

# Parent Guide to SeeSaw

Grades K-1 Your resource for advice, ideas, and more for your beginning reader

April  
2009

Get your  
Parent Guide to SeeSaw  
Every Month  
at [www.scholastic.com/read](http://www.scholastic.com/read).

## Editors' Picks of the Month

Look for these titles in your SeeSaw  
April Book Club flyer.

### Hello, Biscuit!

by Alyssa Satin

**Who It's For:**  
Every child who likes puppies.

**Why We Chose It:**  
The choice of the right name  
for a pet is a task everyone  
can relate to.

**Parents Say:**  
"Biscuit's so cute, my child  
loves to practice reading with  
books about him."



### The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!

by Mo Willems

**Who It's For:**  
Every child who knows how to  
ask for something endlessly.

**Why We Chose It:**  
Funny text and illustrations by  
a Caldecott artist make both  
parents and kids laugh.

**Parents Say:**  
My child loves to be the one  
to decide yes or no!"



### Skippyjon Jones: Up, Up, and Away! Sticker Stories

by Judy Schachner

**Who It's For:**  
Fans of Skippyjon; kids who  
love to play pretend.

**Why We Chose It:**  
Reusable stickers make this an  
interactive read-aloud.

**What Parents Say:**  
"Skippyjon is so ridiculous, he  
makes US laugh!"



## Playing With Poetry

Paint pictures with words, and bring language to life.

Children are born poets; they just need your help to know it. Poetry requires us to look at the world from a unique perspective, to daydream, imagine, laugh, and pretend — all things that children do naturally. Poems help us make sense of the world and express ideas and feelings in ways that everyday language cannot. The playful rhythms, silly rhymes, nonsensical words, and the short form of poetry also grab children's attention and give them a chance to succeed with language. In the words of poet Allen Ginsberg, poetry is ordinary magic.

By introducing your child to poetic forms and inviting her to create her own poems, you can unlock the magic. Poetry allows us to invent language, and anyone, even young children, can write poems. The seeds of poems are everywhere if we train our eyes to look. They appear in the clouds, the wind, a feeling, a cool stream, a friend's crazy hat, a cat cuddled up on our lap, a dog chasing a ball, or even in a silly dream.

What child doesn't enjoy making up new words or combining familiar words in silly ways? This experimentation and exploration helps your child build vocabulary, recognize the sounds of speech, express himself, and enjoy working with words. Poetry allows him to write about what really interests him — what he cares about, what he knows, what he sees, and most important, what he feels. It offers choices — not just of topic but of words, sentence structure, form, and pattern. Best of all, poetry is a place for his personality to shine through.

## Ask an Expert

The very first thing you can do is to make time as a family for quiet pleasure reading. Turn off the TV and minimize other distractions like telephone calls. The key to success of this family time is for your child to see you as a model, enjoying your own good book or catching up on current events with your newspaper. The second important element is that everyone gets to choose what he or she wants to read. This is not the time to force a particular book upon your child, nor should he do any reading associated with homework. It is a time during which pleasure reading can be shared, with your child reading to you, another parent, a sibling, or even someone reading to him. If a family reading session is not possible, try to keep up the bedtime-story ritual. As children progress through their elementary-school years, this tradition tends to wane, despite the fact that it continues to be a great benefit. Reading for enjoyment comes naturally for some, but not for others. But if your family is a reading-for-fun family, it may be harder to reject what gives everyone else a good time.

**Meet our expert:** Francie Alexander, a former teacher, is vice president and chief academic officer for Scholastic.

Have a question about reading? Find advice at [www.scholastic.com/read](http://www.scholastic.com/read).



## Parent to Parent

April is National Poetry Month!  
Find recommended poetry  
books for your reader at  
[www.scholastic.com/read](http://www.scholastic.com/read).

**My child never reads on his own, and I feel like I'm always forcing it. How can I get him to enjoy reading more?**

## 7 Ways to Explore Poetry Together

- 1 Read it aloud.** Many adults are intimidated by the conventions of poetic form, but poetry — especially children’s poetry — is full of wonder, energy, and a sense of humor. Read poetry by different poets to find those you like. A love of poetry is contagious, so be enthusiastic!
- 2 Put poetry in print.** Even if your child can’t yet write, he can dictate his poems to you. Typing up your child’s poetry preserves and honors his ideas and makes them available to others. Invite him to illustrate the poem he created.
- 3 Find a poem in your child’s name.** This type of poetry, known as acrostic, encourages word associations and playful nonsense. Your child’s name becomes the “spine” word. Each letter of her name is a seed for a new word. Invite her to think of words that begin with each letter — the new words can relate to her name, things she loves to do, or nothing at all.

Playing

After school

Makes me happy

- 4 Make a silly poem together.** Read some poems with silly, made-up words, such as “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll or selections from Shel Silverstein’s book, *Runny Babbit*. Can he tell which words the poets made up? Why does he think the poets made up words? Then invite your child to create a poem using real and pretend words.
- 5 Write a “what’s under” poem.** Invite your child to write some lines that describe what’s under, over, in, and out of things. This exercise relies on imagination and explores the relationship of one thing to another. Try making up a poem yourself as an example. Offer a poem-starter phrase such as “Under the sky is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 6 Find some rhymes.** This is an exercise in wordplay. Pick a word and invite your child to think of all the words that rhyme with it. Keep a list of the words he says. Then, together, see if you can create a poem from his list.
- 7 Make it human.** Playing with personification (giving human qualities to nonhuman things) builds on a child’s observational skills and imagination.

## Not all poems rhyme!

Kids can get turned off by the “rules” of poetry if they feel forced to make words rhyme. Encourage your child to write a short non-rhyming poem. Pick a subject and simply describe it in a stanza or two with a few short lines. This will help your child choose the best words possible to describe his thoughts.

For example:

The sky goes on  
For miles on end  
With marshmallow clouds  
Floating everywhere

I love to imagine  
The shapes of the clouds  
They mold to whatever  
I dream them to be

Try it!

## Find More Titles in Kids’ Favorite Series

Now, you and your child can find more titles in your favorite book series online – at the Scholastic Book Clubs Series Headquarters. From Clifford to the Magic School Bus and beyond, the Series Headquarters puts all kids’ best-loved characters all in one place – and all at low Scholastic Book Clubs pricing. And books are delivered right to the classroom, just like always! Visit [www.scholastic.com/serieshq](http://www.scholastic.com/serieshq).

## Kids Read for Kids in Need

Scholastic Book Clubs’ ClassroomsCare is a philanthropic literacy campaign designed to teach children the joys and importance of reading and giving. Students in classrooms across America are encouraged to read 100 books in order to trigger a 1 MILLION BOOK donation by ClassroomsCare! Since 2001, ClassroomsCare has donated 7 MILLION books through Literacy Partners such as Save the Children, Reach Out and Read, and First Book, among others.

This year, for the first time, participating teachers and students will be able to choose where the books they “earn” go. They will have dozens of charities serving many different populations to choose from. This shift in the donation process is aimed at strengthening the connection between the kids who are reading and the kids who are receiving the books.

You can visit [www.scholastic.com/classroomscare](http://www.scholastic.com/classroomscare) to see how a child you know could make a difference by reading. You can also access resources and curriculum aimed at the ClassroomsCare message -- kids have the power to make a difference and there is nothing more worthwhile than helping others, especially when you are offering the gift of reading.

## Did You Know?

When you order, your child’s class gets FREE books and resources!

Find out more about leveled reading at [www.scholastic.com/yourreader](http://www.scholastic.com/yourreader).

**About Your Parent Guide to SeeSaw**  
Your Parent Guide to SeeSaw is produced by the editorial staff at [Scholastic.com/parents](http://Scholastic.com/parents). For information on how to foster reading at home, age-appropriate booklists, and more, visit [www.scholastic.com/read](http://www.scholastic.com/read).