

PAGES

Father's Day

Sharing stories a great way
to spend time with Dad
on Father's Day

BY STEPHANIE MCLELLAN

Special to The Economist & Sun/Tribune

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney / illustrated by Anita Jeram, Candlewick Press, \$9.99 board book, \$21.99 hardcover

This lovely book has become a children's classic and it earns this distinction on many fronts. Anita Jeram's endearing watercolours capture a deep and tender bond between a father rabbit and his little son. Even your little ones will sigh and aw-w-w over the sweet illustrations of Little Nutbrown Hare in various stages of sleep and play.

But that's only half the story.

The carefully chosen words tell the other half as Little Nutbrown Hare tries to tell Big Nutbrown Hare how much he loves him. "This much," he indicates, stretching out his arms as wide as they could go.

But Big Nutbrown Hare has even longer arms and higher hops, and it seems to Little Nutbrown Hare that he can never compete until he spies the moon. He knows in his heart of hearts that "nothing could be farther than the sky," and he sinks into a blissful sleep, satisfied that, at last, he has been able to express the immensity of his love.

If you're a parent reading this, you'll know (as I know, as Big Nutbrown Hare knows) a parent's love for his or her child is really immeasurable, and because it is so, he concedes the point to Little Nutbrown Hare and lets the little one have the triumph. Then, for our ears only, he whispers a truth that will make you smile as you cuddle your little one close. A wonderful book. (Ages 2 to 8).

A Perfect Father's Day, by Eve Bunting / illustrated by Susan Meddaugh, Clarion Books, \$9.95 paperback

In this light-hearted book by prolific children's writer Eve Bunting, four-year-old Susie takes her Dad out for a perfect Father's Day, bent on taking him to all his favourite places to do all his favourite things. Funnily enough, they end up going to all the places Susie loves, such as the park.

They eat fast food and buy balloons, swing on swings and feed the ducks (Susie swings, Dad pushes). Lucky Dad, he even gets to pay! And for all these reasons, it really is a perfect Father's Day.

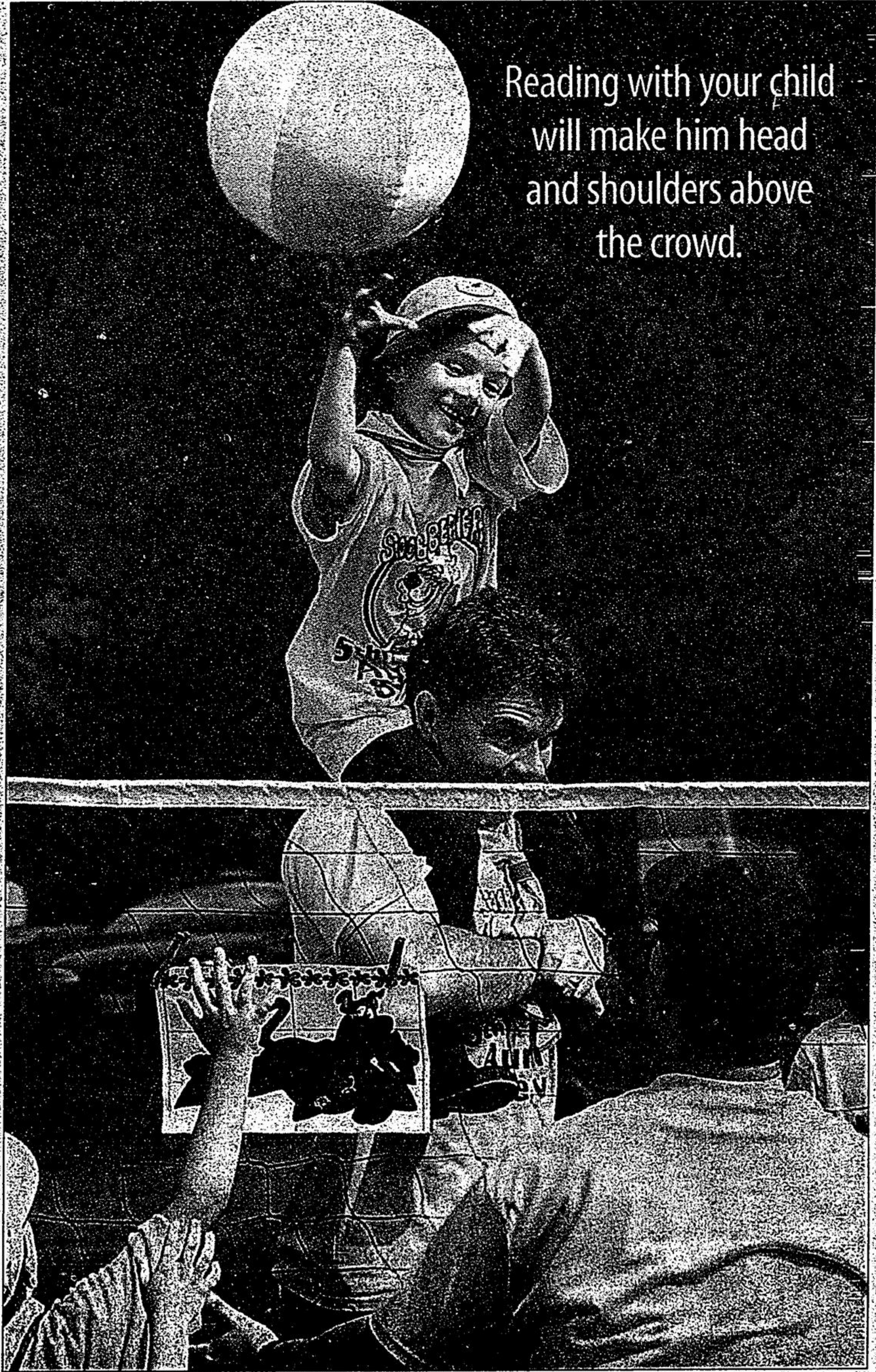
Susie is your typical charming four-year-old whose delights and whims are at the center of a universe that revolves disarmingly around her. She's self-centered without being selfish and is entirely convinced anything she loves doing, her Dad will love doing, too. And she's pretty well right about that! (Ages 3 to 8)

Good Job, Little Bear, by Martin Waddell / illustrated by Barbara Firth, Candlewick Press, \$21.99 hard cover

Good Job, Little Bear is the fourth book beloved British author Martin Waddell has written about the special bond between a father (Big Bear) and his small son (Little Bear). As in the previous stories (*Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?*, *Let's Go Home, Little Bear?*, and *You and Me, Little Bear*) - each available in paperback for \$8.99 - Waddell uses simple incidents to illuminate a touching relationship that feeds both father and son.

Little Bear's innocence, fear, wonder and joy help Big Bear open his eyes and experience the world from a different angle. Big Bear's confidence, warmth,

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Reading with your child
will make him head
and shoulders above
the crowd.

STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Paul Seimkovich hitches a ride with dad, Sam during a volleyball game at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area in Whitchurch-Stouffville. Another way for fathers and children to connect is reading.

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