



School-Home Connection

Your child is reading an excerpt from the book *Off and Running* by Gary Soto. This selection tells about a girl named Miata Ramirez, who is running for president of her fifth-grade class. Her mother arranges for Miata to meet Doña Carment, an elderly woman who was once mayor of her town in Mexico. Doña Carmen inspires Miata and offers flowers from her garden to help Miata keep her campaign promise to make her school pretty. To explore and develop your child's language skills, encourage your child to tell you about this story and to do the following activities with you.

Older Folks

It is sometimes difficult for young people to realize that elderly people, like Doña Carmen in the story, were once young and may have led fascinating lives. Perhaps you have an elderly relative or neighbor who could tell your child an interesting story about past experiences and accomplishments. Encourage your child to write down the story and take it to school to share with classmates.

Vocabulary

Word Play

While reading "Off and Running," your child has learned the following new vocabulary words:

campaign
graffiti

endorse
obnoxious

resident

Have your child cut a sheet of cardboard into five pieces about the size of playing cards and write on vocabulary word on each card. Then hold the cards in your hand in a fan shape so your child cannot see the words. Have your child select a card at random, read the word aloud, tell you what the word means, and use it in a sentence. Continue until all the cards have been used..



TIME TO READ

Encourage your child to read for at least 30 minutes outside of class each day.

Library Visit

If your child would like to read more about Miata and find out whether or not she wins the election, look for the novel *Off and Running* at your public library. You and your child might also look for other books that Gary Soto has written for young people. The three listed here feature characters who also appear in *Off and Running*.

- *The Skirt* by Gary Soto, illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Yearling Books, 1994.
- *The Pool Party* by Gary Soto, illustrated by Robert Casilla. Yearling Books, 1995.
- *Boys at Work* by Gary Soto, illustrated by Robert Casilla. Yearling Books, 1996.

