



# The Zach and Zoe Mysteries: The Missing Baseball

by Mike Lupica

Reading with your child is an excellent way to expose your child to words, topics, and ideas that are more complex than what they would see in books they can read on their own.

Conversations will help increase your child’s oral language skills and build their vocabulary. C.A.R. is a conversation starter that you can use with your child any time.

Below is an example of how to use C.A.R. with the book, *The Zach and Zoe Mysteries: The Missing Baseball*.



C.A.R.	Example
<p><b>C</b> <b>Comment and Wait</b> (count to 5) *Make a comment about what you see on the page.</p>	<p><i>Adult:</i> Look at the ball flying right over the pitcher’s head!</p> <p><i>Child:</i> It looks like it’s going fast.</p>
<p><b>A</b> <b>Ask questions and Wait</b> (count to 5) *Ask questions that do not have a “yes/ no” or one-word answer to them.</p>	<p><i>Adult:</i> What do you think she is thinking right now?</p> <p><i>Child:</i> She’s probably thinking “Oh no! He’s hitting a home run!”</p>
<p><b>R</b> <b>Respond</b> by adding a little more to the child’s response.</p>	<p><i>Adult:</i> I think so too. If Zach hits a home run, he will score, and that will mean his team will win the game. The pitcher is probably disappointed that he had such a good hit.</p>



<b>Activities</b>	<b>Parent Tips</b>
<p>Mysteries are a wonderful way to teach critical thinking skills in an exciting way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Help your child define what a mystery is. Give examples of different well-known mysteries, then see if you can work together to write your own!</li> <li>» Create your own mystery at home and turn it into a game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick something special (a toy, a stuffed animal, a picture) and hide it.</li> <li>• Describe the premise of the story. For example, “Oh no! Fluffy has gone missing! But wait, he left this note in the toy box. Can you read it and help me solve this mystery?”</li> <li>• Scatter other clues around the house for your child to read and try to solve the mystery.</li> <li>• Take turns playing the game with different objects and new clues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Practice the skill of predicting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout the book, ask your child what they predict will happen next.</li> <li>• Ask them why they made that prediction. Encourage them to use details they read in the text to support their prediction.</li> <li>• Model making your own predictions and explain your thinking.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Read this book with a lot of enthusiasm! This chapter book has very few pictures, so you want to make sure you speak clearly and with excitement to keep your child engaged.</li> <li>» Use this book to tap into your child’s imagination! Ask a lot of questions and have your child make predictions about what they think will happen next at the end of each chapter.</li> <li>» Keep in mind it is normal for children to struggle with reading once books become longer and harder to follow. Don’t get discouraged! This is a great opportunity to read with them and make connections to their interests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try partner reading, where you alternate taking turns reading and help each other with tricky words.</li> <li>• Try choral reading, where you read the words together, so your child has you as a model for appropriate pace.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Don’t feel like you have to read this book all at once. Each new chapter is a natural place to pause and take a break.</li> </ul>
<b>More Activities</b>	<b>Related Books/Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Zach and Zoe love to play sports because they enjoy competing against each other and competing against themselves. Talk to your child about what sports they like to play and why.</li> <li>» Set up a friendly game where your family can compete. Whether it is one of the games Zach and Zoe play in the story like one-on-one basketball, soccer, or baseball, or if it is a board game you already have inside your house. Use this time to discuss what it feels like to win and what it feels like to lose. Use Zach and Zoe as an example.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Zach and Zoe Mysteries</b></p> <p><b><i>The Half-Court Hero</i></b> by Mike Lupica</p> <p><b><i>The Hockey Rink Unit</i></b> by Mike Lupica</p> <p><b><i>The Football Fiasco</i></b> by Mike Lupica</p> <p><b><i>The Soccer Secret</i></b> by Mike Lupica</p> <p><b>Related books</b></p> <p><b><i>Amira Can Catch!</i></b> by Kevin Christofora</p> <p><b><i>My Favorite Sport: Baseball</i></b> by Nancy Streza</p> <p><b><i>Teammates</i></b> by Peter Golenbock, illustrated by Paul Bacon</p>

