

## Building Children's Reading Skills

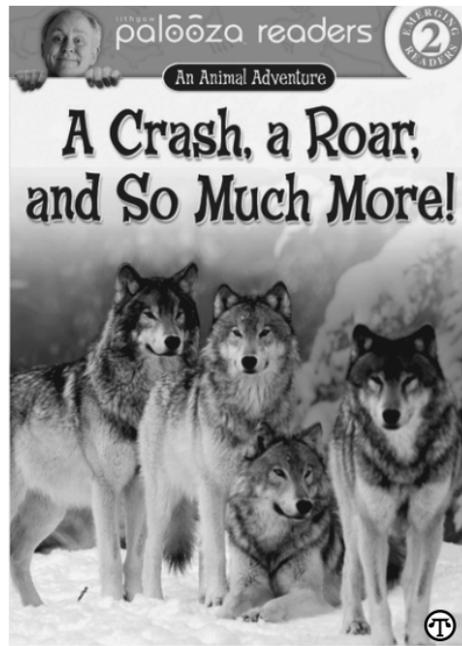
(NAPSA)—Experts say it's hard to read too much into the importance of childhood literacy—and that one of the best ways to build a young child's reading skills may be to use what are known as "leveled readers."

Leveled readers are books written in such a way that they address a child's developmental needs and abilities and help him learn to read. The readers often come in sets, so that as a child finishes one level, he can step up to the next level, which will build on the reading concepts he has just learned. A leveled reader for children in first grade, for example, will feature words and topics that are appropriate and understandable for that age group. The second-grade version of the reader will require the child to use what he learned in the first-grade version, and teach him new concepts.

Leveled readers based on popular children's books can be especially useful, as they often feature characters children are already familiar with—and interested in. For instance, leveled readers developed from John Lithgow's Lithgow Palooza are being used across the country.

The book series from School Specialty Publishing includes titles leveled to levels 2, 3, and 4. These are appropriate for young learners in grades K-3. Each of the leveled readers follows the thematic approach of Lithgow's best-sellers. "Moo-Moo Went the Tuba," for example, is a K-1 new title, developed from "The Remarkable Farkle McBride," which has musical themes.

Similarly, "Zippety Zoo" is a new leveled reader developed for children in grades 2 to 3. It features characters from "Marsupial Sue"—a Lithgow best-seller. "Mar-



**Leveled readers based on popular children's books from School Specialty Publishing can help kids learn to read.**

supial Sue" is about young Sue, who does not like being a kangaroo, so she goes off to find something better. First she tries climbing the trees like a koala, but that doesn't work. Then she wades into the sea like a platypus, but that's no good either. Finally, Sue joins up with some "bouncy, jouncy" wallabies—and discovers that being a kangaroo isn't so bad after all. The book helps reassure children that they can be happy with who they are. The leveled reader based on the book has similar themes and characters.

The leveled readers from School Specialty Publishing are available in bookstores beginning in September, 2005. They'll also be in public and school libraries, and made available to various literacy programs across the U.S. For more information, visit the Web site [www.schoolspecialtypublishing.com](http://www.schoolspecialtypublishing.com).