

Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

SPECIAL POINTS OF IN- TEREST:

If you have any further questions, please contact me, Cookie Stewart, at 508-778-7599 or at stewartv@dy-region-al.k12.ma.us

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DECEMBER 2019

From the Title I Coordinator:

Children like to get into the holiday spirit of giving presents. Unfortunately, most of them do not have any money to purchase a "store bought" item. A gift coupon book of promises makes a great gift and best of all, it does not cost anything. Materials:

1. 8 1/2 by 11 heavy paper or cardboard for the cover.
2. 10 pieces of 8 1/2 by 11 paper.
3. Glue
4. Stapler

Method:

1. Cut the cover and paper into a large oval.
2. Have the child draw his or her face on the cover.
3. Print the words "I promise" on a separate piece of paper

and cut out in the shape of a cartoon dialogue bubble.

4. On each of the interior pages have the child draw a picture of a chore or activity that they will willingly do when asked. These become the "I promise" coupons. (Examples include: set the table, take care of a pet, clean the table, make the bed, help with the laundry, sing a song or tell a story, write a note to a relative, help put away the groceries, give a parent a hug or kiss before going to school, help clean the car, make their bed on a daily basis, etc.
5. Glue the words "I

Picture.

6. Staple the packet together.

As the holiday season approaches, many of us will be buying toys for our children. Unfortunately, not all toy manufacturers take children's safety into consideration as they market toys. Keep the child's age, interests, and skill level in mind when buying toys.

Check the consumer Product Safety Commission's web site for recalls and warnings.

www.cpsc.gov



Things you can do:

Decorate a winter tree for the birds with your children. String some popcorn and/or cranberries and place on a low shrub or tree. Hollow out half of an orange and fill with peanut butter then sprinkle with bird seed and place on the same tree. Place peanut butter or suet on a pinecone and sprinkle with bird seed and place on the same tree.

Let your children use their imaginations to decorate the tree with edible fruits for the birds and squirrels. When they have finished this, go inside and have them draw a picture of the tree and write a paragraph about what they have done.



Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

December 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



SHORT NOTES

Spot the object

Finding hidden pictures is not only fun—it also improves your youngster's attention to detail. Try a book from a series like *Where's Waldo?* (Martin Handford) or *I Spy* (Jean Marzollo). Or search the internet for "hidden pictures." She can print out the pages or play online.

Tell the truth

Show your child that being truthful matters—even in situations where no one would know the difference. For example, if you leave a store without noticing an item under your cart, let him see you return to pay for it. Explain that being honest is the right thing to do and it makes you feel good.

The best gifts

This holiday season, help your youngster brainstorm presents that don't cost a lot of money. For instance, she might make a book of coupons that family members can redeem ("Good for one dog wash"). Or the two of you could bake muffins for teachers and neighbors.

Worth quoting

"Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers." *Kahlil Gibran*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: Why did the walrus stand on the marshmallow?

A: So she wouldn't fall into the hot cocoa!

We're a family of readers

When families share a love of reading, children develop stronger literacy skills and are more motivated to pick up a book. Here's how some of our readers have made reading a family affair.

After-dinner novel

"We pick a novel all ages can enjoy—often one my wife or I enjoyed as a child—and take turns reading a chapter a night. The kids look forward to it, especially if we stopped at a cliff-hanger the day before. After each chapter, we share our opinions of the book and say what we think will happen tomorrow."

Reading adventures

"Every time we visit the library, we look for books related to someplace we're going soon. Before a visit to the aquarium, we found nonfiction books about sharks and dolphins. And before a trip to my sister's apartment in the city, we read about skyscrapers, subways, and taxis."



Treasure hunts

"When my son first learned to read, he searched for free reading 'treasure.' He'd collect maps from parks and malls, brochures from the vet's office, and even fortunes from cookies. Soon, our whole family was adding to the 'treasure chest.' We've learned a lot, like how dogs communicate and what fun things there are to do at our favorite park." ♥

Clearing out clutter

Try these ideas for decluttering during winter break, and your youngster will start the New Year with organized spaces to work and play:

- Have your child sort through her backpack and study area. She could file old tests and quizzes, save favorite papers and projects, and discard anything she won't need when school starts again.
- Let your youngster start a donation box in her closet for outgrown clothes and toys. Once the box is full, decide together where to donate it—she'll discover the satisfaction that comes from helping others.
- Suggest that your child label separate containers for smaller items like erasers and sticky notes. Putting them into the correct bins gives her practice with sorting and makes school supplies easy to find at homework time. ♥

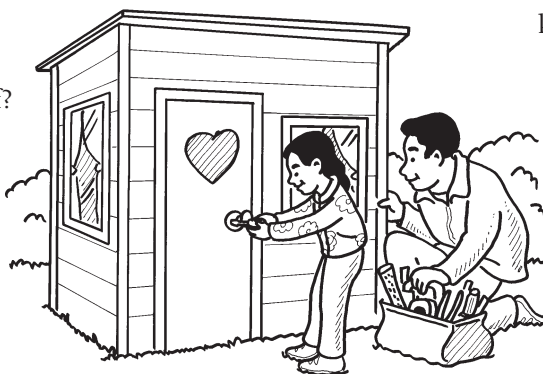


I can handle that!

What is your child capable of doing for herself? Probably more than she realizes. Encourage her to become more responsible with these tips.

Manage a social life. Let your youngster call friends to set up her own get-togethers. She can also RSVP to birthday parties and pick out and wrap gifts. If she's sleeping over at a friend or relative's house, ask her to pack her own overnight bag herself.

Do minor repairs. Teach your child how to use a screwdriver and other tools safely. You can watch as she puts her



know-how to work fixing a younger sibling's toy or tightening a loose doorknob.

Track "inventory." Is your youngster running low on crayons, shampoo, or her favorite cereal? Have her keep a list on the refrigerator.

Cook food. Your child can learn to make sandwiches and salads, mash potatoes, and whisk eggs. With supervision, she could peel and chop vegetables and use the microwave. *Idea:* Encourage her to be creative in the kitchen and come up with her own recipes.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Connect with history

Become history "tourists" in your own town. These activities help your child learn about history and make connections to what he's learning in school.

Exhibits

Visit historic sites and museums. Your youngster may learn how people made hand-dipped candles or crafted armor. Encourage him to ask staffers questions about the time period. He might inquire about chores children did, for instance.



Historical markers

These plaques tell what happened in specific locations. Perhaps a one-room schoolhouse once stood in your town or a famous inventor was born nearby. Stop to read and discuss the markers. *Tip:* Search for markers near you at hmdb.org.♥



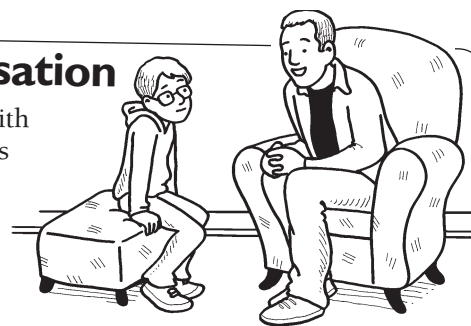
Drugs: Start a conversation

It's never too early to discuss drugs with your youngster. In fact, opening the lines of communication now will pave the way for more serious conversations as he gets older. Consider this advice.

● **Begin with questions.** Find out what your child knows about drugs.

What has he learned in health class or heard from other kids? Using his knowledge as a starting point will lead to a more meaningful discussion and allow you to correct misconceptions.

● **Discuss safety rules.** When you take medication or give any to your youngster, read the instructions together. Explain that taking more than directed is dangerous and that he's not allowed to take medicine without your permission. *Note:* Be sure to keep your medicine cabinet locked.♥



Motivated from within

Q: My daughter told me that her friends "all" get rewards for good grades and she wants to get rewards, too. How should I handle this?

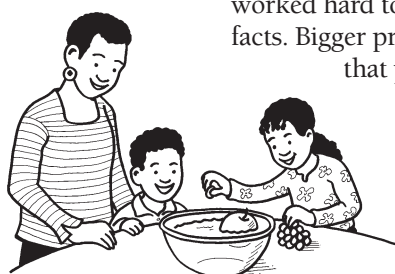
A: Help your child see that doing well is a reward in itself. That way, she won't get in the habit of depending on rewards like money or stickers.

First, encourage her to focus on the excitement of learning rather than just on her grades. Say she aced a science test. Of course you're proud of her and you'll let her know it. But also

ask her to explain a concept or show you an experiment or activity she did in class. ("You answered that an apple floats but a grape sinks—I'd like to see that!")

Also, help her see how her effort leads to natural rewards. If she brings home a good math grade on her report card, you could say, "Great job. I know you worked hard to learn multiplication facts. Bigger problems will be easier now that you've memorized those."

Over time, she'll realize how rewarding it is to learn new things, work hard, and succeed—without rewards from anyone else.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

December 2019

Beginning Edition

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

TOOLS & TIDBITS

Twice as big

Have your child draw a picture of a favorite object—say, a boat or a dinosaur. Now ask him to draw it again in different sizes, twice as big or half as big. He'll enjoy drawing while he learns about bigger and smaller.

Snack on science

Use fruit to sharpen your youngster's observation skills. Cut grapes, apples, and oranges in half so she can compare the cross-sections. Which ones contain seeds? Are the colors the same or different inside and out? Let her draw and label what she sees. Then, make fruit salad and enjoy the sweet snack together.



Book picks

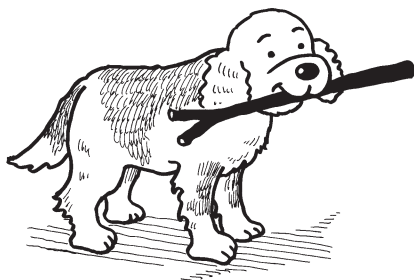
Every second counts in a championship soccer game! *Game Time!* (Stuart J. Murphy) is a soccer story that helps readers tell time.

Where Do Puddles Go? (Fay Robinson) invites youngsters to find out what happens to water after it rains.

Just for fun

Q: What do you call a boomerang that won't come back?

A: A stick.



Winter addition

These winter-themed activities encourage your youngster to add objects, practice addition facts, and find missing numbers—no snow required.

Dig in the snow

Fill a baking dish with sugar, and bury dry beans in the "snow." Your child can use a slotted spoon to dig up two scoops of beans and make them into an addition problem. If the first scoop has 7 beans and the second has 8, she would say " $7 + 8 = 15$." Have her count the beans to check her answer, then scoop up more to create a new problem.

Match the mittens

To work on facts to 10, let your youngster trace around each of her hands 5 times on paper and cut out the 10 "mittens." She should label the left mittens 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the right ones 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Now she should make pairs that equal 10 and say each addition fact (" $5 + 5 = 10$ "). Suggest that she decorate each pair so the mittens match!



Throw the snowballs

Help your child find missing addends (numbers that are added together). Give her 20 cotton balls to throw into a bowl. Can she figure out how many landed in the bowl? If she missed 4, she would think, "Four plus what equals 20?" Then she could count up from 4 to 20 or subtract $20 - 4 = 16$. Finally, she should count the balls in the bowl to check. 🦋

An erupting volcano

Your child can watch a "volcano" erupt right before his very eyes with this hands-on model.

1. Go outdoors together, and help your youngster scoop soil (to represent a volcanic mountain) into a small plastic or paper cup.
2. Over newspaper, poke a small hole in the bottom of the cup. Have your child hold the cup in the air and insert an open toothpaste tube into the hole from the bottom. The toothpaste represents magma (melted rock).
3. What happens when your youngster squeezes the tube? (The "magma" swirls up through the "mountain" and eventually erupts as "lava.") 🦋

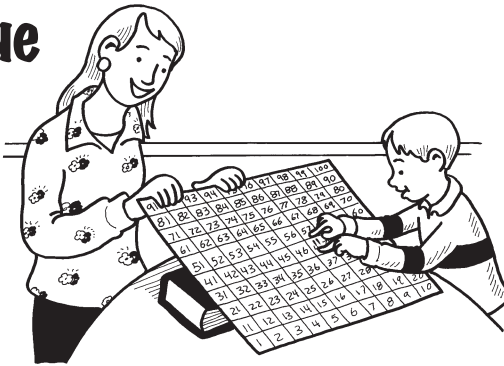


Play with place value

A hundred chart is a great tool for exploring place value. With this topsy-turvy version, your child can look at numbers in a different way! He'll work with numbers that get bigger as they climb up the chart—just as a block tower grows taller from bottom to top.

Draw a 10 x 10 grid. Starting in the bottom left corner, help him write 1–10 across the bottom row. Continue across each row until he writes 100 in the top right corner. Then, try these ideas.

Find my number. Pick a number, and give your youngster clues to find it. For 57, you might say, “My number is 10 more than 47.” He would place his finger on 47 and either



count forward by 1s to 57 or move up 1 row to add 1 ten ($47 + 10 = 57$). How are 47 and 57 similar? (They each have 7 ones. Adding 1 ten only changed the number in the tens place.)

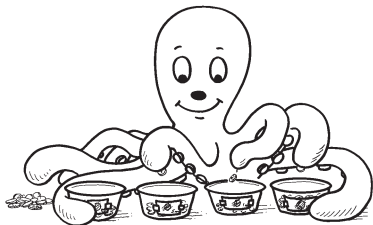
Identify the tens and ones. Cover a number (say, 65) with a bingo chip. Encourage your child to use surrounding numbers to figure out how many tens and how many ones the covered one has. Ask him what the other numbers have in common in the same row (6 tens) and column (5 ones). How many tens and ones are in the hidden number? (Answer: 6 tens and 5 ones, or 65.)



Q & A What's that coin?

Q: My daughter is learning how to recognize coins in school. How can she practice at home?

A: Let your child set up a coin station. Give her four bowls—one each for pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters—and put her in charge of sorting spare change.



Suggest that she make coin-rubbing labels for the bowls. She can tape each coin to a table, cover it with white paper, and rub lightly with the side of an unwrapped crayon. Help her write each coin's name (“quarter”) and value (“25 cents”) on its label.

Then, it's her job to match spare change to the rubbings and sort coins into the correct bowls. Soon, she'll recognize the coins automatically. *Idea:* She could count by 1s, 5s, 10s, and 25s to get the totals.

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SCIENCE LAB

Musical glasses

Why are some musical notes higher or lower than others? This experiment shows your youngster how pitch works.

You'll need: empty glass, pencil, measuring cup, water

Here's how: Ask your child to gently tap the side of the glass with the pencil. What does she think will happen to the sound if you pour water into the glass? Slowly fill the glass with water as she taps repeatedly.

What happens? The sound gets lower in pitch as you add more water.

Why? Striking the glass creates a sound wave that travels from the glass through the water. Water slows down the vibrations—so the more water, the slower the vibrations and the lower the pitch. When there's less water, the vibrations are faster, and the pitch is higher.

Idea: Suggest that your youngster measure different amounts of water ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup, 1 cup) into several identical glasses. She can tap the glasses to play a tune!



MATH CORNER

Gingerbread glyph

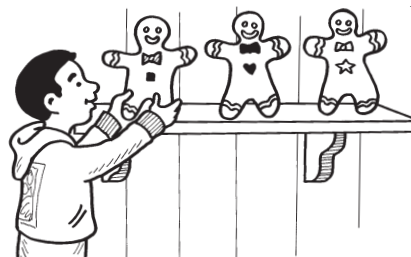
A *glyph*, or a pictograph, lets your youngster represent and analyze data. Try this family glyph activity to share information about your favorite things.

Materials: brown construction paper or cardboard, pencil, scissors, markers

Together, list survey questions and assign a gingerbread decoration to each possible answer. *Examples:* “Which season do you like best? Winter = round button, spring = square button,

summer = star button, fall = heart button.” “Which meal is your favorite? Breakfast = red bowtie, lunch = blue bowtie, dinner = yellow bowtie, brunch = green bowtie.”

Have each family member draw and cut out a gingerbread “person” and decorate it to show his favorites. Now compare them. How many people like summer the best? How many more people chose dinner than lunch?



BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Encourage your preschooler to participate when you are reading together

Reading with your child every day is crucial to her development as a reader. And as you read, it's important to involve your child! When she is an active participant, your child is likely to become even more excited about reading.

When you read together, be sure to:

- **Ask your child questions** about the story.
- **Encourage her to point out** and name letters, words and pictures that she sees.
- **Have her make predictions** about what will happen next in the story.
- **Repeat rhymes** and refrains together.
- **Reread favorites.** As your child memorizes a story, have her "read" it along with you.



*"The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."*

—Dr. Seuss

Brainstorm rhymes with your child

Your child will find learning to read easier if he is familiar with the sounds letters make. To sharpen this skill, read stories and poems that rhyme. Talk about the rhyming sounds.

You can also encourage your child to make up his own rhymes. To get started, say a word and then give him a clue about a word that rhymes: "I know a word that rhymes with *hat*. It's an animal that says *meow*. It is a" Your child may be able to supply the missing word, *cat*, right away. It's OK if he can't, though. Just say the word yourself. Play this game often and your child will soon pick up the idea!

Sock puppets can tell stories

Get creative during story time by turning your child's best-loved tale into a puppet show. Here's how:



- **Make a sock puppet.** Draw a face on the toe end of an old sock.
- **Slide the puppet** onto your child's arm. Show her how to make it "talk" by opening and closing her hand.
- **Sit back and listen** as your child and her puppet act out the story.

Don't forget about nonfiction!

Silly stories are wonderful to read, but so is nonfiction. The next time you're at the library, explore the nonfiction section with your child. He may love looking at books with elaborate pictures of animals, outer space or faraway countries. See what new things you can learn together!



Turn reading into a fun tradition

Start a new holiday tradition this year: Pick one night during the month to read holiday books as a family.

Ask your child to help you select a variety of festive books from the library. Plan to share a few yummy snacks while you read.



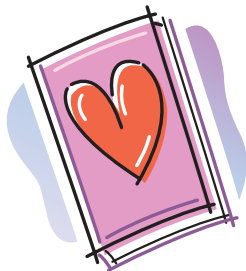
Your child will be thrilled, you'll spend time together—and you'll be nurturing her budding language-learning skills.

Use picture books to engage your preschooler in storytelling

Storytelling boosts your child's oral language skills and nurtures her creativity. You can use her favorite books as a springboard for telling stories. When you encourage your child to talk about the books, you help her learn to express ideas and relate events.

To introduce storytelling:

- **Reread favorite books.** Have your child retell the plot and turn the page when it's time to move on to the next page.
- **Look at a wordless picture book.** Encourage your child to use the pictures to "read" what is happening in the story.
- **Have a stuffed animal "tell" the story** and ask your child questions. Then let her hold the animal and retell the story.



Reading skills develop over time

Are you worried that your child isn't a "born reader"? Don't be! Technically, there's no such thing.

That's because there's no specific part of the brain devoted to grasping printed words. Instead, learning to read requires effort, instruction and time.

So rejoice if your child naturally loves books. But don't fret if he doesn't "naturally" know how to read them yet.



Help your child build early writing skills

Your child will learn to write in school—but it's not too early to boost his interest in writing. You can:

- **Encourage your child to draw** every day. Ask him to tell you about his drawings, then write captions underneath them using your child's own words.
- **Post a chart of the alphabet** where your child can see it. Review the letters together often. Explain that people use these to write.
- **Have your child practice** writing his first name. Point out the individual letters of his name in books or on signs. Encourage him to put his name on all the pictures he draws.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Sneezy the Snowman*** by Maureen Wright. He's made of snow, so of course Sneezy gets chilly sometimes! But is that cup of hot cocoa really the best thing for the shivering snowman to drink?
- ***Winter Wonderland (Picture the Seasons)*** by Jill Esbaum. Wintertime comes to life in this beautiful book. Bold, splashy photographs and vivid colors capture just how gorgeous the frostiest season can be.
- ***Scaredy Squirrel*** by Mélanie Watt. Scaredy Squirrel sticks to a strict schedule every day, and he makes sure safety comes first ... until one day, when he bravely ventures outside his nest.



Q: My child suddenly can't stand her favorite stories! What should I do?

A: Give your child's bookshelf an overhaul! Head to the library, yard sales or the bookstore and find new titles to pique her interest. Let her do most of the choosing, and don't expect to "pick a winner" every time. Discovering that perfect needle-in-a-haystack story is half the fun.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2019

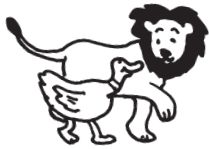
Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *How to Be a Lion* (Ed Vere)

Some lions believe there's only one way to be a lion and that Leonard is not doing it right. He's gentle and quiet, and his best friend is a duck!



When the other lions try to bully Leonard into changing, he must stand up for himself.

■ *A Ticket Around the World*

(Natalia Diaz and Melissa Owens)

Where would your child go if he had a ticket to any place in the world? The little boy in this book invites readers to explore 13 countries with him—and learn about languages, food, geography, cultures, and more along the way.



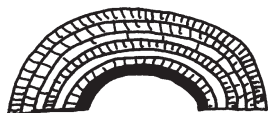
■ *Anne Arrives* (Kallie George)

The Cuthberts plan to adopt an orphaned boy to help on their farm, and they're disappointed when they get Anne instead. But Anne is determined to prove herself. The first book in the Anne series, in which *Anne of Green Gables* is adapted for beginning readers.

■ *Light Makes a Rainbow*

(Sharon Coan)

Learn all about rainbows in this non-fiction book. Simple explanations and colorful photos make it easy for readers to understand what makes rainbows appear. Includes hands-on activities. (Also available in Spanish.)



Winter literacy traditions

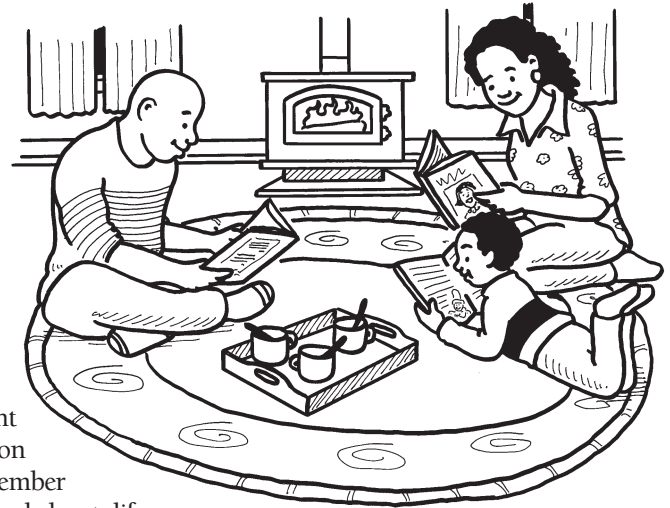
Keep your youngster's language arts skills strong during winter break. Fit reading, writing, speaking, and listening into family traditions with these activities.

Celebrate reading

Give books a starring role on special days by holding read-a-thons while you sip hot chocolate. For instance, you might read winter-themed books on the first day of winter (December 21). Or on December 31, read about different ways people celebrate New Year's Eve around the world.

Share news

Help your child launch an annual family newsletter. He could ask relatives to submit short articles about important events during 2019 and then write an article or two of his own. Have him add headlines, draw illustrations, and write captions to complete the first edition!



Tell stories

Swapping family stories during gatherings builds your youngster's speaking and listening skills. Pull out photos to spark ideas, perhaps ones taken at a wedding or reunion, and invite your youngster to contribute details as everyone reminisces. What songs were played at the reception? What games did he play with his cousins? ♥

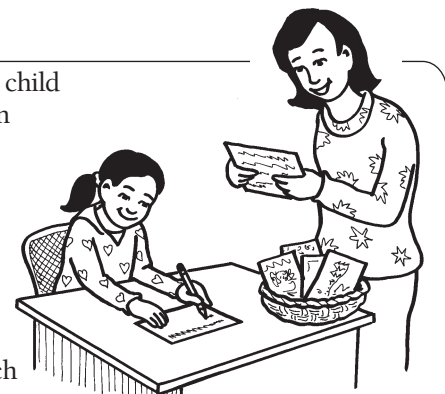
Inspired to write

Fill a basket with items that will give your child writing practice. Here are ideas for creating an "inspiration station."

● **Greeting cards.** Let your youngster cut cards in half and turn the fronts into post-cards. She can write messages on the blank sides and mail the cards to relatives.

● **File folders.** Ask your child to glue a magazine picture on one inside panel of each folder. Help her write a story about the picture and glue it on the other inside panel. She could add a title on the front.

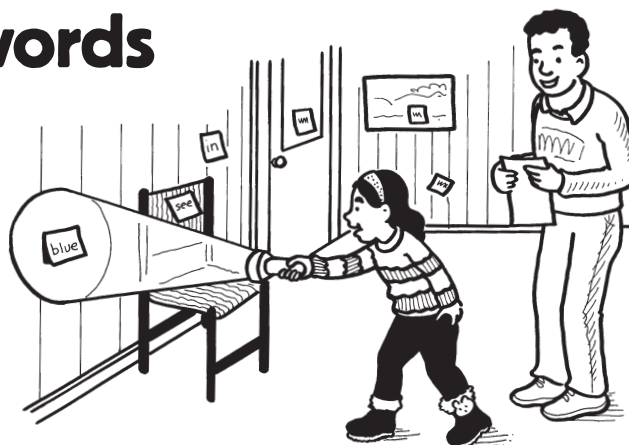
● **Homemade writing paper.** Have your youngster decorate the borders of plain white paper with stickers or stamps. Use a ruler to draw lines she can write on. ♥



100 “magic” words

Did you know that just 100 words in the English language account for about half of the words beginning readers encounter? Ask your youngster’s teacher or search online for a list of these *high-frequency words*, and use them to play the following games.

Word search. Arrange Scrabble tiles in an 8 x 8 grid, spelling several of the words vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Give your youngster a list of the words you hid. Can she find them all?

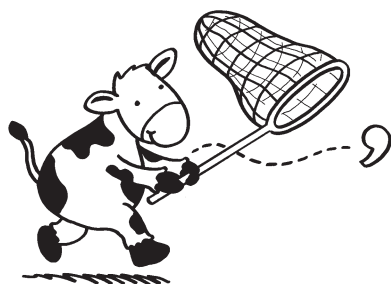


Flashlight tag. Pick 10 of the words and have your child copy them onto separate sticky notes. Place them randomly around a room. Hand her a flashlight, turn off the lights, and call out the words one by one. It’s her job to shine her “spotlight” around the room looking for the word. Ask her to read each correct word out loud when she finds it.

Note: Encourage your youngster to look for high-frequency words when she reads. She may be surprised how common they are—and by how many she can read all by herself.♥

Fun with Words Spot the comma

When you’re out and about with your child, try to spot as many commas as possible! You’ll help him learn where commas belong and what jobs they do.



See a comma? Read the words it goes with, and tell why it’s there. For example, your youngster might read “lettuce, tomato, and cheese” on a restaurant menu and say that those commas separate words in a series. Or maybe you’ll spot “December 12, 2019” on a newspaper (a comma goes between the date and year). Can he find a place where a comma should be or a comma that’s used incorrectly?♥

Parent to Parent

Five-finger retelling

At school, my son Noah retells stories that he reads so the teacher can see how well he understands them. He recently learned a new retelling strategy that we’re enjoying at home: the five-finger retelling.

We read a story together, and Noah holds up each finger as he retells a different part. For his thumb, he introduces the main character. Then, he holds up a second finger and describes the setting. When he holds up his third, fourth, and fifth fingers, he explains what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

This has really helped Noah retell stories in sequence, and it works for more than books. We’ve used five-finger retelling to talk about everything from Noah’s day at school to sporting events we’ve attended.♥



Q&A Reading at the “right” level?

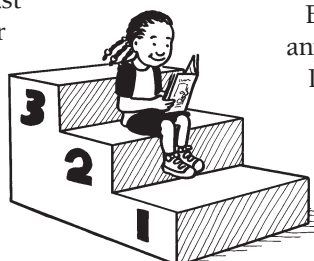
Q My daughter often wants to read books that are too hard or too easy for her. Shouldn’t she stick to books at her reading level?

A Reading levels help teachers select books that challenge kids just enough to make them better readers. But your child can also enjoy and learn from books that are above or below her level.

When she reads easier books, she gains confidence, becomes a more

fluent reader, and develops a love of reading. More difficult books challenge her vocabulary and comprehension skills and give her a sense of accomplishment—even if she doesn’t “get” everything.

Encourage her to explore any book she’s excited about. If she struggles with a book, offer to read it aloud. She’ll be more motivated to read, and the more she reads, the stronger her skills will grow.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children’s reading, writing, and language skills.

Resources for Educators,
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BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Build your child's vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension

A strong vocabulary helps children understand what they read. It reduces how often they have to stop reading and ask, "What does this word mean?"

To strengthen your child's vocabulary, read aloud often and use new words in conversation. You should also:

- **Make definitions** easy to understand. When defining the word *curious*, for instance, you might say, "A *curious* person is eager to learn more."
- **Give relatable examples.** "When the box arrived from Grandma, you were *curious* about what was inside."
- **Ask your child** to give examples. "Can you think of someone who was *curious*?" "Fernando was *curious* about how Amy's book ended."
- **Keep using the new word.** "I'm *curious* about countries in Africa. Let's do some research together."



Connect to the past by reading history books

Reading helps children in every school subject, and history is no exception! The next time you're at the library, browse the shelves for some:

- **Biographies** and autobiographies.
- **Books** about historic events.
- **Fictional stories** that are set during fascinating periods in time.



Have fun with acrostic poems

Encourage your child to write an acrostic poem. Have her pick a word or a name and write it in a vertical line. Then, she should brainstorm words that describe that topic. The catch is that each word has to start with a letter of the original word!



Three strategies can help your child overcome reading challenges

Reading is an important part of many home and school activities, so when a child struggles, every part of life is affected. If your child is having difficulty with reading, you should:

1. **Consult his teacher.** Ask about realistic expectations. Is your child reading at grade level? If not, what help is available?
2. **Use reading materials at home** that minimize frustration. Choose books that are easy to read and understand. This will help him gain confidence.
3. **Stay positive** about your child's learning. Focus on how his strengths can help him overcome challenges.

Bookmarks make reading special

Making bookmarks for friends and family can get your child excited about reading—and they make great gifts! You'll need:

- **Construction paper**, cut into strips 6" long and 2" wide.
- **Colored pencils**, markers or crayons.
- **Small photos** of your child.
- **Glue** and clear tape.

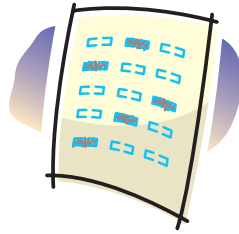


Have your child decorate the bookmarks with photos and drawings. He can personalize each one with a name and a short message. Then, cover them with clear tape.

Read for success on standardized tests

When children read well, they do better on tests. And certain reading skills are especially useful when taking standardized tests. Help your child work on:

- **Comprehension.** Standardized tests often ask students to find the “main idea.” Practice this by reading news articles with your child. For each article, summarize the main idea together.
- **Speed.** Standardized tests are usually timed, so it’s important for kids to read at a reasonable pace. Reading speed improves naturally when children practice every day. Reading silently boosts speed, too, since whispering or mouthing words slows reading.
- **Vocabulary.** When kids recognize a lot of words, it’s easier for them to understand test questions. Introduce your child to new words daily. Look them up together and use them repeatedly to increase memory.



Play games to improve decoding skills

To read, children must first learn the sounds that letters make. (For example, the letter *m* makes an *mm* sound.)

The next step in learning to read is to *decode* written words. Children decode a word by sounding out each of its letters, then blending the sounds together.

To help your child improve this skill:

- **Write words** on index cards. Take turns selecting a card and sounding out the word.
- **Place packaged foods** on your table. See if your child can sound out words on the labels.
- **Have a treasure hunt.** Hide words written on slips of paper throughout your house. Have your child find the slips and sound out the words.



Q: Part of my child’s homework is to read every day, but she often refuses to do it. How should I handle this?

A: This is a concern to discuss with your child’s teacher. Share your ideas about possible reasons for your child’s refusal. The teacher will have suggestions that might make reading time easier,

such as taking turns reading aloud. Work together and you’ll find a strategy that will help your child.

Try graphic organizers

Graphic organizers are diagrams that help kids think about what they read. Try drawing a large star with five points. Your child can put the title of the story or an article she has read in the center. Then use the points to write or talk about *who*, *what*, *when*, *where* and *why*. She’ll have a clearer picture of what she’s read in no time!



For lower elementary readers:

- *The Cloud Spinner* by Michael Catchpool. A boy weaves beautiful fabric from the clouds. But there are consequences when a king demands too much clothing.



- *The Day the Crayons Came Home* by Drew Daywalt. A new bunch of crayons have a bone to pick with Duncan. Your child will delight in these crayons’ gripes!

For upper elementary readers:

- *Romeow and Drooliet* by Nina Laden. This clever adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* features a cat and dog as the star-crossed lovers.
- *The Spaghetti Detectives* by Andreas Steinhöfel. Rico and Oscar are an interesting pair who take on a number of mysteries to solve.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

December 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

■ *Moo* (Sharon Creech)

City kids Reena and Luke experience culture shock when their family moves and they have to help out on a farm. Told in a blend of poetry and prose, this novel follows the siblings as they make new friends and bond with the animals—even a stubborn cow named Zora.



■ *Money Sense for Kids!*

(Hollis Page Harman)

This book introduces youngsters to basic economics, offers advice for earning and managing money, and explains how banks and stock exchanges work. Readers will also learn the history of U.S. currency. Each chapter includes a practical activity, such as budgeting allowance money.



■ *The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science* (Joyce Sidman)

Maria Merian's unique approach to studying insects led her to create beautiful art and become one of the first scientists to draw the life cycle of butterflies. This biography describes how Maria dedicated her life to entomology, or the science of insects.



■ *The Year of Billy Miller*

(Kevin Henkes)

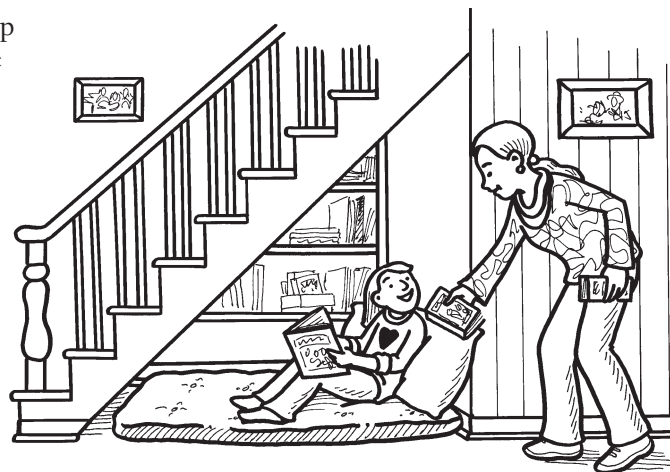
Billy is a sometimes misunderstood second-grader who spends the year navigating school challenges, friendships, and sibling squabbles. The story of his life is told in four chapters: "Teacher," "Father," "Sister," and "Mother."

A family book nook

A cozy place to curl up with a book or magazine can inspire your child to read more. Use these steps to carve out a special book nook for your family.

1. Create. Even the smallest space can become a reading zone. Together, choose a quiet spot away from distractions. For example, your youngster might suggest a corner of the family room or basement, or a space between two bookcases in the living room. Let her add a comfortable seat (favorite chair, beanbag, big pillows) and a lamp.

2. Organize. Help your child collect containers to hold reading materials. Maybe she'll put magazines in cereal boxes, small paperbacks in shoeboxes, and bigger books in baskets. She can cover the boxes with construction paper and label them ("Science magazines,"



"Mysteries," "Biographies"). *Tip:* Include a special box for library books, and have her add sticky notes with due dates.

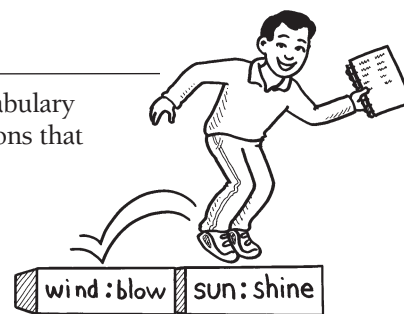
3. Enjoy. Make using the book nook part of your family's daily routine. You might read the newspaper there in the morning. Your youngster can use the spot for reading assignments after school. And family members might take turns relaxing there on evenings and weekends to read novels or listen to audiobooks. ■

Analogy challenge

Build your youngster's reasoning and vocabulary skills by playing with *analogies*, or comparisons that show how two things are similar.

Analogies encourage your child to think about relationships. Here's an example: "Top is to bottom as in is to ____." Ask your youngster to think about the relationship between *top* and *bottom* (opposites) to determine the missing word (*out*, the opposite of *in*).

Take turns making up analogies and discussing how to solve them. Say you write, "Wind is to *blow* as sun is to ____." Your child can think about how *wind* and *blow* are related (the wind blows) and then consider what the sun does (shines, rises). For more practice, have him try analogies at factmonster.com/analogies. ■



Spice up your writing

Encourage your youngster to view creative writing assignments as opportunities to try new ideas. The following tips can improve his stories and make writing even more fun.

Foreshadowing

Authors sometimes drop hints about what's going to happen later in a book. If a big thunderstorm will be important in your child's story, he might mention his character's fear of storms early in his tale.



Titles

Have your youngster consider different titles for his story. One way to create an eye-catching title is to refer to an exciting aspect of an event. Instead of "My Summer Vacation," his title could be "Trapped in the Treehouse."

Flashback

Rather than starting his tale at the beginning, your youngster might begin at the end. Perhaps the main character is finishing his first year at a new school. Your child could write about the character spending time with friends he has made, and then go back and describe his struggle to fit in at first. ■

Parent 2 Parent

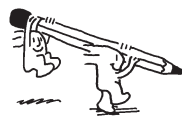
Math stories

When my son Kieran was struggling with math homework, I remembered a strategy my fifth-grade math teacher taught me. She had me turn equations into stories, and this really helped me visualize and solve the problems.



I mentioned this idea to Kieran and helped him make up a story to go with the first problem, 6×24 . He wrote, "Six buses traveled to the museum. Each bus held 24 students. In all, 144 students went on the trip." Then he decided to connect all the problems into one big story. For 8×45 , he continued: "The museum had 8 exhibits. Each had 45 artifacts. There were 360 artifacts altogether."

When Kieran finished, he read his story to me. He agreed that the activity helped him picture the math and come up with the right answers. I think it also strengthened his storytelling skills! ■



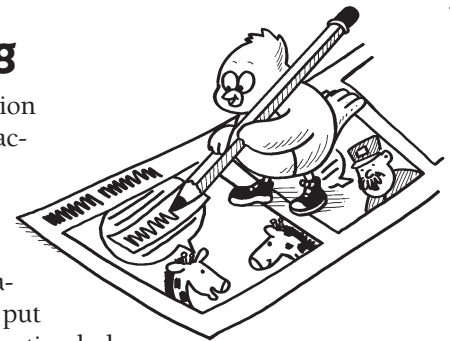
Comically speaking

Stretch your child's imagination with this activity that lets her practice writing dialogue—the conversations characters have with each other.

Choose comics. Let your youngster cut some of her favorite comics from the newspaper or print some from the internet. She can put small pieces of masking tape over the conversation bubbles to block out the existing words.

Write new dialogue. Each of you can pick one of the comics, think about what's going on in the pictures, and write lines for the characters on the pieces of tape.

Share your versions. Take turns reading your dialogue aloud. Then, choose new comics and make up conversations for those characters. ■



Reading and writing gifts—on a budget

Q I'd like to give my daughter gifts that will keep her reading and writing during winter break—and when it's over. My budget is tight. Any suggestions?

A You'll both keep reading when you create coupons good for library visits together. These make great gifts for your child, and they're free! Another idea is a magazine subscription related to her interests (perhaps *National*

Geographic Kids, *Fun for Kidz*, or *Ask*). Many magazines offer deep discounts this time of year.

For a writing-related gift, you could visit a craft shop or dollar store and fill a gift bag with fun writing

treats. You can find notepads in different shapes and sizes, colorful pens, and pencils with interesting erasers. Also consider a diary, as well as books of crossword puzzles, word searches, or *Mad Libs*. ■



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Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

DECEMBER 2019

READING Sketch a story

Strong readers visualize what's happening in a story. Boost your child's comprehension by having him draw what he "sees" as you read aloud to him.

Ingredients: picture book, paper, crayons or colored pencils

Read the book without showing your youngster the illustrations. Encourage him to listen for details and use them to draw pictures. Perhaps the book describes a character's messy room. He could draw the unmade bed, clothes falling out of open dresser drawers, and toys all over the floor. Or if the book is set on a farm, he might draw the barn, animals, and cornfield.

Now show him the pictures in the book and let him compare them with his drawings to see how well he visualized.

CREATIVE THINKING Act it out

How would a robot vacuum a room? What might a sloth look like riding a skateboard? Spark your youngster's imagination with this game.

Ingredients: index cards, pencil

On separate index cards, have your child write names of animals or things she might pretend to be. *Examples:* robot, dolphin, dragon, sloth. Mix up the cards, and stack them facedown.

Now name a situation for her to act out, such as vacuuming or doing skateboarding tricks. She draws a card and, without showing it to you, acts out the scenario while pretending to be whatever is on the card. If she's a robot, maybe she'll walk stiffly while pretending to vacuum. Can you figure out which card she drew? Then, trade roles.

Refrigerator Poster

Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."

VOCABULARY Word checkers

Play this twist on checkers to help your child review vocabulary words.

Ingredients: word list or textbook, poster board, marker, checkers, dictionary

First, have your youngster draw an 8 x 8 grid on poster board. He should write a word from his list or textbook glossary in every other square (the squares that would be black on a checkerboard).

Then, put your checkers on the squares with words, and play with this twist: To jump over a square and capture the other person's piece, a player must correctly define the word in the square. (Use a dictionary or your child's textbook to check.) The first person to capture all his opponent's pieces wins.

PRIME NUMBERS

A prime number's only factors (numbers that can be multiplied to equal it) are 1 and itself. Have your child number paper squares 1-25 and make a two-column chart for "Prime" and "Composite" (numbers that aren't prime). Take turns choosing a square. Then place it in the correct column, and check your choice by finding its multiples.

HEALTH

Teach your youngster to eat healthy portions by reading the serving size on nutrition labels. Then, she could measure it out—say, by putting 20 mini pretzels in a bowl for each of you. Now enjoy a snack together.

Recipes for Success

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Character Corner

MATH Clever clips

Your youngster will need subtraction know-how, and a little luck, to win this game.

Ingredients: paper clips, playing cards (face cards removed, ace = 1), bowl

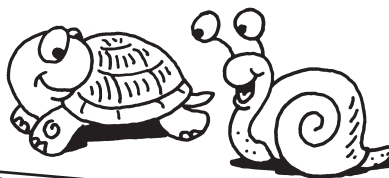
Each player gets 50 paper clips. Shuffle the cards, stack them face-down, and set out the bowl. On each turn, a player draws two cards and subtracts the smaller number from the larger one. So if your child draws 10 and 3, she would say "10 - 3 = 7." She discards that many paper clips (7) into the bowl. (If the numbers are equal, don't discard any clips.)

The winner is the first player to run out of paper clips—by exact count or not.



SPEAKING

Does your child know how to join a conversation? Role-play so he feels confident. He should listen and wait for a pause. Then, he can make a relevant comment ("I liked that movie, too") or ask questions ("Which scene was your favorite?").



RESEARCH

Help your youngster learn to narrow a report topic. Name a broad topic (say, weather), and go back and forth, being more specific each time. *Example:* winter weather, snow, blizzards, historic blizzards. She'll get more targeted results when she does research.



GEOMETRY

Go on a geometry hunt at a park. Your youngster can look for shapes: sphere (ball), rectangle (tennis court), or triangle (swing-set frame). Or he could try to find as many right angles (90°) as possible, perhaps at the corners of the picnic table and the sandbox.



MANNERS

Let your child draw small circles around the edges of an index card. When you notice him using good manners (perhaps by saying, "Please pass the potatoes"), he gets to hole-punch a circle. Once all the holes are punched, he can illustrate the card and start a new one.



LEADERSHIP

Boost your youngster's leadership skills by letting her delegate tasks to family members. Before a trip to the grocery store, she might ask you to make the list, then have her brother clip coupons while she packs up the reusable bags.



LOYALTY

Have your child think of ways to show loyalty to others if he hears gossip about them. He might say, "We don't know that for sure." Or he could simply change the subject: "Hey, let's go do a puzzle."



PHONICS

Choose a letter combination, such as *sch*, *br*, or *th*. Take turns thinking of words that include the combination in the beginning (*school*), middle (*vertebrate*), or end (*tooth*).



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)