, CNBC's *Equal Time*, and ABC's *Nightline*, among others. His bylined column examining key issues that have an impact on public education appears regularly in *The Washington Post* and *Education Week*.

Chase earned his B.A. from Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, and his M.A. from Western Connecticut State College in Danbury, Connecticut. He has done graduate work at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut and at the University of Washington in Seattle. Chase is a veteran of the U.S. Army and served a tour of duty in the artillery division in Germany between 1968 and 1970. He has two grown daughters.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

PURPOSE: The National Education Association was founded in 1857 to "advance the interest of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of education in the United States." A leader in school reform, the Association has invested more than \$70 million in public education improvements since 1983, the year of the watershed status report on American education, *A Nation at Risk*.

The Association seeks a quality education for each child in safe schools where children can learn the basics, practice values such as responsibility and teamwork, and prepare for jobs of the future.

MEMBERSHIP: NEA is the nation's largest professional employee organization. Its more than 2.3 million members include elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, educational support personnel, school administrators, retired educators, and college students preparing to become teachers.

STRUCTURE: NEA has 52 state-level affiliates: 50 state associations, the Federal Education Association, and the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico. NEA's more than 13,250 local affiliates include some 560 higher education affiliates.

GOVERNANCE: The Representative Assembly (RA) is the Association's top policy-making body. With about 10,000 delegates each year, it is among the world's largest regularly meeting deliberative bodies — larger than the Democratic and Republican national conventions combined. The 1998 Assembly will meet July 3-6 in New Orleans. Between annual meetings of the RA, a nine-member Executive Committee and a 159-member Board of Directors act for the Association.

PRESIDENT: Robert (Bob) Chase, a junior high school social studies teacher from Danbury, Conn., began his three-year term on September 1, 1996. A former president of the Connecticut Education Association, Chase served as NEA vice president since 1989 to 1996, and he was a member of the Executive Committee from 1984 to 1989.

VICE PRESIDENT: Reginald (Reg) Weaver, a middle school math teacher from Harvey, Ill., became NEA's vice president on September 1, 1996. Weaver served on the NEA Executive Committee from 1989 to 1995. He was Illinois Education Association president from 1981 to 1987.

SECRETARY-TREASURER: Dennis Van Roekel, a high school mathematics teacher from Phoenix, Ariz., was elected secretary-treasurer at the 1997 NEA Representative Assembly. He has also served on the NEA Executive Committee and is a former president of the Arizona Education Association.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Don Cameron, a former teacher of American and world history from Birmingham, Mich., has been NEA's executive director since 1983.

PROGRAMS AND STAFF: NEA employs 549 staff members at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., and in six regional offices. NEA works to build broad-based support for a quality public education system, enhance the Association's capacity to generate community partnerships that promote excellence in public schools, and supports initiatives to create quality teaching and learning for all students.

1201 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone 202/822-7200; fax 202/822-7292
<http://www.nea.org>

9/1/97





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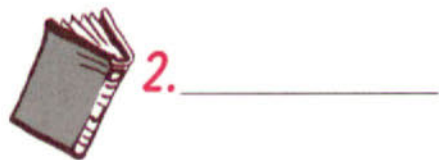
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Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday
March 2nd

MY FAVORITE BOOKS



Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday
March 2nd

MY FAVORITE BOOKS



Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday
March 2nd

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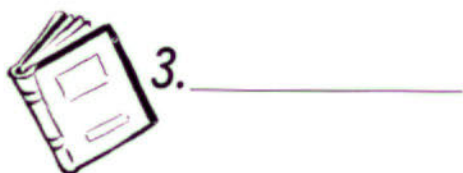
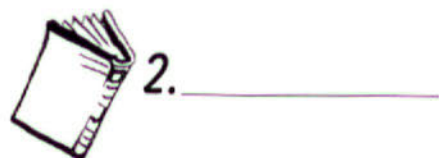
Color version of bookmark can be ordered by using
the enclosed order form.



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March 2nd

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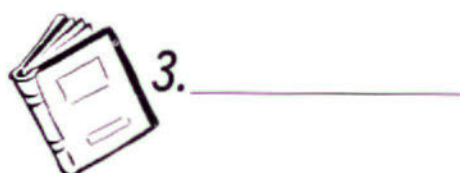
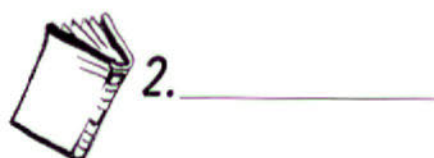
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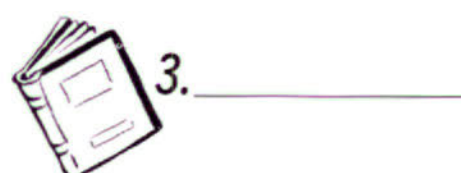
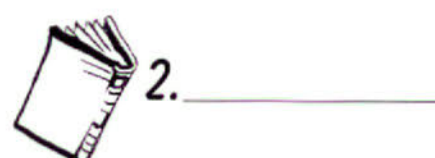
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Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday
March 2nd

MY FAVORITE BOOKS



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Cut on dotted lines and distribute.

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PARTICIPATE!**

at

www.nea.org/readacross

Fax On-Demand

1-888-747-READ

E-mail

readacross@nea.org



*For more information
locally, contact*



It's never too cold,
too wet or too hot
To pick up a book
And share what you've got
There are children around you
Children in need
Of someone who'll hug
Someone who'll read

So join us March 2nd
In your own special way
And make this America's
Read to Kids Day.



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**Celebrate Dr. Seuss'
Birthday!**

**Read with a child on
Monday, March 2, 1998.**

nea
National
Education
Association

Add logos.



WHAT IS READ ACROSS AMERICA?

A national celebration of reading.

We want every child to be in the company of a book.

WHEN?

The evening of March 2, 1998,
Dr. Seuss' birthday.

WHY?

To generate new enthusiasm for
reading. Children who read outside of
school do well in school.

WHO?

National Education Association
American Library Association
Reading is Fundamental
International Reading Association
National PTA
and many others...

Get schools, libraries, and
bookstores to sponsor
special events.

HOW?

- In Cambridge, MA, firefighters will invite children to read in firehouses.
- In Alexandria, VA, high school students will read with first and second graders.
- In West Valley City, UT, sixth graders will raise money to buy books for children at a nearby homeless shelter's school.
- In Los Angeles, CA, celebrities will perform choral readings in public theatres.
- In Portland, OR, a local elementary school will serve donuts for dads and muffins for moms while offering a comfortable place for families to read.

For more information about
what's going to happen on March 2,
visit www.nea.org/readacross

This Panel Not Intended For Use As Is

Use this panel to customize this pamphlet for your own use. Consider creating a panel that tells people what's happening in their community.

We also have provided other panel options on the following page for making pamphlets that are customized for seniors, school staff, and parents and families.

DIRECTIONS:

Make several xeroxes of this master pamphlet. Then, create your own panel or cut out any of the specific audience panels on the next page. Then paste the panel into this column.

Finally, make a 2-sided xerox copy of this sheet and the cover sheet that follows. Fold it and it is ready to use. Consider using different color paper to keep different versions easily recognizable.

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This is a grouping of Camera Ready Art developed for *Read Across America*, a new, nationwide NEA campaign to motivate children to read.



HOW SENIORS CAN PARTICIPATE:

- Contact your local and state education associations to offer your assistance.
- Read to your grandchildren.
- Volunteer to “guest read” at a local elementary school.
- Organize seniors to read as a group with children in local hospitals.
- Lobby local and state governing bodies to pass resolutions supporting *Read Across America*.
- Recruit your community organizations to read on March 2.
- Organize a community book drop.

Get elected officials, community leaders, and celebrities to read with children in your community.

HOW PARENTS AND FAMILIES CAN PARTICIPATE:

- Read with your child at home.
- Involve your child in school and community events.

TIPS FOR READING AT HOME:

- Start early. Infants love to hear reading aloud.
- Keep reading once your child starts school.
- Pick a comfortable spot.
- Read slowly, with feeling.
- Talk about the pictures.
- Ask your child to guess what’s coming next.
- Check with your teacher or librarian to find books that are appropriate for your child’s reading level.
- Find books on topics your child likes.

Get elected officials, community leaders, and celebrities to read with children in your community.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN PARTICIPATE:

- **ROUND ROBIN READING**
Children move from classroom to classroom to hear stories read by staff and community members.
- **CHORAL READING**
A large group reads a story together, using both individual and collective voices to highlight particular sections and create meaning. (*Seuss works are great for choral readings.*)
- **FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT**
Students hear stories while parents learn how to support reading instruction.

WHY SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD PARTICIPATE:

- Part of any educator’s job is to motivate students to love reading.
- Schools run better when children read well.

HOW LIBRARIES CAN PARTICIPATE:

- Invite local celebrities and VIPs including mayors, state senators, radio and TV personalities, local actors, and sports figures, to be guest readers.
- Consider a bedtime read-aloud. Have children bring pillows and dress in pajamas or as Dr. Seuss characters.
- Have children make bookmarks.
- Organize a Dr. Seuss reading club.

Get elected officials, community leaders, and celebrities to read with children in your community.

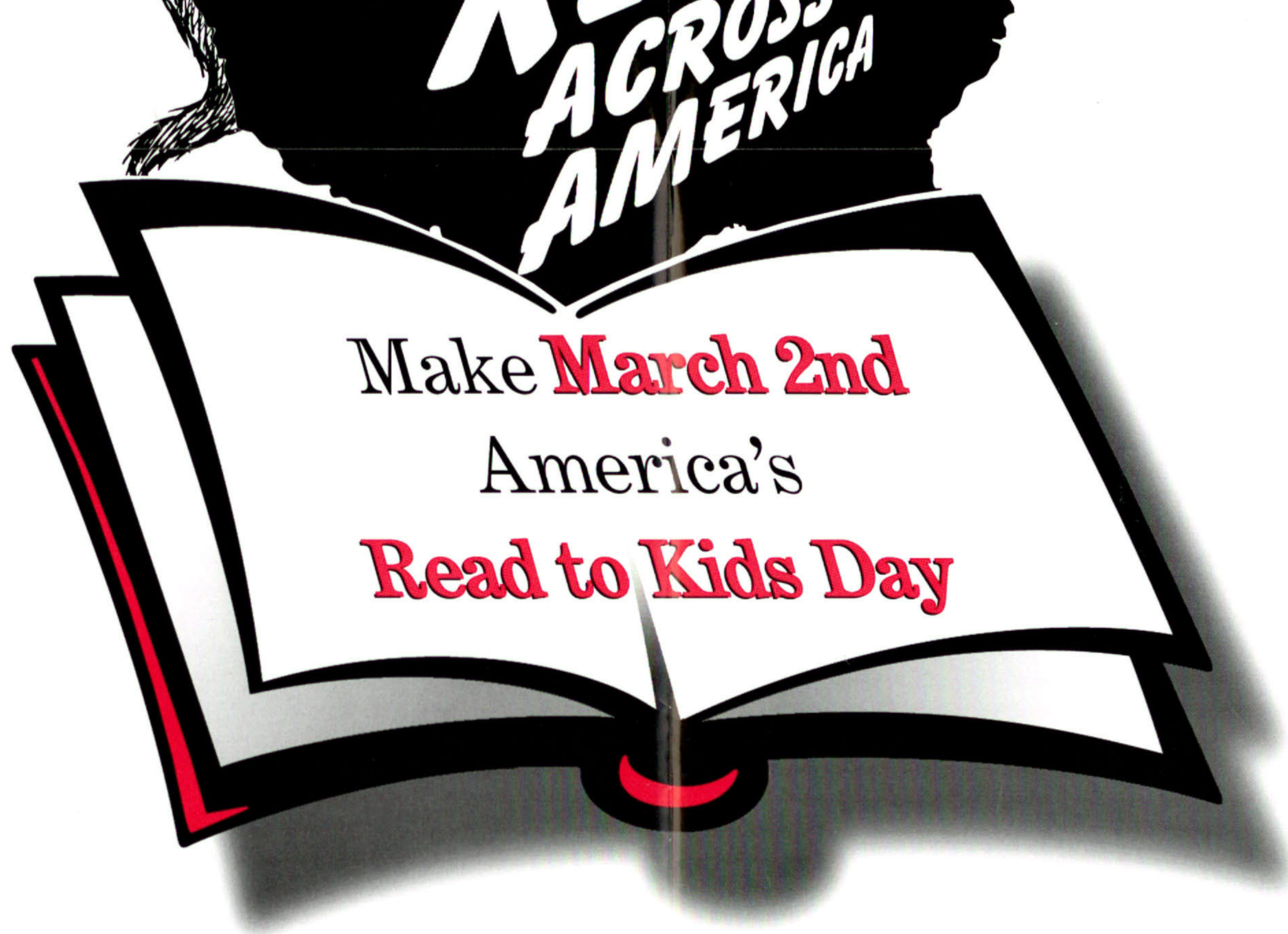
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Document Title: **Make March 2nd America's Read to Kids Day**
NEA - National Education Association



Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday — Read with a Child

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 1998

**'Read Across America' Catching Fire,
Participation Now Projected in Millions**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The national "Read Across America" celebration organized for March 2, Dr. Seuss' birthday, is capturing the imagination and the heart of the nation. On that date, literally millions of persons, led by Seuss' storybook hero *The Cat in the Hat*, will fire up the country's commitment to literacy and reading by the simple act of picking up a book and sharing its words with a child.

Baltimore Orioles third-baseman Cal Ripken Jr. is the event's national chairman, and the National Education Association, with 2.3 million members, its chief sponsor. NEA members alone are organizing reading activities and companion events that organizers estimate will reach more than two million children.

In several states, NEA members are contributing books to youngsters in homeless shelters. The North Carolina Association of Educators is donating 10,000 new books to needy children. In a preliminary activity Feb. 27, Virginia Education Association leaders are escorting 100 Norfolk elementary students aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Eisenhower at the world's

-more-

largest naval station. Students and sailors will read together there. The vessel is being rechristened the U.S.S. Readership for the day.

Volunteers are coming from everywhere:

- ♦ Lorna Hellbronner, a 68-year-old retired teacher in Eugene, Ore., has organized 40 of her retirement community friends to sip hot chocolate and read with Head Start students in front of a fire in her community's clubhouse. Every child will receive a stovepipe hat and a book to take home.
- ♦ In Haverhill, Mass., 39 city business leaders will read in first-grade classrooms, and city chefs will prepare green eggs and ham for students.
- ♦ Mount Vernon Elementary School in Alexandria, Va., will welcome 700 volunteers to read with each of the school's 700 students.

The celebration of reading was designated as an NEA priority by its president, Bob Chase, last fall as a project to stimulate greater interest in reading among children and to gain more public support for improving education. Under the banner of "new unionism," NEA has assumed a strong leadership role in such reform issues as upgrading the quality of instruction in classrooms and modernizing public schools and equipping them with 21st century technology.

"Education drives the nation," Chase explains. "Without public support, the job's not going to get done. 'Read Across America' gives everyone a chance to become a partner in the country's progress."

At NEA's invitation, hundreds of other educational, literacy, media, parental and civic groups are promising to place children in the company of a book on the special date of March 2. Among national organizations that have joined in the mobilization are the American Library Association, American Association of School Administrators, Girl Scouts of America, National PTA, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Center for Family

Literacy, International Reading Association, Random House, Scholastic Inc., and the Screen Actors Guild Foundation.

The Newspaper Association of America Foundation has alerted newspapers across the country, encouraging them to participate.

While studies regularly find that young people who read for enjoyment outside of school do better in school, a 1996 trend report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that the number of older children who read outside of the classroom is gradually decreasing.

To help stimulate interest in reading, professional football, baseball, basketball, and hockey teams have joined the campaign. Several are signing up their players to read to students in stadiums, schools and theaters. The gorilla mascot of the NBA's Phoenix Suns is touring his town to drum up interest.

Baseball's Cal Ripken, who has quietly championed literacy during much of his career, will read with students before a spring training game in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on March 2.

Other celebrities lending support include James Earl Jones, Barbara Bosson, Kirk Douglas, Barbara Bain, LeVar Burton, and Miss America Kate Shindle. Shindle will read at the Moorestown, N.J., elementary school she attended as a child. Bosson, Bain, and Douglas will be part of an NEA/Screen Actors Guild Foundation celebration at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles that is hosting more than 2,000 students. Scholastic Inc. will give every child a book.

Actor LeVar Burton, host of the award-winning TV series Reading Rainbow, explains his involvement: "Inspiring and encouraging a love of reading is one of the most important things a parent or teacher can do for a child. I read to my daughter every day, as my mother did to me."

Many members of Congress, a dozen governors, and five first ladies have already pledged to read to groups of youngsters that day.

The campaign's logo leader, the eight-foot-tall *Cat*, is presently touring 14 cities in the Northeast, joining with local celebrities in activities that stress the importance of reading for fun as well as enrichment. The tour began on Feb. 12 in Springfield, Mass., the late Dr. Seuss author Theodor Geisel's hometown, and ends March 2 at the Dr. Seuss exhibit at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. It will also include a visit to the White House.

While the celebration is taking on a festive aura, its motive is earnest, stresses NEA President Chase. Quoting a U.S. Department of Education study, he observes, "The single most important activity for building knowledge required for eventual success is reading aloud to children."

MBNA America Bank, N.A., provided financial support to assist in organizing the "Read Across America" campaign.

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 2.3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support personnel, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

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2/18/98

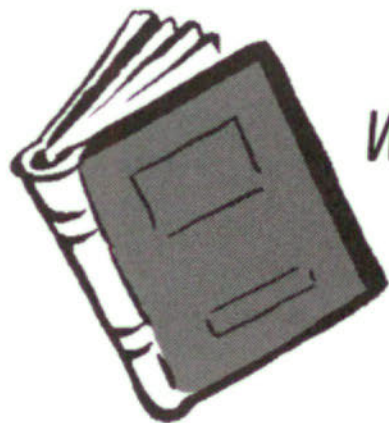
NEA Focus is a weekly online media newsletter with news and information about what National Education Association members are doing at national, state, and local levels to make things better for children, public schools, and America's future. For an e-mail subscription to NEA Focus, type "subscribe medialine" in the body of a message sent to Lyris@list.nea.org.

Read Across America

Research confirms the value of reading to children

- Kids who read aloud in their early years with their parents do better in school. Experts say the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. (*Becoming a Nation of Readers*, U.S. Dept. of Education 1985)
- Kids who read for fun outside of school do better in school. (IEA Literacy study, NAEP data)
- There is a gradual yet discouraging decrease in the amount older children are reading outside of school. A third of 13-year-olds read for fun on a daily basis, and this number decreases as they get older. The number of kids who report never reading anything for fun, while a small percentage, is increasing. (*Trends in Academic Progress*, NAEP, 1996)
- Adults need to be role models to their children. Children read more when they see other people reading at school and at home. (*The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*, Stephen Krashen, 1993)
- Reading material at home makes a big difference. Over the last 25 years, the amount of reading material in most homes has decreased. (NAEP trend data) Children who have access to books, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedias at home are better readers than those who have access to two or fewer of these reading materials. (1992 *Trends in Academic Progress*, National Center for Education Statistics)
- Children who are read to regularly for several months make superior gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary. (*The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*, Stephen Krashen, 1993)
- The single most important thing that influences primary grade reading achievement is having someone read to a child on a regular basis. (*Becoming a Nation of Readers*, U.S. Department of Education, 1985)





WHAT IS READ ACROSS AMERICA?

The National Education Association is calling for every child in America to be in the company of a book during the evening of March 2, 1998, Dr. Seuss' birthday. There will be—

- Choral readings in schools.
- Community gatherings in libraries.
- Celebrity events in bookstores.
- Families curling up together at home with a book.

WHY A READING CELEBRATION?

We know that children who read outside of school do well in school. *Read Across America* will generate new enthusiasm for reading nationwide.

WHY ELSE?

In a larger sense, *Read Across America* is about:

- Shining a spotlight on the importance of early reading.
- Helping all children to read at grade level by third grade.
- Building a sense of community around our public schools.

WHO'S DOING WHAT AND WHERE?

The Cat in the Hat is gearing up for a trek from Seuss' old house in Springfield, MA to the White House to stir up interest. One Oregon elementary school is planning to serve donuts for dads and muffins for moms while spreading books around the cafeteria for parents to read with children. In Fall River, MA, third graders are ready to read their favorite Seuss books to kindergartners. Across the nation, firefighters are offering to read. So are police, mayors and governors.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

The National Education Association is the primary sponsor. Our partners include the American Library Association, the National PTA, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Reading is Fundamental, the National Center for Family Literacy and other education and community groups. MBNA America Bank, N.A. has also provided generous financial support.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Don't wait for someone else.
- Gather friends and brainstorm. Get those creative juices flowing.
- Start acting on your best ideas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our Web site at <http://www.nea.org/readacross>

or write to us at Read Across America, c/o NEA,
1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

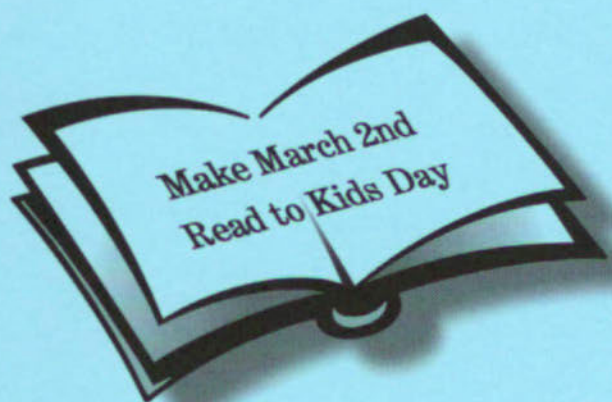
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You're
never
too
old,
too
wacky,
too
wild,
to pick
up a
book,
and
read
to a
child.

READ ACROSS AMERICA

Event Possibilities for Elementary School Children

ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS

1) Round Robin Readings

Students move from classroom to classroom, listening to a different story at each stop.

How to do a round robin reading

- Decide how many rooms you want to use for readings the night of March 2.
- Make a list of local people who can inspire your students. Consider people like local celebrities, the mayor, and town council members.

Also, consider a school bus driver, an involved grandparent, a school secretary, or cafeteria worker. Remember that retired teachers can be a big hit with children.

- Pick your books carefully so none take more than 20 minutes to read.
- Encourage your storytellers to practice reading their stories aloud several times before the night of the actual event.

Tips for organizing the actual event

- Invite families and children for a night of story reading in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday.
- Have your storytellers read their stories every 20 minutes.
- Plan on audience participants staying for about an hour in total.
- You may want to consider bringing the night to a close by having a birthday cake for Dr. Seuss.



A DOZEN, QUICK, FUN, READING-RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH 2

*Special
thanks to
Reading is
Fundamental
for many of
these ideas.*

1 Have kids come to school dressed as their favorite storybook characters.

2 Set up a scavenger hunt. Create seven stations around your school building where students engage in a variety of reading-related activities. At one station, they read a story. At the next, they listen to a story. At the next they write a few sentences. At the fourth, they read directions for where to go next, etc.

3 Have a book swap among your students, where everyone brings a book from home and trades it with another child.

4 Invite grandparents and senior citizens to join your students for a reading show-and-tell period.

5 Collect infant-appropriate books to give to babies at your local hospital.

6 Make book jackets for the books in your library that aren't covered. The jackets should include the name of the author, the title, and a relevant picture or design. Use shelf paper or drawing paper. Children can also write a quick book summary on the inside cover.

7 Have kids make their own books to read at home.

8 Make a Dr. Seuss mural.

9 Ask each child to name his or her favorite book. Tabulate the results. Then create a best-sellers list for your class and post it on your door.

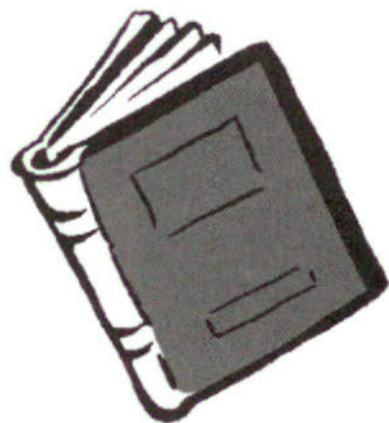
10 Make jigsaw puzzles by mounting old book jackets on cardboard and then cutting them up.

11 Declare March 2nd *Book Day* and require that every child carry at least one book all day.

12 Have a *Green Eggs and Ham* Party!
You'll need eggs, ham, egg beater, mixing bowl, food coloring, dash of salt and pepper, vegetable oil, toast, knives, forks, plates, napkins and a skillet.

Slice pre-cooked ham. Turn skillet to warm. Add a drop of vegetable oil. Have children break eggs into a mixing bowl. Scramble the eggs with the egg beater. Put a drop of green food coloring in the eggs. Scramble the eggs in the skillet. Eat.

Another variation... Have both uncolored eggs and green eggs. Blind-fold students and see if they can taste the difference.



SHARE A BOOK — SHAPE AN IMAGINATION

Dr. Seuss' Five Most Popular Books are:

- *Green Eggs and Ham*
- *The Cat in the Hat*
- *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*
- *Hop on Pop*
- *Dr. Seuss' ABCs.*



A favorite among older children is *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* For more information about Dr. Seuss' books, visit Seussville at www.randomhouse.com.

The following books for young readers were selected from recommended reading lists of the American Library Association, NEA's Emergency Commission on Urban Children, and Reading Is Fundamental.

Preschool through Kindergarten

- "Where's My Teddy?"
— *Jez Alborough*
- "Madeleine"
— *Ludwig Bemelmans*
- "Goodnight Moon"
— *Margaret Wise Brown*
- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar"
— *Eric Carle*
- "Corduroy" — *Don Freeman*
- "Amazing Grace"
— *Mary Hoffman*
- "Jamal's Busy Day"
— *Wade Hudson*
- "Guess How Much I Love You"
— *Sam McBratney*
- "Where the Wild Things Are"
— *Maurice Sendak*

Grades 1 through 3

- "Miss Nelson is Missing!"
— *Harry Allard*
- "Ramona Quimby, Age Eight"
— *Beverly Cleary*
- "Bedtime for Frances"
— *Russell Hoban*
- "Frog and Toad are Friends"
— *Arnold Lobel*
- "Amelia Bedelia"
— *Peggy Parish*
- "Encyclopedia Brown, Boy
Detective"
— *Donald J. Sobol*
- "Boxcar Children"
— *Gertrude Warner*
- "Charlotte's Web"
— *E.B. White*
- "The Velveteen Rabbit"
— *Margery William*

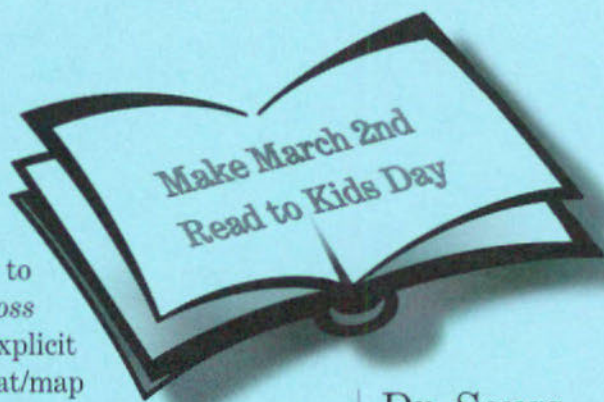
Grades 4 through 6

- "Tuck Everlasting"
— *Natalie Babbitt*
- "The Wizard of Oz"
— *L. Frank Baum*
- "The Black Stallion"
— *Walter Farley*
- "The Lion, the Witch and
the Wardrobe"
— *C.S. Lewis*
- "Island of the Blue Dolphins"
— *Scott O'Dell*
- "The Bridge to Terabithia"
— *Katherine Paterson*
- "Where the Red Fern Grows"
— *Wilson Rawls*
- "Black Beauty" — *Anna Sewell*
- "Roll of Thunder,
Hear My Cry"
— *Mildred Taylor*
- "Little House on the Prairie"
— *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

IMPORTANT NOTE #1

Please read the following list of rules *very carefully*.

Dr. Seuss Enterprises has given us a wonderful opportunity to use the Cat in the Hat/map logo to promote our *Read Across America* celebration. This opportunity comes with some explicit restrictions. We will lose our right to use the Cat in the Hat/map logo immediately if we violate any of the clauses in the agreement.



Dr. Seuss Copyright Rules

Rule 1

The Cat in the Hat/map logo may be used only in connection with the promotion of the *Read Across America* campaign. (We have no other rights to use the logo. If we violate this restriction, we can and will be sued.)

Rule 2

Any potential sponsor must be cleared by Dr. Seuss Enterprises. Fast food firms and commercialization are the main taboos. (See the next two points for more details.)

Rule 3

Absolutely no fast food companies may be involved in *Read Across America*. That means that McDonalds, Pizza Hut, and similar companies that engage in pro-education campaigns are not allowed as sponsors. If you want to use a particular company as a sponsor, call us at 202-822-7830 or e-mail us at readacross@nea.org. We will get a quick yes or no response from Dr. Seuss Enterprises and get right back to you.

Rule 4

No commercialization is permitted. Stores and sponsors are not allowed to sell their products in any way in connection with the Cat in the Hat/map logo. "Buy one, get one free" promotions in honor of *Read Across America* are not acceptable.

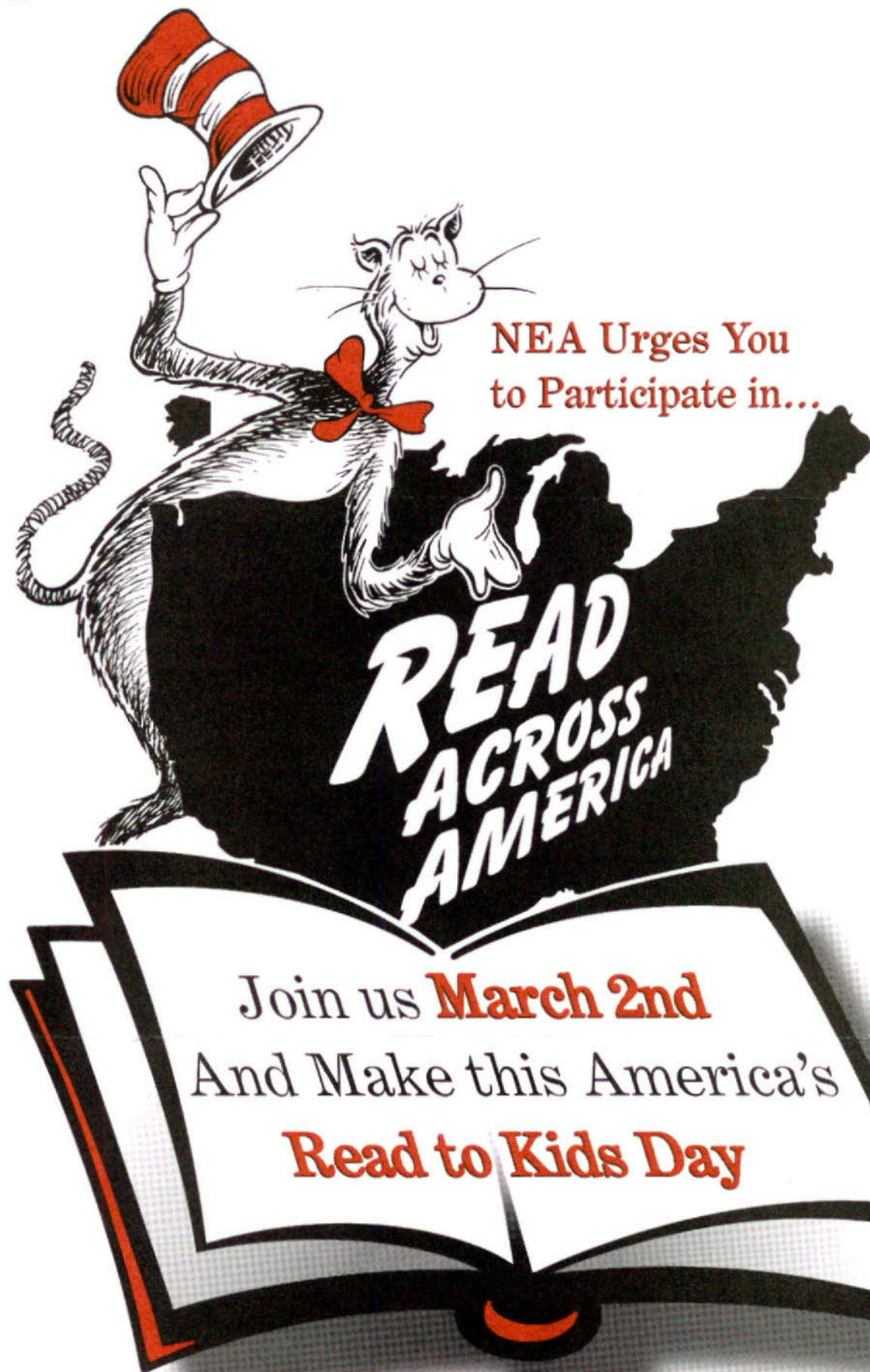
Rule 5

The copyright tagline (exactly as it appears with the campaign logo) must appear on absolutely everything that contains the Cat in the Hat/map logo — and the copyright tagline must be readable. The Cat in the Hat/map logo may not be modified in any way.

IMPORTANT NOTE #2

Dr. Seuss Enterprises has given its approval to the message outlined in these materials. They have agreed to allow NEA's state and local affiliates to localize these materials without going through further review as long as there are "no substantive changes from these pre-approved materials." If you want to make substantive changes, send us the materials right away and we will see if we can get approval.

nea
National
Education
Association



**NEA Urges You
to Participate in...**

Dear Colleague,

Read Across America is a new, nationwide NEA campaign to motivate children to read. We are calling for every child in every school in every community to be in the company of a book the evening of March 2nd, in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday.

Please join us in this exciting program. It provides us with an excellent opportunity to work with parents and others in our communities to make a difference in the lives of our students.

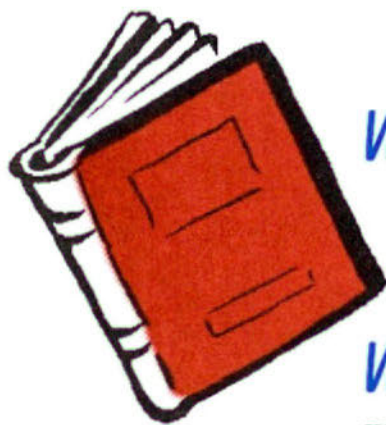
With best wishes for many fun-filled reading adventures.

Sincerely,

Bob Chase

Bob Chase
NEA President

nea
National
Education
Association



WHAT IS READ ACROSS AMERICA?

With the help of Dr. Seuss Enterprises and many other partners, NEA is planning a *Read Across America* celebration. The evening of March 2nd, Dr. Seuss' birthday, NEA is calling for every child in America to be in the company of a book.

WHY A READING CELEBRATION?

We know that children who read outside of school do well inside school. *Read Across America* will generate a new enthusiasm for reading nationwide.

HOW CAN WE START?

Get schools, libraries, and bookstores in your community to sponsor special activities.

What kinds of activities?

Picture this:

- High school students sitting down with 6-year-olds, reading them *The Cat in the Hat*.
- 8-year-olds in pajamas, pillows in hand, arriving at local libraries for a bedtime reading session.
- Authors and people dressed as storybook characters reading with children in local bookstores.

What are some other activities for my school?

- Family Literacy Night. Students listen to stories while families learn the best way to support a child's education at home.
- Round Robin Reading. Children move from room to room to hear school staff and community members reading their favorite children's stories. Pick a cafeteria worker, an active parent, a retired teacher, the principal, and other people who will inspire.

What are some other activities for my community?

- Recruit your local police, firefighters, judges, or sports teams to read with children. Contact town councils, mayors, and local celebrities to see if they will participate.

IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS

1. Post the front page of this flyer in the faculty lounge at your school.
2. Go to your local school board for their support.
3. Get your town, city, or county to pass a resolution supporting *Read Across America*.
4. Gather a team together to brainstorm activities that will work best for your community and then act on your best ideas.
5. Visit our Web site. (address below)

You're
never
too
old,
too
wacky,
too
wild,
to pick
up a
book
and
read
to a
child.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

about *Read Across America* events, visit our Web site at <http://www.nea.org/readacross>
or call

1-888-747-READ

RAAF9798



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 SCHOLASTIC

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jill Perlstein, ABA
(914) 591-2665, ext. 283

**READ TO YOUR BUNNY BY ROSEMARY WELLS
INSPIRES NATIONAL READING PROGRAM AT LOCAL BOOKSTORES**

SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOLASTIC, THE ASSOCIATION OF BOOKSELLERS
FOR CHILDREN, AND THE INGRAM BOOK COMPANY

(Tarrytown, NY, November 1997) More than two hundred thousand free copies of a new book, *Read to Your Bunny*, have been distributed to participating bookstores across the nation through a cooperative initiative entitled Prescription for Reading. The Prescription for Reading Partnership, an integral component of the America Reads Challenge, was launched in April 1997 by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on the eve of the White House Conference on Early Childhood and Brain Development. Prescription for Reading is based on the successful work of a Boston-based organization, Reach Out and Read, which corroborates that reading to very young children enhances the child's overall intellectual, emotional, and physical development.

The American Booksellers Association (ABA), in partnership with the Association of Booksellers for Children (ABC), Scholastic Inc., the Ingram Book Company, and local bookstores across the country, has designed this program to encourage parents and guardians of very young children to make reading part of a daily routine. By working with local health-care providers to *prescribe* reading during "well-baby" checkups, we can work toward meeting the goal of the America Reads Challenge and ensure that all children learn to read well and independently by the time they enter third grade.

Read to Your Bunny, a new Scholastic picture book by acclaimed author and illustrator Rosemary Wells, is a colorful, vibrant story that delivers a simple message: Reading to a child is an important part of daily activities. The book will be published by Scholastic in March 1998 (U.S. price \$7.95). Local bookstores are distributing "prescription coupons" for free paperback copies of *Read to Your Bunny* to pediatricians, well-baby clinics, and other health-care facilities, where the coupons will be given to individual parents and guardians to be redeemed at the sponsoring bookstore. Parents and guardians will also be provided with special reading lists for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. The promotion will run from November 1997 through March 1, 1998.

"Your program ... is a very important step in implementing the Prescription for Reading Partnership," wrote First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in a letter to the ABA. "We all realize that modest investments in the sound development of our children, especially our youngest children, will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity, better health, with fewer social ills, and ever greater opportunities for our citizens to lead fulfilling lives."

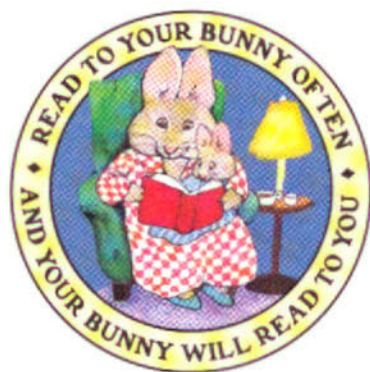
The American Booksellers Association, founded in 1900, is a not-for-profit trade organization headquartered in Tarrytown, New York, and on the Internet at <http://www.bookweb.org/>. Its mission includes protecting the well-being of retail bookstores and promoting the availability of books. The ABA supports its members through education, research, and the dissemination of information.

For more than 75 years, Scholastic Inc., has been committed to creating quality educational materials for students, teachers, and families. The company is one of the leading publishers and distributors of children's books, magazines, and core curriculum materials. Scholastic also publishes educational software products and produces children- and family-oriented videos and television programs. The company's international operations include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Mexico.

The Association of Booksellers for Children is a national membership association that offers a support network for professional children's booksellers who share the goal of encouraging quality and service within the children's book industry.

The Ingram Book Company is America's largest wholesale distributor of books, audiobooks, periodicals, and multimedia to booksellers, librarians, and specialty retailers.

#



"Reading to children aloud everyday is as important as brushing their teeth and fastening their seat belts."—Rosemary Wells

Why Read To Your Bunny?

Because it's the most important gift you can give to your child. The twenty minutes a day you spend reading with your child is much more than twenty minutes of fun, it's quality time that adds up to a lifetime of success.

The latest research in neuroscience proves that reading aloud actually stimulates a baby's brain growth and strengthens the connections in the brain that are the basis for language and learning. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics supports the national *Prescription for Reading* campaign with the recommendation that all pediatricians "prescribe" reading as a standard part of pediatric care.

Listed below are just a few of the benefits of reading to your child...

- ◆ When a child is read to, brain cells are "turned on" and the connections between cells are strengthened and exercised
- ◆ The development of early literacy skills through early experiences with books and stories is directly linked to a child's success in learning to read
- ◆ Reading aloud to a child provides a role model and encourages children to actively imitate the behavior and "read back"
- ◆ When parents share books with young children, they cause children to associate books, reading, and language with a loving and nurturing environment
- ◆ Reading stimulates a child to form their own pictures in their mind, nurturing the imagination
- ◆ Reading aloud provides a shared experience between parent and child leading to better bonding and caregiving
- ◆ Reading invites an active response to repeat and practice language



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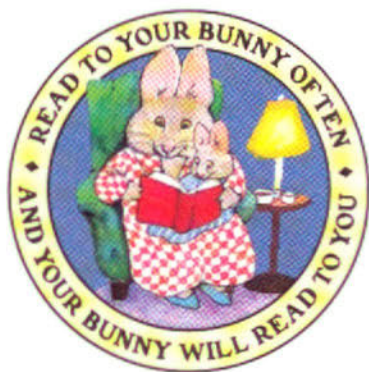
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"Reading to children aloud everyday is as important as brushing their teeth and fastening their seat belts."—Rosemary Wells

Quotes from the experts

"Infants can see and hear at birth, and seem genetically programmed to prefer to look at faces and listen to human voices....Infants perceive the world through all of their senses, and transfer information from one sense to another....Children learn predominantly by association. If books are part of loving parent-child interactions from an early age, children will associate the presence of books with all of the positive feelings of being held and loved. Undoubtedly, these associations are encoded in a profound way in the child's developing brain. Picture books provide an ideal context for parent-child interactions that are loving and stimulating. When parents look at picture books with young children, they provide stimuli in multiple sensory modes - visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic (the sense of movement). Parents use more complex language when looking at books, and also language that is more attuned to the child's cues. Books also invite active participation. Active learning involves more brain areas; things learned actively are more likely to persist in memory and to facilitate other knowledge acquisition." - *Dr. Robert Needleman, Division of Behavioral Pediatrics and Psychology, Rainbow Babies' and Children's Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio*

"Pediatricians are trained to think in terms of prevention. Growing up without books is growing up deprived and with a deprivation that puts one at risk for failure. Just like many of the other risks and deprivations that children face in poverty, growing up without books is a sad loss in itself, but also a risk factor for larger, sadder losses. Double jeopardy. If we want our children to grow up reading, we have to do everything possible, and we have to do it as early as possible....Children either start school liking books and understanding what they are, or they start school way behind, set up for failure." - *Dr. Perri Klass, Boston Medical Center, Co-Founder of "Reach Out and Read"*

"It is important to start your kids reading at a young age. It helps develop their minds, brains, language skills. It is the most critical thing parents can do for their kids." - *Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School and Judge Baker Children's Center, Boston, MA.*

"My goal is that by the year 2000 giving information about reading to children will be as routine in pediatric practice as giving immunizations. Both are critically important to promoting children's health and well-being." - *Dr. Barry Zuckerman, Boston Medical Center, Co-Founder of "Reach Out and Read"*

(more)



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555 Broadway
New York, New York 10012

"A shared moment with a good book is a memory that both parents and children can treasure forever. Reading together opens the door to a rainbow of possibilities." - *Sharon M. Draper, Author, 1997 National Teacher of the Year*

"If you want to raise readers, you must provide them with books as soon as humanly possible. This is a parental obligation on par with vaccinations." - *Deirdre Donahue, Children's Book Reviewer, USA Today*

BOOKSTART SUMMARY AND UPDATE

Bookstart was initiated in 1992 by Book Trust, working in co-operation with Birmingham Library Services, the South Birmingham Health Authority and Birmingham University School of Education.

BACKGROUND

Bookstart set out to explore the significance of the role of parents and carers in sharing books with very young children. While new parents receive information and advice regarding their role in their child's health and general welfare, reading with and talking to babies is often ignored. Parents need to be equipped with the appropriate information, advice and confidence to launch their child's reading development from the earliest possible age.

PILOTING BOOKSTART

The initial Bookstart pilot scheme concentrated on 300 parents/carers of nine month old babies. They were given a gift book together with advice and information about books and reading by their health worker and have been monitored (alongside a control group) over the past five years. Early results from Professor Barrie Wade and his team at the University of Birmingham indicated a substantial increase in awareness of books, sharing of books, enrollment of babies in libraries, use of book clubs and family use of books.

THE FIVE YEAR RESEARCH FINDINGS

The University of Birmingham continued to monitor the original Bookstart babies as they arrived at primary school and took part in the Baseline Assessment. Indications are that the full five-year research will produce extremely exciting results: these will be outlined at the forthcoming Bookstart conference. To summarize, the Bookstart children performed noticeably better than their carefully matched peers in all 9 categories of the Baseline Assessment. They were frequently ahead on assessments for *Speaking and Listening* and *Reading and Writing* and performed better on assessments of *Using and Applying Mathematics, Number and Shape* and *Space and Measures*. Children who had had the advantage of Bookstart were clearly ahead in both literacy and numeracy.

For further information on Bookstart, please contact Alexandra Strick or Ann Newton at Book Trust, Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ. For information on the research, contact Professor Barrie Wade on 0121 414 4844 or Dr Maggie Moore on 0120 476 1181.

For Bookstart Conference details, call our dedicated conference hotline on 01962 885911

Newsweek

February 19, 1996 : \$2.95

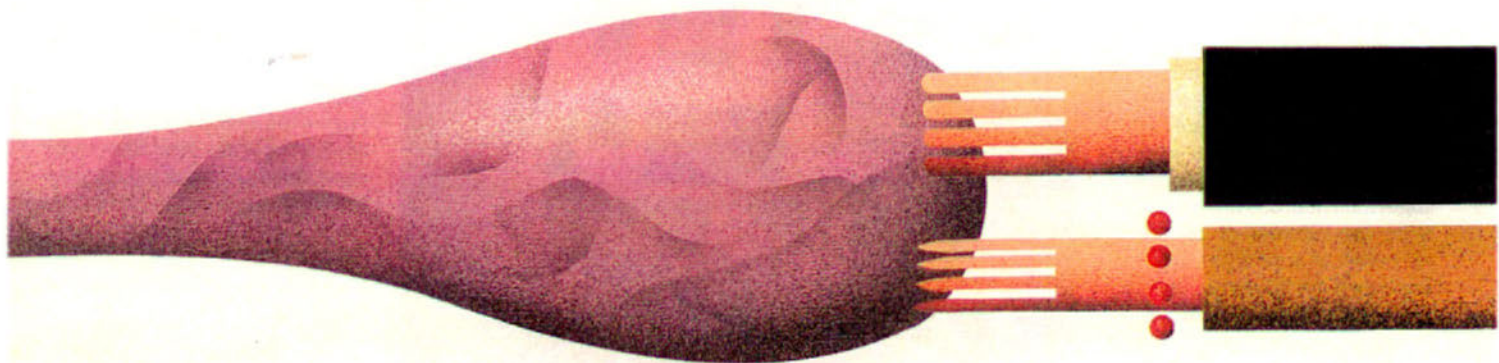
EXCLUSIVE
Oklahoma City:
A Bizarre Defense

YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN

How Kids
Are Wired
for Music,
Math &
Emotions

BY SHARON BEGLEY

A baby's brain is a work in progress, trillions of neurons waiting to be wired into a mind. The experiences of childhood, pioneering research shows, help form the brain's circuits—for music and math, language and emotion.



Your Child's Brain

BY SHARON BEGLEY

YOU HOLD YOUR NEWBORN SO HIS SKY-blue eyes are just inches from the brightly patterned wallpaper. *ZZZt*: a neuron from his retina makes an electrical connection with one in his brain's visual cortex. You gently touch his palm with a clothespin; he grasps it, drops it, and you return it to him with soft words and a smile. *Crackle*: neurons from his hand strengthen their connection to those in his sensory-motor cortex. He cries in the

night; you feed him, holding his gaze because nature has seen to it that the distance from a parent's crooked elbow to his eyes exactly matches the distance at which a baby focuses. *Zap*: neurons in the brain's amygdala send pulses of electricity through the circuits that control emotion. You hold him on your lap and talk . . . and neurons from his ears start hard-wiring connections to the auditory cortex.

And you thought you were just playing with your kid.

When a baby comes into the world her brain is a jumble of neurons, all waiting to be woven into the



intricate tapestry of the mind. Some of the neurons have already been hard-wired, by the genes in the fertilized egg, into circuits that command breathing or control heartbeat, regulate body temperature or produce reflexes. But trillions upon trillions more are like the Pentium chips in a computer before the factory preloads the software. They are pure and of almost infinite potential, unprogrammed circuits that might one day compose rap songs and do calculus, erupt in fury and melt in ecstasy. If the neurons are used, they become integrated into the circuitry of the brain by connecting to other neurons; if they are not used, they may die. It is the experiences of childhood, determining which neurons are used, that wire the circuits of the brain as surely as a programmer at a keyboard reconfigures the circuits in a computer. Which keys are typed—which experiences a child has—determines whether the child grows up to be intelligent or dull, fearful or self-assured, articulate or tongue-tied. Early experiences are so powerful, says pediatric neurobiologist Harry Chugani of Wayne State University, that “they can completely change the way a person turns out.”

By adulthood the brain is crisscrossed with more than 100 billion neurons, each reaching out to thousands of others so that, all told, the brain has more than 100 trillion connections. It is those connections—more than the number of galaxies in the known universe—that give the brain its unrivaled powers. The traditional view was that the wiring diagram is predetermined, like one for a new house, by the genes in the fertilized egg. Unfortunately, even though half the genes—50,000—are involved in the central nervous system in some way, there are not enough of them to specify the brain's incomparably complex wiring. That leaves another possibility: genes might determine only the brain's main circuits, with something else shaping the trillions of finer connections. That something else is the environment, the myriad messages that the brain receives from the outside world. According to the emerging paradigm, “there are two broad stages of brain wiring,” says developmental neurobiologist Carla Shatz of the University of California, Berkeley: “an early period, when experience is not

required, and a later one, when it is.”

Yet, once wired, there are limits to the brain's ability to create itself. Time limits. Called “critical periods,” they are windows of opportunity that nature flings open, starting before birth, and then slams shut, one by one, with every additional candle on the child's birthday cake. In the experiments

dictates how long they stay malleable. Sensory areas mature in early childhood; the emotional limbic system is wired by puberty; the frontal lobes—seat of understanding—develop at least through the age of 16.

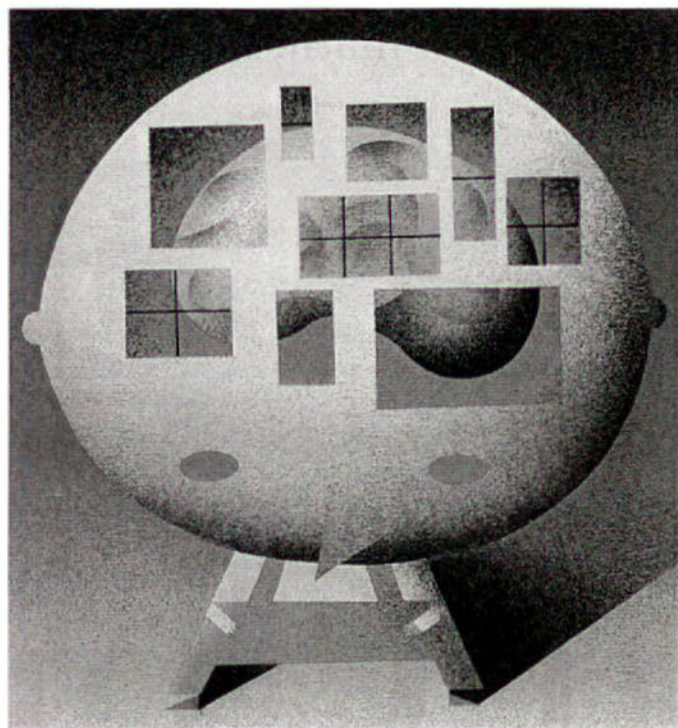
The implications of this new understanding are at once promising and disturbing. They suggest that, with the right input at the

right time, almost anything is possible. But they imply, too, that if you miss the window you're playing with a handicap. They offer an explanation of why the gains a toddler makes in Head Start are so often evanescent: this intensive instruction begins too late to fundamentally rewire the brain. And they make clear the mistake of postponing instruction in a second language (page 58). As Chugani asks, “What idiot decreed that foreign-language instruction not begin until high school?”

Neurobiologists are still at the dawn of understanding exactly which kinds of experiences, or sensory input, wire the brain in which ways. They know a great deal about the circuit for vision. It has a neuron-growth spurt at the age of 2 to 4 months, which corresponds to when babies start to really notice the world, and peaks at 8 months, when each neuron is connected to an astonishing 15,000 other neurons. A baby whose eyes are clouded by cataracts from birth will, despite cataract-removal surgery at the age of 2, be forever blind. For other systems, researchers know what happens, but not—at the level of neurons and molecules—how. They nevertheless remain confident that cognitive abilities work much like sensory ones, for the brain is parsimonious in how it conducts its affairs: a mechanism that works fine for wiring vision is not likely to be abandoned when it comes to circuits for music. “Connections are not forming willy-nilly,” says Dale

Purves of Duke University, “but are promoted by activity.”

Language: Before there are words, in the world of a newborn, there are sounds. In English they are phonemes such as sharp ba's and da's, drawn-out ee's and ll's and sibilant ss's. In Japanese they are different—barked hi's, merged rr/ll's. When a child hears a phoneme over and over, neurons from his ear stimulate the formation of



The Logical Brain



SKILL: Math and logic

LEARNING WINDOW: Birth to 4 years

WHAT WE KNOW: Circuits for math reside in the brain's cortex, near those for music. Toddlers taught simple concepts, like one and many, do better in math. Music lessons may help develop spatial skills.

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT: Play counting games with a toddler. Have him set the table to learn one-to-one relationships—one plate, one fork per person. And, to hedge your bets, turn on a Mozart CD.

that gave birth to this paradigm in the 1970s, Torsten Wiesel and David Hubel found that sewing shut one eye of a newborn kitten rewired its brain: so few neurons connected from the shut eye to the visual cortex that the animal was blind even after its eye was reopened. Such rewiring did not occur in adult cats whose eyes were shut. Conclusion: there is a short, early period when circuits connect the retina to the visual cortex. When brain regions mature

dedicated connections in his brain's auditory cortex. This "perceptual map," explains Patricia Kuhl of the University of Washington, reflects the apparent distance—and thus the similarity—between sounds. So in English-speakers, neurons in the auditory cortex that respond to "ra" lie far from those that respond to "la." But for Japanese, where the sounds are nearly identical, neurons that respond to "ra" are practically intertwined, like L.A. freeway spaghetti, with those for "la." As a result, a Japanese-speaker will have trouble distinguishing the two sounds.

Researchers find evidence of these tendencies across many languages. By 6 months of age, Kuhl reports, infants in English-speaking homes already have different auditory maps (as shown by electrical measurements that identify which neurons respond to different sounds) from those in Swedish-speaking homes. Children are functionally deaf to sounds absent from their native tongue. The map is completed by the first birthday. "By 12 months," says Kuhl, "infants have lost the ability to discriminate sounds that are not significant in their language, and their babbling has acquired the sound of their language."

Kuhl's findings help explain why learning a second language after, rather than with, the first is so difficult. "The perceptual map of the first language constrains the learning of a second," she says. In other words, the circuits are already wired for Spanish, and the remaining undedicated neurons have lost their ability to form basic new connections for, say, Greek. A child taught a second language after the age of 10 or so is unlikely ever to speak it like a native. Kuhl's work also suggests why related languages such as Spanish and French are easier to learn than unrelated ones: more of the existing circuits can do double duty.

With this basic circuitry established, a baby is primed to turn sounds into words. The more words a child hears, the faster she learns language, according to psychiatrist Janellen Huttenlocher of the University of Chicago. Infants whose mothers spoke to them a lot knew 131 more words at 20 months than did babies of more taciturn, or

less involved, mothers; at 24 months, the gap had widened to 295 words. (Presumably the findings would also apply to a father if he were the primary caregiver.) It didn't matter which words the mother used—monosyllables seemed to work. The sound of words, it seems, builds up neural circuitry that can then absorb more words,

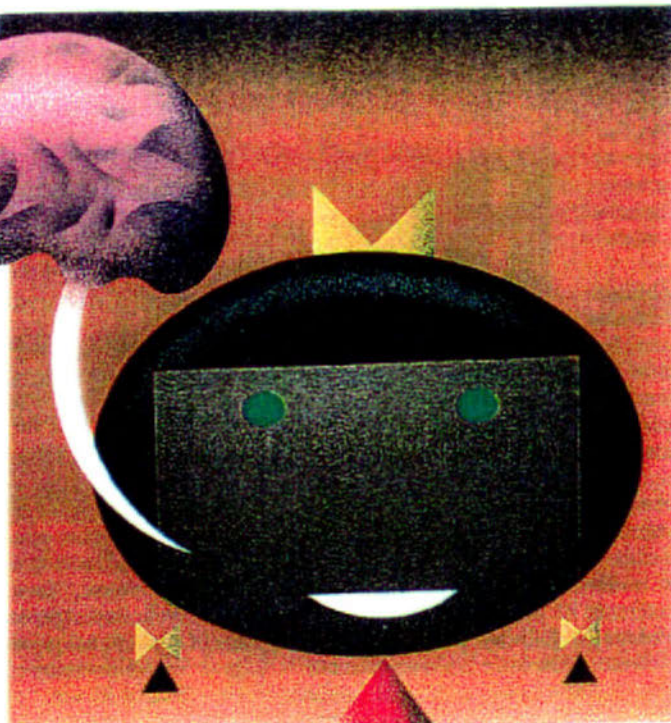
ing, the amount of somatosensory cortex dedicated to the thumb and fifth finger of the left hand—the fingering digits—was significantly larger than in nonplayers. How long the players practiced each day did not affect the cortical map. But the age at which they had been introduced to their muse did: the younger the child when

she took up an instrument, the more cortex she devoted to playing it.

Like other circuits formed early in life, the ones for music endure. Wayne State's Chugani played the guitar as a child, then gave it up. A few years ago he started taking piano lessons with his young daughter. She learned easily, but he couldn't get his fingers to follow his wishes. Yet when Chugani recently picked up a guitar, he found to his delight that "the songs are still there," much like the muscle memory for riding a bicycle.

Math and logic: At UC Irvine, Gordon Shaw suspected that all higher-order thinking is characterized by similar patterns of neuron firing. "If you're working with little kids," says Shaw, "you're not going to teach them higher mathematics or chess. But they are interested in and can process music." So Shaw and Frances Rauscher gave 19 preschoolers piano or singing lessons. After eight months, the researchers found, the children "dramatically improved in spatial reasoning," compared with children given no music lessons, as shown in their ability to work mazes, draw geometric figures and copy patterns of two-color blocks. The mechanism behind the "Mozart effect" remains murky, but Shaw suspects that when children exercise cortical neurons by listening to classical music, they are also strengthening circuits used for mathematics. Music, says the UC team, "excites the inherent brain patterns and enhances their use in complex reasoning tasks."

Emotions: The trunk lines for the circuits controlling emotion are laid down before birth. Then parents take over. Perhaps the strongest influence is what psychiatrist Daniel Stern calls attunement—whether caregivers "play back a child's inner feelings." If a baby's squeal of delight at a puppy is met with a smile and hug, if her excitement at seeing a plane overhead is



The Language Brain



SKILL: Language

LEARNING WINDOW: Birth to 10 years

WHAT WE KNOW: Circuits in the auditory cortex, representing the sounds that form words, are wired by the age of 1. The more words a child hears by 2, the larger her vocabulary will grow. Hearing problems can impair the ability to match sounds to letters.

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT: Talk to your child—a lot. If you want her to master a second language, introduce it by the age of 10. Protect hearing by treating ear infections promptly.

much as creating a computer file allows the user to fill it with prose. "There is a huge vocabulary to be acquired," says Huttenlocher, "and it can only be acquired through repeated exposure to words."

Music: Last October researchers at the University of Konstanz in Germany reported that exposure to music rewires neural circuits. In the brains of nine string players examined with magnetic resonance imag-

their use

in complex reasoning tasks."

mirrored, circuits for these emotions are reinforced. Apparently, the brain uses the same pathways to generate an emotion as to respond to one. So if an emotion is reciprocated, the electrical and chemical signals that produced it are reinforced. But if emotions are repeatedly met with indifference or a clashing response—Baby is proud of building a skyscraper out of Mom's best pots, and Mom is terminally annoyed—those circuits become confused and fail to strengthen. The key here is "repeatedly": one dismissive harrumph will not scar a child for life. It's the pattern that counts, and it can be very powerful: in one of Stern's studies, a baby whose mother never matched her level of excitement became extremely passive, unable to feel excitement or joy.

Experience can also wire the brain's "calm down" circuit, as Daniel Goleman describes in his best-selling "Emotional Intelligence." One father gently soothes his crying infant, another drops him into his crib; one mother hugs the toddler who just skinned her knee, another screams "It's your own stupid fault!" The first responses are attuned to the child's distress; the others are wildly out of emotional sync. Between 10 and 18 months, a cluster of cells in the rational prefrontal cortex is busy hooking up to the emotion regions. The circuit seems to grow into a control switch, able to calm agitation by infusing reason into emotion. Perhaps parental soothing trains this circuit, strengthening the neural connections that form it, so that the child learns how to calm herself down. This all happens so early that the effects of nurture can be misperceived as innate nature.

Stress and constant threats also rewire emotion circuits. These circuits are centered on the amygdala, a little almond-shaped structure deep in the brain whose job is to scan incoming sights and sounds for emotional content. According to a wiring diagram worked out by Joseph LeDoux of New York University, impulses from eye and ear reach the amygdala before they get to the rational, thoughtful neocortex. If a sight, sound or experience has proved painful before—Dad's drunken arrival home was followed by a beating—then the amygdala floods the circuits with neurochemicals before the higher brain knows what's happening. The more often this pathway is used, the easier it is to trigger: the mere memory of Dad may induce fear. Since the circuits can stay excited for days, the brain remains on high alert. In this state, says neuroscientist Bruce Perry of Baylor College of Medicine, more circuits attend to nonverbal cues—facial expressions, angry noises—that warn of impending danger. As a result, the cortex falls behind in development and has trouble assimilating complex information such as language.

SCHOOLS

Why Do Schools Flunk Biology?

BY LYNNELL HANCOCK

BIOLOGY IS A STAPLE AT MOST American high schools. Yet when it comes to the biology of the students themselves—how their brains develop and retain knowledge—school officials would rather not pay attention to the lessons. Can first graders handle French? What time should school

start? Should music be cut? Biologists have some important evidence to offer. But not only are they ignored, their findings are often turned upside down.

Force of habit rules the hallways and classrooms. Neither brain science nor education research has been able to free the majority of America's schools from their 19th-century roots. If more administrators were tuned into brain research, scientists argue, not only would schedules change, but subjects such as foreign language and geometry would be offered to much younger children. Music and gym would be daily requirements. Lectures, work sheets and rote memorization would be replaced by hands-on materials, drama and project work. And

teachers would pay greater attention to children's emotional connections to subjects. "We do more education research than anyone else in the world," says Frank Vellutino, a professor of educational psychology at State University of New York at Albany, "and we ignore more as well."

Plato once said that music "is a more potent instrument than any other for education." Now scientists know why. Music, they believe, trains the brain for higher forms of thinking. Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, studied the power of music by observing two groups of preschoolers. One group took piano lessons and sang daily in chorus. The other did not. After eight months the musical 3-year-olds

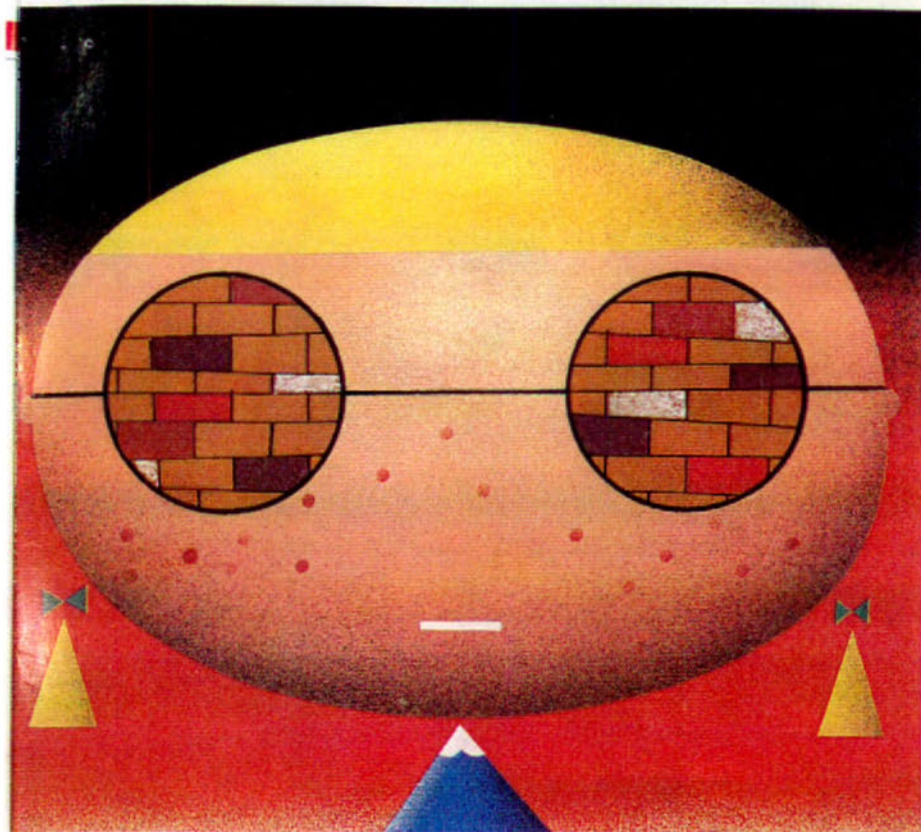
were expert puzzlemasters, scoring 80 percent higher than their playmates did in spatial intelligence—the ability to visualize the world accurately.

This skill later translates into complex math and engineering skills. "Early music training can enhance a child's ability to reason," says Irvine physicist Gordon Shaw. Yet music education is often the first "frill" to be cut when school budgets shrink. Schools on average have only one music teacher for every 500 children, according to the National Commission on Music Education.

Then there's gym—another expendable hour by most school standards. Only 36 percent of schoolchildren today are required to participate in daily physical education. Yet researchers now know that exercise is good not only for the heart. It also juices up the brain, feeding it nutrients in the form of glucose and increasing nerve connections—all of which make it easier for kids of all ages to learn. Neuroscientist William Greenough confirmed this by watching rats at his University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign lab. One group

The Windows of Opportunity





did nothing. A second exercised on an automatic treadmill. A third was set loose in a Barnum & Bailey obstacle course requiring the rats to perform acrobatic feats. These "supersmart" rats grew "an enormous amount of gray matter" compared with their sedentary partners, says Greenough.

Of course, children don't ordinarily run such gauntlets; still, Greenough believes, the results are significant. Numerous studies, he says, show that children who exercise regularly do better in school.

The implication for

schools goes beyond simple exercise. Children also need to be more physically active in the classroom, not sitting quietly in their seats memorizing subtraction tables. Knowledge is retained longer if children connect not only aurally but emotionally and physically to the material, says University of Oregon education professor Robert Sylwester in "A Celebration of Neurons."

Good teachers know that lecturing on the American Revolution is far less effective than acting out a battle. Angles and dimensions are better understood if children

chuck their work sheets and build a complex model to scale. The smell of the glue enters memory through one sensory system, the touch of the wood blocks another, the sight of the finished model still another. The brain then creates a multidimensional mental model of the experience—one easier to retrieve. "Explaining a smell," says Sylwester, "is not as good as actually smelling it."

Scientists argue that children are capable of far more at younger ages than schools generally realize. People obviously continue learning their whole lives, but the opti-

mum "windows of opportunity for learning" last until about the age of 10 or 12, says Harry Chugani of Wayne State University's Children's Hospital of Michigan. Chugani determined this by measuring the brain's consumption of its chief energy source, glucose. (The more glucose it uses, the more active the brain.) Children's brains, he observes, gobble up glucose at twice the adult rate from the age of 4 to puberty. So young brains are as primed as they'll ever be to process new information. Complex subjects such as trigonometry or foreign

language shouldn't wait for puberty to be introduced. In fact, Chugani says, it's far easier for an elementary-school child to hear and process a second language—and even speak it without an accent. Yet most U.S. districts wait until junior high to introduce Spanish or French—after the "windows" are closed.

Reform could begin at the beginning. Many sleep researchers now believe that most teens' biological clocks are set later than those of their fellow humans. But high school starts at 7:30 a.m., usually to accommodate bus schedules. The result

can be wasted class time for whole groups of kids. Making matters worse, many kids have trouble readjusting their natural sleep rhythm. Dr. Richard Allen of Johns Hopkins University found that teens went to sleep at the same time whether they had to be at school by 7:30 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. The later-to-rise teens not only get more sleep, he says; they also get better grades. The obvious solution would be to start school later when kids hit puberty. But at school, there's what's obvious, and then there's tradition.

Why is this body of research rarely used in most American classrooms? Not many administrators or school-board members know it exists, says Linda Darling-Hammond, professor of education at Columbia University's Teachers College. In most states, neither teachers nor administrators are required to know much about how children learn in order to be certified. What's worse, she says, decisions to cut music or gym are often made by noneducators, whose concerns are more often monetary than educational. "Our school system was invented in the late 1800s, and little has changed," she says. "Can you imagine if the medical profession ran this way?"

With PAT WINGERT and MARY HAGER in Washington

Circuits in different regions of the brain mature at different times. As a result, different circuits are most sensitive to life's experiences

at different ages. Give your children the stimulation they need when they need it, and anything's possible. Stumble, and all bets are off.

4 YEARS

5 YEARS

6 YEARS

7 YEARS

8 YEARS

9 YEARS

Movement: Fetal movements begin at 7 weeks and peak between the 15th and 17th weeks. That is when regions of the brain controlling movement start to wire up. The critical period lasts a while: it takes up to two years for cells in the cerebellum, which controls posture and movement, to form functional circuits. "A lot of organization takes place using information gleaned from when the child moves about in the world," says William Greenough of the University of Illinois. "If you restrict activity you inhibit the formation of synaptic connections in the cerebellum." The child's initially spastic movements send a signal to the brain's motor cortex; the more the arm, for instance, moves, the stronger the circuit, and the better the brain will become at moving the arm intentionally and fluidly. The window lasts only a few years: a child immobilized in a body cast until the age of 4 will learn to walk eventually, but never smoothly.

THERE ARE MANY more circuits to discover, and many more environmental influences to pin down. Still, neuro labs are filled with an unmistakable air of optimism these days. It stems from a growing understanding of how, at the level of nerve cells and molecules, the brain's circuits form. In the beginning, the brain-to-be consists of only a few advance scouts breaking trail: within a week of conception they march out of the embryo's "neural tube," a cylinder of cells extending from head to tail. Multiplying as they go (the brain adds an astonishing 250,000 neurons per minute during gestation), the neurons clump into the brain stem which commands heartbeat and breathing, build the little cerebellum at the back of the head which controls posture and movement, and form the grooved and rumpled cortex wherein thought and perception originate. The neural cells are so small, and the distance so great, that a neuron striking out for what will be the prefrontal cortex migrates a distance equivalent to a human's walking from New York to California, says developmental neurobiologist Mary Beth Hatten of Rockefeller University.

Only when they reach their destinations

do these cells become true neurons. They grow a fiber called an axon that carries electrical signals. The axon might reach only to a neuron next door, or it might wend its way clear across to the other side of the brain. It is the axonal connections that form the brain's circuits. Genes determine the main highways along which axons travel to

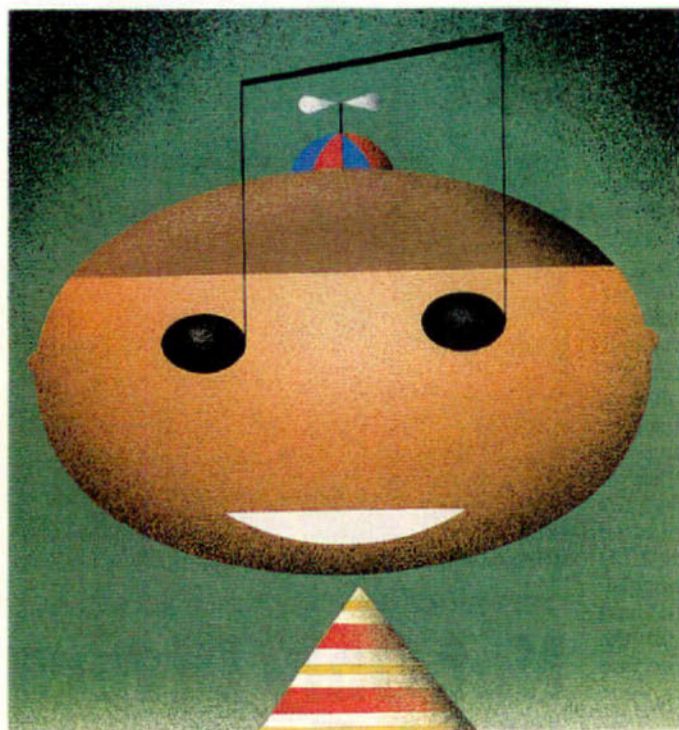
baby neurons fire electrical pulses once a minute, in a fit of what Berkeley's Shatz calls auto-dialing. If cells fire together, the target cells "ring" together. The target cells then release a flood of chemicals, called trophic factors, that strengthen the incipient connections. Active neurons respond better to trophic factors than inactive ones. Barbara Barres of Stanford University reported in October. So neurons that are quiet when others throb lose their grip on the target cell. "Cells that fire together wire together," says Shatz.

The same basic process continues after birth. Now, it is not an auto-dialer that sends signals, but stimuli from the senses. In experiments with rats, Illinois's Greenough found that animals raised with playmates and toys and other stimuli grow 25 percent more synapses than rats deprived of such stimuli.

Rats are not children, but all evidence suggests that the same rules of brain development hold. For decades Head Start has fallen short of the high hopes invested in it: the children's IQ gains fade after about three years. Craig Ramey of the University of Alabama suspected the culprit was timing: Head Start enrolls 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. So in 1972 he launched the Abecedarian Project. Children from 120 poor families were assigned to one of four groups: intensive early education in a day-care center from about 4 months to age 8, from 4 months to 5 years, from 5 to 8 years, or none at all. What does it mean to "educate" a 4-month-old? Nothing fancy: blocks, beads, talking to him, playing games such as peek-a-boo. As outlined in the book "Learninggames,"* each of the 200-odd activities was designed to enhance cognitive, language, social or motor development. In a recent paper, Ramey and Frances Campbell

of the University of North Carolina report that children enrolled in Abecedarian as preschoolers still scored higher in math and reading at the age of 15 than untreated children. The children still retained an average IQ edge of 4.6 points. The earlier the children were enrolled, the more enduring the gain. And intervention after age 5 conferred no IQ or academic benefit.

*Joseph Sparling and Isabelle Lewis (226 pages, Walker, \$8.95).



The Musical Brain



SKILL: Music

LEARNING WINDOW: 3 to 10 years

WHAT WE KNOW: String players have a larger area of their sensory cortex dedicated to the fingering digits on their left hand. Few concert-level performers begin playing later than the age of 10. It is much harder to learn an instrument as an adult.

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT: Sing songs with children. Play structured, melodic music. If a child shows any musical aptitude or interest, get an instrument into her hand early.

make their connection. But to reach particular target cells, axons follow chemical cues strewn along their path. Some of these chemicals attract: this way to the motor cortex! Some repel: no, that way to the olfactory cortex. By the fifth month of gestation most axons have reached their general destination. But like the prettiest girl in the bar, target cells attract way more suitors—axons—than they can accommodate.

How does the wiring get sorted out? The



"Reading to children aloud everyday is as important as brushing their teeth and fastening their seat belts."—Rosemary Wells

**The Twenty Minutes A Day Are There—
Look For Them!**

During our busy days, we sometimes overlook the many different ways in which to find the time to read to our children. Here are just a few ideas of where those twenty minutes might be...

- ◆ Take advantage of those long family car trips and pass the time by reading to your child
- ◆ Don't just stand in those long, slow lines at the supermarket, pull your child close to you and find some peace in all that supermarket chaos by sharing a book – right then and there
- ◆ Use the time you're waiting in the doctor's or dentist's office before your appointment
- ◆ Share a snack and enjoy it together with your favorite book
- ◆ Anytime for cuddling can also be a read aloud time – just after a nap or a bath
- ◆ There's always that old stand-by (and stand-by for good reasons!): Bedtime



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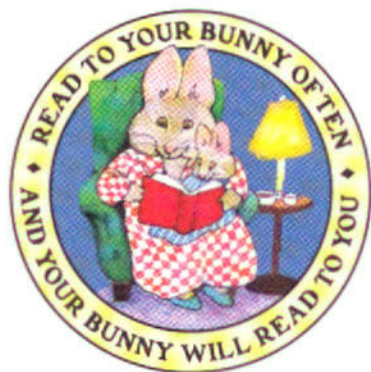
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Dear Friends:

All of us love our children more than anything in the world. In their first years we feed them so they grow. We bring them to the doctor so they are healthy. We strap them in car seats so they are safe.

But the most important thing in the first years of life is the growth of the mind and spirit. This is when a child learns to love and trust, to speak and listen.

After a child turns two years old, these things are very difficult to learn or teach ever again. Trusting, singing, laughing, and language are the most important things in a young child's life.

And so they must come first for mothers and fathers, too. Because we can never have those years over again.

Every day, make a quiet, restful place for twenty minutes. Put your child in your lap and read a book aloud. In the pages of the book you will find a tiny vacation of privacy and intense love. It costs nothing but twenty minutes and a library card.

Reading to your little one is just like putting gold coins in the bank. It will pay you back tenfold. Your daughter will learn, and imagine, and be strong in herself. Your son will thrive, and give your love back forever.

Rosemary Wells



"Reading to children aloud everyday is as important as brushing their teeth and fastening their seat belts."—Rosemary Wells

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kris Moran
(212) 343-7710

*Twenty old favorite minutes
Twenty minutes brand new
Read to your bunny often
And your bunny will read to you*

**Best-selling Author And Illustrator, Rosemary Wells
Gives A Rallying Cry For Reading**

READ TO YOUR BUNNY

OLD MACDONALD: BUNNY READS BACK

Written and Illustrated by Rosemary Wells

Since the launch of the national "Twenty Minutes a Day" literacy campaign in 1994, acclaimed author and illustrator Rosemary Wells has been the initiative's most eloquent speaker. Now, with **Read To Your Bunny** (Scholastic Press; March 1998; \$7.95; All Ages), she has created a gem that is an invitation to the world of reading.

An intimate poem that children will want to hear again and again, **Read To Your Bunny** conveys a very simple yet vital message – read to your child often, and your child will soon read to you. Recent studies show that reading aloud to children is critically linked to their success in learning to read. **Read To Your Bunny** wonderfully illustrates the most important way you can nurture your child's literacy skills. Scholastic will donate a portion of the proceeds from **Read To Your Bunny** to *Reach Out and Read*, a program which encourages parents to read to their children from birth through prenatal centers and pediatricians.

With this goal in mind, Rosemary Wells also offers the delightful **Bunny Reads Back** books starting with the adorable debut title, **Old MacDonald** (Scholastic Press; March 1998; \$4.95; All Ages). Featuring familiar children's songs in board book format, the **Bunny Reads Back** books will get your preschoolers turning pages, looking at pictures, memorizing words, and most importantly, reading back to you in no time. Together with the colorful illustrations of Wells' trademark bunnies, these heartwarming books are a true celebration of reading!



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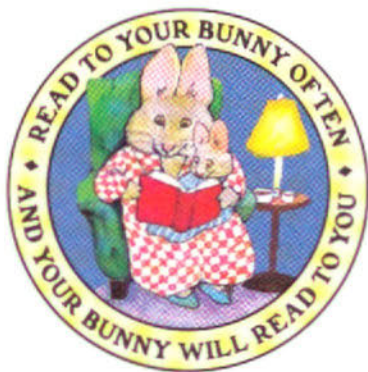
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(more)

As Rosemary Wells so poignantly states, "Reading to your little one is just like putting gold coins in the bank. It will pay you back tenfold. Your daughter will learn, and imagine, and be strong in herself. Your son will thrive, and give your love back forever."

Rosemary Wells recently presented *Read To Your Bunny* at a White House conference on brain development. She has been writing and illustrating children's books for twenty years. Her early success came with *Noisy Nora*, now a classic, and has continued with her best-selling *Max and Ruby* books, with several million copies in print. Her most recent bestseller is *Bunny Cakes*. She lives in Scarborough-on-Hudson, New York.

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"Reading to children aloud everyday is as important as brushing their teeth and fastening their seat belts."—Rosemary Wells

Rosemary Wells Bio

Born in New York City, Rosemary Wells grew up in a house "filled with books, dogs, and nineteenth-century music." Her childhood years were spent between her parents' home near Red Bank, New Jersey, and her grandmother's rambling stucco house on the Jersey Shore.

After finishing high school, Wells attended the Museum School in Boston. A self-proclaimed "poor student," Wells found this time in her life "a bastion of abstract expressionism...an art form that brought to my mind things I don't like to eat, fabrics that itch against the skin, divorce, paper cuts, and metallic noises." Without her degree, Wells left school at 19, married, and began her publishing career as a book designer with a Boston textbook publisher. When her husband, Tom, became an architecture student at Columbia, the couple moved to New York City, and Wells joined the staff of Macmillan as a designer in their children's book division.

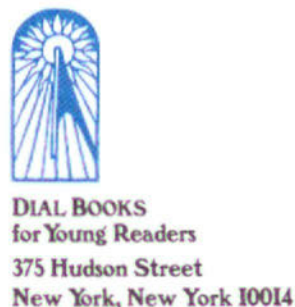
It was at Macmillan that Rosemary Wells began her promising writing and illustrating career when Wells presented a small illustrated dummy of a Gilbert and Sullivan song to her editor-in-chief. Those illustrations became her first published book, *Sing A Song, O!*, and Rosemary Wells was on her way to extraordinary success.

Her children and home life have long been an inspiration for many of her books. Her daughters Victoria and Beezoo were constant inspirations, especially for the now famous "Max" board book series. Her West Highland white terrier, Angus, had the shape and expressions to become Benjamin and Tulip, Timothy, and all the other animals of her stories.

But not all of Wells' ideas come from within the family circle. She admits, "I put into my books all of the things I remember. I am an accomplished eavesdropper in restaurants, trains, and gatherings of any kind. These remembrances are jumbled up and changed because fiction is always more palatable than truth. Memories become more true as they are honed and whittled into characters and stories."

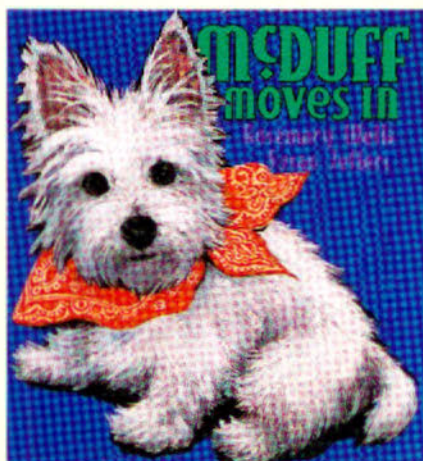
Rosemary Wells calls her prolific writing and illustrating career, which has spanned nearly three decades, a "pure delight." She adds, "I have been blessed with a small key to the world of the young." With over 50 well-loved, award-winning picture books to her credit and an endless list of awards and accolades, Wells has also written many highly acclaimed novels for teenagers including *Leave Well Enough Alone*, *When No One Was Looking*, and *Through a Hidden Door*.

(more)



Most recently, Rosemary Wells has been a leading voice in the children's literacy campaign. Since the launch of the national "Twenty Minutes a Day" literacy campaign in 1994, she has been the initiative's most eloquent speaker calling attention to the lifelong benefits in spending twenty minutes each day reading to your child. Her latest picture book, **Read To Your Bunny**, is an intimate poem that invites parents and children to read together and share in twenty minutes of joy and love. Moreover, Wells' **Read To Your Bunny** serves as the foundation for the national **Read To Your Bunny** campaign which seeks to further spread the message of children's literacy.

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- *Booklist*, starred review of McDUFF MOVES IN



Rosemary Wells and Susan Jeffers
with their other favorite Westies.



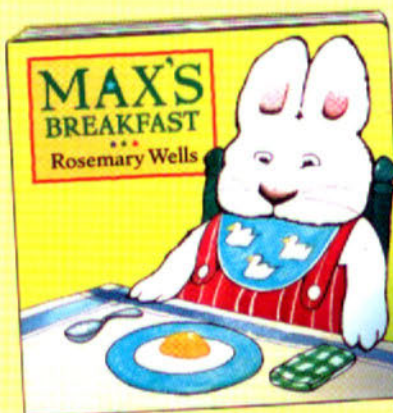
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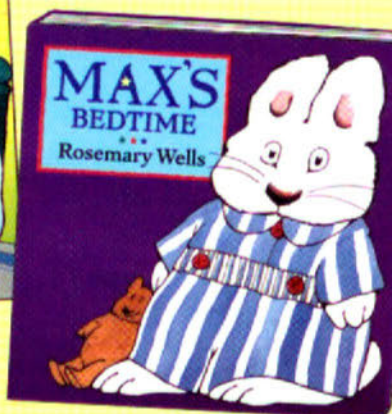
by Rosemary Wells

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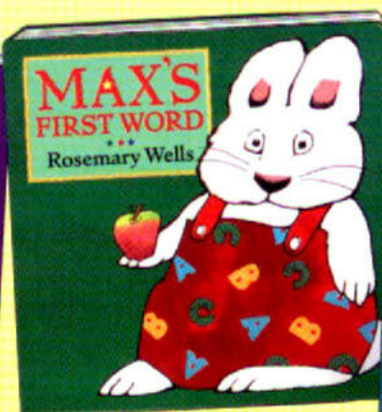
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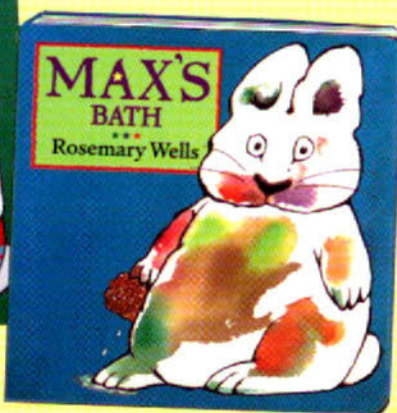
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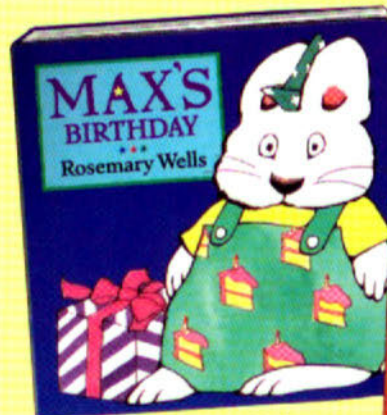
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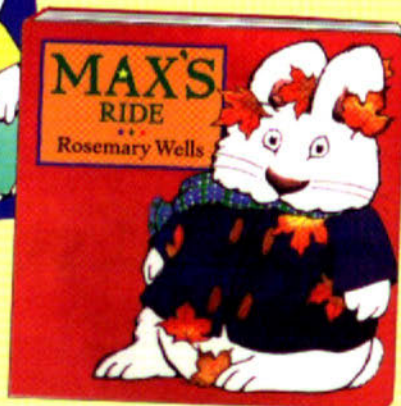
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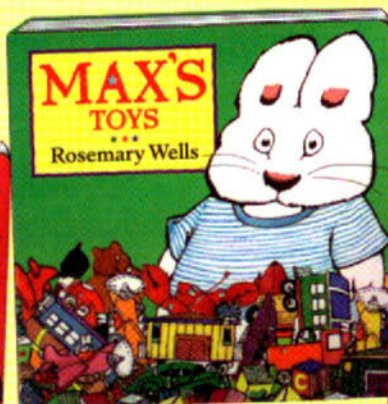
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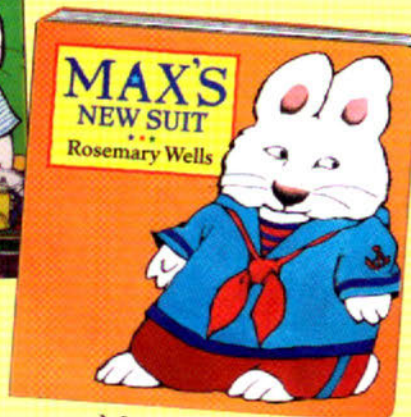
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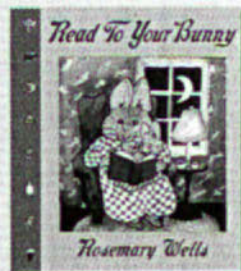
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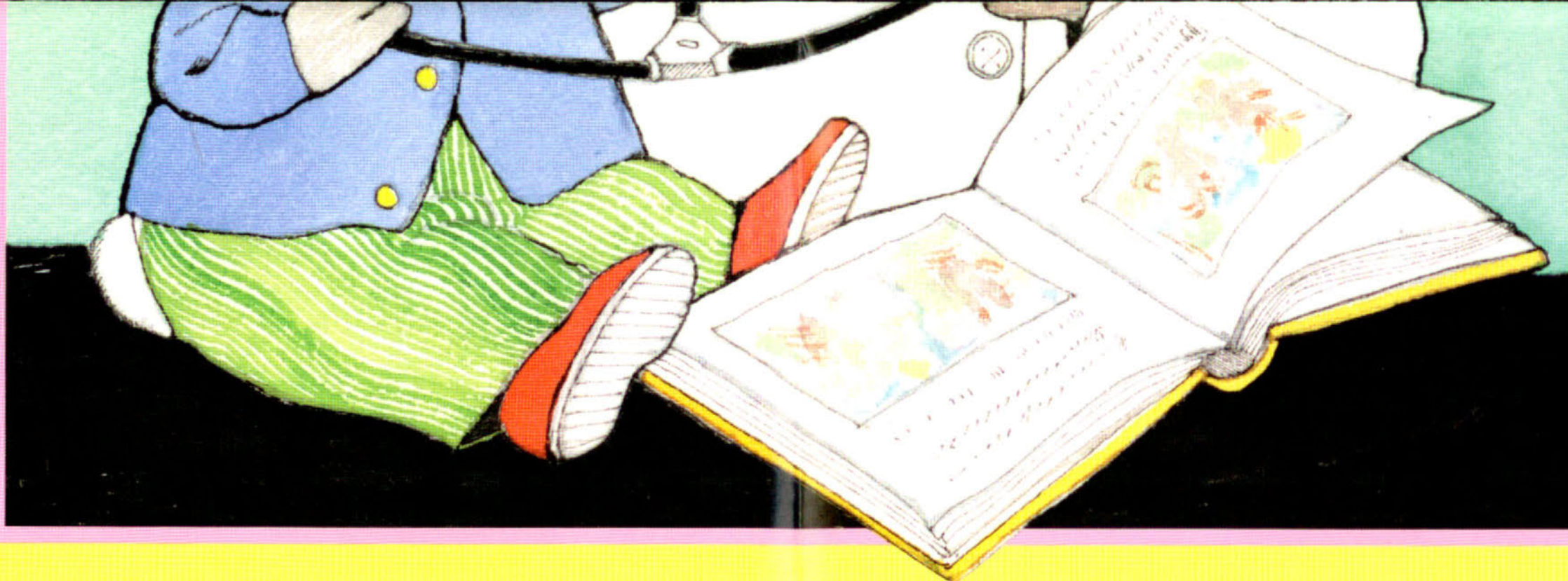


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