

# Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

## How to Help Improve Your Child's Attendance:

- Talk with your child about why it's important to attend school regularly.
- Avoid scheduling family trips or doctor appointments during school hours.
- Make sure your child stays healthy by eating nutritious food and getting enough sleep and exercise.
- Don't accept excuses for why your child "must" miss or be late for school.
- Discuss with your child what happened at school each day.
- Support school rules and consequences for missing class and being tardy.
- Show your child why education is important. Give specific examples of how education helps people succeed.
- Lead by example!



## Ways Busy Parents Can Help Children Succeed in School

✓ **Use time in the car** with your child or other pockets of time to squeeze in a little more learning. Your child can not read library books in the tub, but he can count his toes. He can't write an essay in the car, but he can talk about what he's going to write, or review spelling words.

✓ **Set priorities.** Decide what's most important to you. Then consciously decide how to spend your time. Make sure your decisions reflect what matters. Have a choice between cooking a fancy dinner or reading with your child? Order pizza and read the book!

✓ **Spend one-on-one time.** Kids need both "quality" and "quantity" time with you. There's nothing like spending time alone with a parent to make a child feel special. Every week make an appointment to spend some time alone with each of your children.

✓ **Find your child's "Prime Time" for studying.** This may be a key to his success in school. It might be early in the morning or late at night or any time in between. Work with your child to find the homework time that is best for him. It just might work to your advantage

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Parent conferences, for elementary youngsters on early release days are on March 5th and 7th

As always, for further information, or answers to your questions, please contact me, Cookie Stewart at 508-778-7599 or [stewartv@dy-regional.k12.ma.us](mailto:stewartv@dy-regional.k12.ma.us) Or at MES 440 Higgins Crowell Rd. West Yarmouth, MA 02673



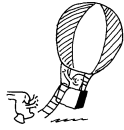
# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

March 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



#### SHORT NOTES

##### Display schoolwork

Saving work your youngster brings home is one way to show her that school is important to you. Consider creating a hallway gallery of framed papers and artwork, or store her work in a coffee-table binder. *Tip:* Take photos of her sculptures, dioramas, and other 3-D projects. Display the photos, or add them to her binder.

##### A list-making habit

Get your child in the routine of making checklists in a student planner or notebook. Suggest that he write down tasks in the order he needs to complete them. Encourage him to check off each item as he tackles it—he will enjoy a sense of satisfaction as his list grows shorter.

##### Promote a work ethic

A good work ethic, or a belief in the value of hard work, will make your youngster better at any job she undertakes. Develop this trait by giving her regular chores like taking out the recycling or sweeping the floor. Then, let her know how her contribution makes a difference. (“The kitchen looks nice and tidy thanks to you!”)

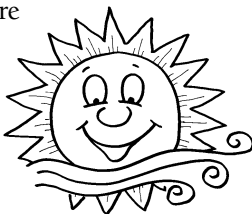
##### Worth quoting

“Why fit in when you were born to stand out?” *Dr. Seuss*

#### JUST FOR FUN

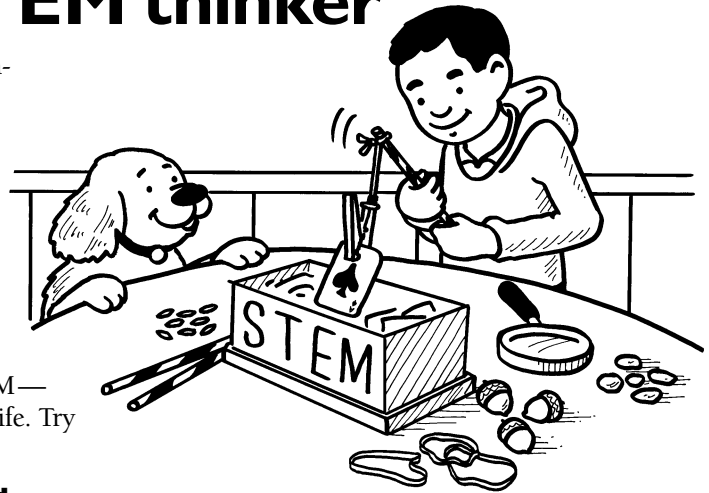
**Q:** “I pass before the sun but make no shadow. What am I?”

**A:** The wind.



## Be a STEM thinker

With science, technology, engineering, and math jobs in demand, STEM is a hot topic these days. Being a curious, critical, creative thinker who can solve problems will help your child do well in STEM—and in every area of life. Try these ideas.



##### Wonder out loud

Bring out your youngster’s natural curiosity by discussing what you’re curious about. (“I wonder why rainbows are curved and not straight.”) Then, he could experiment to find out. Perhaps he’ll create his own rainbows using a flashlight, a mirror, and a pan of water.

##### Make a “tinker box”

Your child will use critical thinking skills by tinkering with natural objects and loose parts. In a shoebox, let him collect items like pebbles, acorns, seeds, straws, rubber bands, and clothespins.

He could add new objects as he finds them. Maybe he’ll design a “claw machine” that picks up small objects or examine an acorn under a magnifying glass.

##### Promote problem solving

Treat everyday problems as learning opportunities. Say the TV remote won’t work, even though you just replaced the batteries. Have your youngster think of solutions and test them. He might check that the batteries are inserted correctly, try batteries he’s sure are fresh, or turn the TV off and on again. ♥

## Parent-child chats

Regular conversations with your youngster keep the two of you close—and build her language skills. Here are suggestions for making chats more meaningful.

● **Phrase questions thoughtfully.** Questions that require more than a one-word answer will lead to more informative answers. Try “What made you laugh today?” rather than “Did you have a good day?”

● **Show you’re paying attention.** It’s easy for busy parents to respond out of habit without focusing on what youngsters are really saying. Instead, look your child in the eye, and stop to consider her words. She’ll know that what she has to say matters to you. ♥



## Learning to be patient

Patience is a skill that can be learned. Kids who develop it tend to have greater self-control and even do better in school. Foster patience in your youngster with these tips.

**Live in the moment.** Encourage your child to enjoy what's going on right now, rather than looking forward to what will happen next. For example, she could look out the window at the sunset while she waits for you to get off the phone. Or if she's having trouble falling



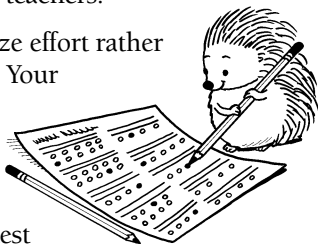
asleep because she can't wait to visit her friend tomorrow, she might focus on how warm and cozy she feels in her bed now.

**Enjoy the payoff.** Have your youngster think of something that took her a while to master, such as learning to read music. Then, remind her of how good she felt when she succeeded. Share an example from your life, too. *Idea:* Let her take on an activity or a project that requires patience, like growing a plant or putting together a jigsaw puzzle. ♥

## Top tips for standardized tests

How can you help your child do well on standardized tests? Consider this advice from teachers:

- "Emphasize effort rather than scores. Your youngster will feel more confident and relaxed on test day if he knows that doing his best is what counts the most."



- "Have your child do any practice tests or packets that the teacher sends home. Ask him about the material, and look over the work to be sure it's complete."

- "Make sure he gets enough sleep, at least 9–11 hours, each night. He'll be more alert and focused during the test."

- "Give your youngster a balanced breakfast on test day so he has energy and isn't distracted by a growling stomach. Whole-wheat toast, fruit, and yogurt make a brain-boosting combination." ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Autism: Support for parents

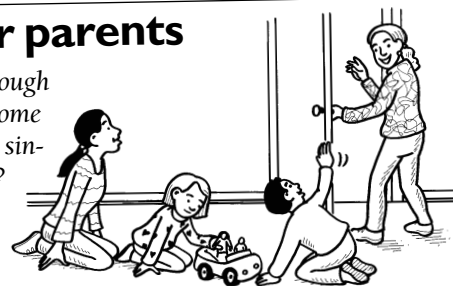
**Q:** My daughter has autism, and although she's making good progress, she has some behavioral challenges. I'm a working single parent—how can I handle the demands?

**A:** To take the best care of your daughter, you need to also take care of yourself. If possible, try getting up before she does.

Take a warm shower, and enjoy a cup of tea. You'll feel calmer and ready to start the day on a positive note, which can help her behave better.

Also, look for people who will stay with your child while you recharge. You might run errands or try a new hobby. Ask friends, family, and neighbors if they're able to help or know anyone who can.

Finally, consider joining an autism support group. Connecting with other parents who face similar challenges will make you feel less alone, and you'll get information and advice for helping your daughter. Check online, or ask your child's doctor for referrals. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Pump up your memory

A good *working memory* lets your youngster switch back and forth between tasks and do work that involves more than one step. Sharpen his memory with these activities.

#### Story chain

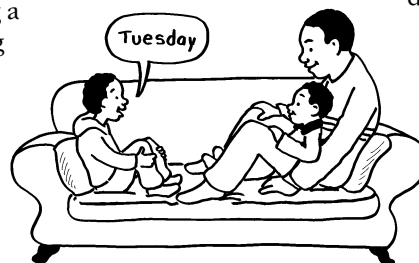
Build a "repeating story" by remembering what everyone before you has said. One person starts with a sentence like "I'm riding a \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_," filling in the blanks. ("I'm riding a kite to the moon.") The next person repeats the sentence and adds his own sentence. Continue until someone

skips a sentence, says them out of order, or can't remember one.

#### The last time I...

When was the last time you used a ruler or saw frost on a window? This game strengthens your child's power of recall. Take turns calling out a question, such as "When did you last eat an egg?" To answer, everyone needs to think about details and context.

("We had tacos in school on Monday. So it must have been Tuesday, when I got the salad bar and put hard-boiled egg slices on my lettuce.") ♥



# Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

March 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Number "cake walk"

Play this game to help your youngster show numbers in different ways. Have him number paper plates 1–10 and put them randomly in a circle on the floor. Turn on music while he and his friends walk around the circle. Now stop the music—players freeze and hold up fingers to equal the number they're closest to. For 6, your child might show 3 fingers on each hand.

### Animal field trip

Your child can learn about animals by visiting a farm or zoo, where many babies are born in spring. Encourage her to ask workers questions about the animals.



Together, observe mothers caring for their young, listen for animal sounds, and talk about what they're eating.

### Book picks

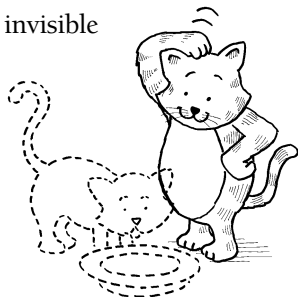
■ The little inchworm in *Inch by Inch* (Leo Lionni) measures everything in his path, from a flamingo's neck to a heron's leg. But how could he measure a hummingbird's song?

■ Your youngster will discover the science behind the projects in *Crafty Science* (Jane Bull). Includes more than 20 ideas, from a "swirling snowstorm" to a "meringue mountain."

## Just for fun

**Q:** What do invisible cats drink?

**A:** Evaporated milk!



## Subtraction strategies

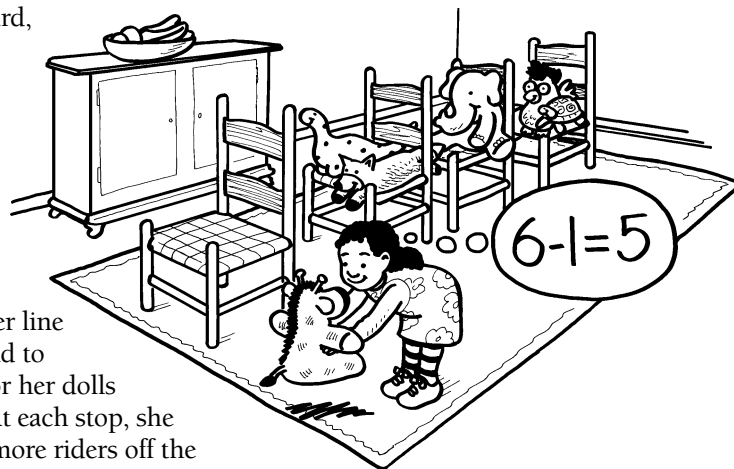
Counting backward, finding the difference, and doing "take-away" are all ways your child can solve subtraction problems. Try these hands-on activities.

### Empty the bus

Let your youngster line up chairs and pretend to drive a school bus for her dolls or stuffed animals. At each stop, she should help one or more riders off the bus and count backward from the total. *Example:* If she starts out with 6 passengers and unloads 1 at the first stop, she would say, "6, 5...there are 5 passengers left.  $6 - 1 = 5$ ."

### Pair 'em up

Making pairs is an easy way to find the difference. Each of you should choose a color of play dough, then toss a die and create that number of play dough "marbles." Now your child can pair each of her marbles with one of yours. Say she made 5 and you made 2—the number of unpaired marbles (3) is the difference



(because  $5 - 2 = 3$ ), and she earns 3 points. The first player to get 20 points wins.

### Take-away sticks

Line up 20 craft sticks, and stack a deck of cards facedown (face cards removed, ace = 1). On each turn, a player flips over a card (7), takes that number of sticks, and says how many sticks are left ( $20 - 7 = 13$ ). She keeps the sticks, and it's the next person's turn. To win, get the last stick by exact count ( $3 - 3 = 0$ ). *Note:* If you draw a card and can't remove that many sticks, your turn ends. ♣

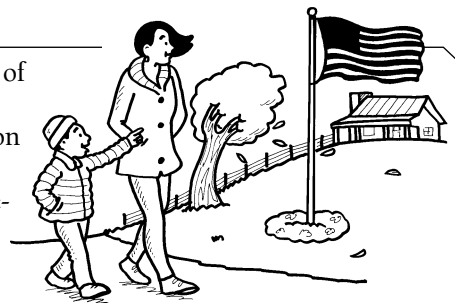
## Blowing in the wind

Your youngster will discover the power of wind with this demonstration.

Let him select a few small objects (cotton ball, ribbon, button, rock) and place them at one end of a cookie sheet. Have him predict which items will be easiest to move to the opposite end by blowing through a straw. Now he can test his prediction.

What does your child notice? Lighter objects (cotton ball, ribbon) are easier to blow, while heavier ones (button, rock) take more effort. They need a stronger "breeze" to push them and make them move.

Then, go for a walk on a windy day. Your youngster can observe which objects blow (flag, leaves) and which ones are too heavy for the wind to push (house, car). ♣

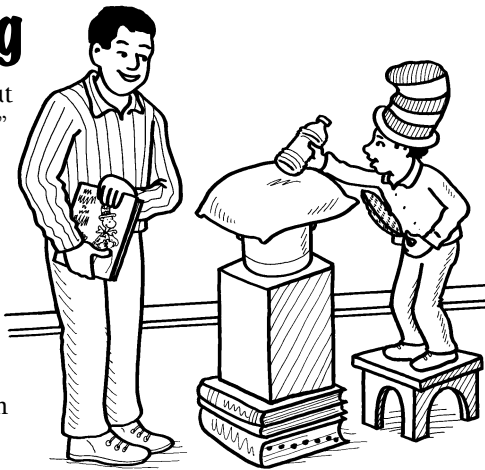


# Dr. Seuss engineering

“Thing 1” for your youngster to know about engineering is that anyone can do it. “Thing 2” is that it’s fun! Here are engineering challenges inspired by Dr. Seuss, whose 115th birthday is celebrated on March 2.

**Read:** *The Cat in the Hat*

**Try:** How many objects can your child stack before his tower topples over? He’ll find out with this Cat in the Hat-style engineering feat (no fishbowl or cake allowed!). Encourage him to consider the size, shape, and weight of each item, then decide where each should go. For



example, he’ll probably want bigger, heavier objects (dictionary, cooking pot) toward the bottom and smaller, lighter ones (pillow, empty water bottle) near the top.

**Read:** *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*

**Try:** Challenge your youngster to engineer a fishing rod that will hook paper fish. He might suspend a string from a pencil and attach a magnet. Now let him cut out fish shapes from construction paper and slide a paper clip on each one. Can

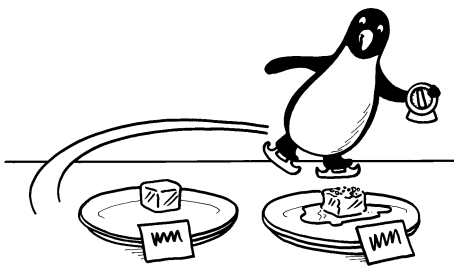
he catch one fish? How about two? Suggest that he redesign his rod to hook even more fish at a time. 🦋

## SCIENCE LAB

### Ice cube race

In this cool experiment, you and your youngster can “race” to melt ice cubes.

**You’ll need:** two ice cubes, two plates, measuring spoon, salt, timer



**Here’s how:** Each of you should put an ice cube on a plate. Have your child measure  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt on her cube, and leave your cube alone. She can set a timer and check the cubes every five minutes, until they begin to melt.

**What happens?** Her cube wins! The ice cube with salt melts the fastest.

**Why?** Ice melts when it gets above freezing (32 degrees). But salt has special properties that help ice melt faster. That’s why we put salt on icy sidewalks and roads—even when it’s below freezing, the ice or snow will begin to melt. 🦋

## MATH CORNER

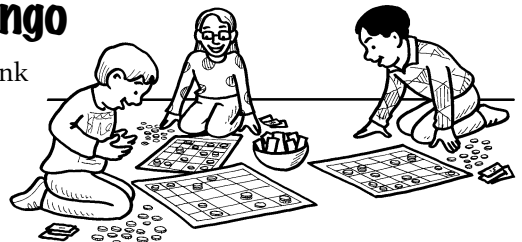
### Coin value bingo

Empty the piggy bank and play this game that helps your child identify coins and their values.

**Set up:** Each player makes a big 5 x 5 bingo card and puts his choice of any 1, 2, or 3 coins (pennies, nickels, dimes) onto each square. On separate slips of paper, write the following numbers: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25, and 30. Put the slips in a bowl.

**Play:** Let your youngster draw a slip and call out the number. Players clear any one square on their board whose coins total that value. *Example:* If the number is 15, your child could clear a space with 3 nickels ( $5 + 5 + 5 = 15$ ) or with 1 dime and 1 nickel ( $10 + 5 = 15$ ).

**Win:** The first player to clear 5 spaces in a row—horizontally, vertically, or diagonally—wins and calls the numbers for the next round. 🦋



## Q & A

### Be upbeat about math

**Q:** *I’ve never felt very confident about math, but I know I’m supposed to be positive about it for my daughter. What should I do and say?*

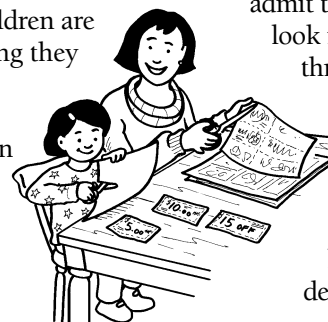
**A:** You’re right. When parents have a good attitude toward math, children are more likely to see it as something they can do—and to learn more.

Throughout the day, notice ways you use math, and mention examples to your youngster. You might show her coupons you’ve clipped and say, “I love how math helps me save money.” And be sure to ask her,

“How did math help you today?” Maybe she used measuring cups in the sand and water table at school, for instance.

Also, if you’re not sure about a math concept, such as kilometers vs. miles, admit that to your child. Then, look it up together, and talk through a problem as you solve it.

You may discover that you can do math confidently after all—and you’ll help your daughter develop a love of math. 🦋



## OUR PURPOSE

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# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Help your preschooler welcome spring with some outdoor story time!

Who wants to stay cooped up inside on a warm spring day? Not your budding bookworm! To help your child enjoy reading in the great outdoors:

- **Go on a book picnic.** Grab a few special stories, a blanket and some snacks and head outside. Once you've eaten, stretch out in the sunshine and read the books together.
- **Head to the park.** Enjoy the swings and playground, and then relax on a park bench for some quality reading time.
- **Put some "splash" in stories.** Springtime is often as rainy as it is sunny, but don't let a few raindrops keep you inside! Gather a stack of waterproof bathtub books (and an umbrella) and read them together under a covered area.



Need more motivation to get outside? Outdoor reading can sharpen your child's attention and listening skills. Learning to tune out distractions, such as bird and traffic sounds, strengthens her ability to focus.

### Weather rainy days at the library

The only predictable thing about March's weather is that it's unpredictable. So the next time your outdoor plans are rained out, take your child to the library for some indoor fun.

Along with looking for books, help him explore the library's:

- **DVD collection.** Can you find a movie version of a story you've read together?
- **Computer games.** Ask the librarian which ones have the best language-learning features.
- **Audiobooks.** Try to find one that has an accompanying print version. Then, while you're cooking dinner, your child can "read" it to himself!

## Use mail to excite your child about reading and writing

Young children get excited when they receive mail addressed to them. Why not ask relatives and family friends to send your child some letters through the mail?



Read the letters together and then ask your child to dictate a response. She can also draw a picture to include with her letter. Your child will learn some practical uses for reading and writing—and connect with people who are important to her.

## Show your child how to get crafty with bookmarks

Did you know that March is National Craft Month? Help your child celebrate by showing him how to make his own bookmarks. All he needs are strips of heavy paper, crayons and lots of imagination!



## Draw attention to new words

Your child will learn thousands of words before she enters kindergarten. Kids soak up words they hear in conversations, shows and storybooks. But just *hearing* new words isn't enough—the words need to pique your child's interest.

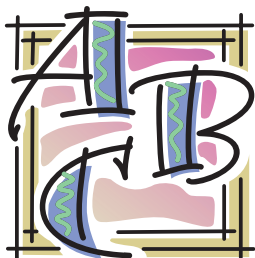


When you come across a new word, draw attention to it: "Jess, the book just mentioned a *cockatoo*. Do you know what a *cockatoo* is? Let's find out!"

## Boost your child's ABC smarts by going on a letter walk

When it comes to strengthening your child's alphabet knowledge, think beyond the bookshelf. Take a letter walk around your neighborhood. Here's how:

- **Pick a letter.** Talk to your child about the sound a particular letter makes. "The letter T makes a *ttt* sound like in the words *table* and *toy*."
- **Get moving.** Go for a stroll and help your child search for objects that start with the letter T. "Look, a *tricycle*! That starts with a *ttt* sound. Can you find something else that starts with a *ttt* sound?"
- **Be flexible.** If she struggles to find T words, don't let her get discouraged. Just choose a different letter!



## Create a musical picture book

Make a picture book of songs with your child by writing lyrics in rebus form. Help him replace some of the words that are repeated throughout each song with small pictures.

For example, in a rebus of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," help your child draw a picture of a girl in place of the word *Mary* and a picture of a lamb in place of the word *lamb*.



## What does your child want to be?

He's only in preschool, but your child really will be all grown up someday. To get him excited about the future, talk about what he wants to be. And don't worry if he replies, "A superhero!"

Visit the library to find stories about his chosen career. Don't forget to talk about what an important role education plays in getting that career.

If your child doesn't seem interested in the idea of a career at all, spark his curiosity with kid-friendly books like:

- ***I Want to Be a Veterinarian*** by Catherine O'Neill Grace.
- ***When I Grow Up*** by P.K. Hallinan.
- ***I Want to Be an Astronaut*** by Byron Barton.



## Books to delight your early reader

- ***Mustache Baby*** by Bridget Heos. When Billy is born, he has a mustache. Is it a good guy mustache or a bad guy mustache? As time goes on, his family finds out!
- ***What Shall We Play?*** by Sue Heap. Lily May wants to play fairies, but Matt wants to play trees and Martha wants to play cars. The friends learn to compromise so everyone is happy.
- ***Ten Little Caterpillars*** by Bill Martin Jr. Count with the colorful creepers as they crawl around the garden and beyond.
- ***Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature*** by Joyce Sidman. Share this book and then head outside to find spirals in your neighborhood.



**Q:** I've already labeled items around the house for my child. How else can I help her learn sight words?

**A:** Another effective way to teach your child sight words is by pointing out short, simple words and phrases you see over and over when reading stories. Some of the easiest include *the end* and *once upon a time*. Also show your child common words on greeting cards, such as *dear* and *love*.

### Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

## Book Picks

### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *Shelter Pet Squad: Jelly Bean*

(Cynthia Lord)

Suzannah has just become the youngest member of the Shelter Pet Squad, a group of kids who help local shelter animals. Her first mission is to find a forever home for an adorable guinea pig named Jelly Bean. Book one in the Shelter Pet Squad series.



#### ■ *In Mary's Garden*

(Tina and Carson Kugler)

This biography tells how Mary Nohl loved art as a little girl and grew up to create an unusual garden. She used materials like sand, metal, wood, and rocks to make interesting sculptures, turning her garden into what would become a historic landmark.

#### ■ *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!* (Jon Scieszka)

According to the big bad wolf, the story everyone knows about the three little pigs is wrong. And he's here to set the record straight. Readers will laugh at the wolf's elaborate tale of how he never meant to eat the pigs—he just wanted to borrow a cup of sugar. (Also available in Spanish.)



#### ■ *If You Were the Moon*

(Laura Purdie Salas)

The child in this story thinks the moon just hangs around in the sky. But it really has many “jobs,” from making ocean waves to waking night-time animals. This picture book uses a conversation between a girl and the moon to present scientific facts.



## Pretend play boosts vocabulary

“I’m grooming my stuffed dog.” “I can fix that car—I’m a mechanic!” Imaginary play gives your child chances to say words that he might not use every day. Try these ideas to grow his vocabulary through make-believe.



### Find props

Give your youngster new things to talk about. You could put a wrench and a socket with his toy cars. Or offer him empty food packages to play store. When you notice him using the props, name them for him. You could say, “I see you’re repairing your cars with a wrench and socket” or “Oh, your grocery store sells *relish* and *chickpeas*.”

### Play together

Spend time pretending with your child, and introduce new words. Maybe you’ll hold a chopstick and say, “I’m a *conductor*. I’m using this *baton* to *conduct* the *symphony*.” Or if you’re playing vet, ask,

“What kind of dog do you have? Mine is a *Siberian husky*.”

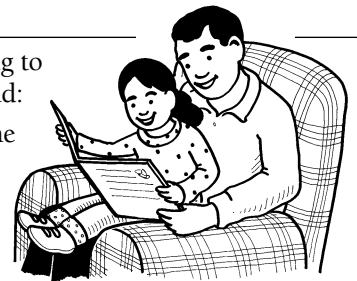
### Act out a story

It’s common for youngsters to pretend they’re book characters after hearing a story. When you read to your youngster, explain unfamiliar words he can use to act out the book. If the story was about a *scuba diver*, perhaps he’ll pretend his pajamas are a *wet suit*. He might turn a cardboard tube into a *snorkel* and go on an imaginary underwater adventure! ♥

## How to handle reading errors

Oops! Your youngster just goofed while reading to you. What should you do? Keep these tips in mind:

- Wait to see if she catches her own mistake. If she doesn’t notice her error by the end of the sentence or paragraph, ask, “Did that part make sense?” or “What other word would make sense there?” She’ll learn to *self-correct*—an important step toward becoming an independent reader.
- Resist the urge to correct every mistake your child makes. That can interrupt the flow of the story. For example, if her error doesn’t really affect the meaning of the sentence (say, she reads *house* instead of *home*), consider letting her keep going. ♥





# “Just right” books for now—and later

**Q:** What are the three categories of books that help new readers grow?

**A:** Books that are too easy, ones that are too hard, and those that are just right!

**Too easy.** That favorite book you think your child has outgrown is similar to a “beach read”



for adults. She knows all the words and doesn't have to think too hard about the plot. Encourage her to relax with books like these—they build confidence and her enjoyment of reading.

**Too hard.** Sometimes kids want to read books that are out of reach of their reading abilities. If

your youngster has her heart set on one, read it aloud to her. She'll enjoy listening to a book she chose. Plus, she'll pick up new words and be exposed to a more complex plot.

**Just right.** These books are ones your child can read with a little help. To determine if a book is a good fit, have your child read the first couple of pages to you. If she knows most of the words and understands what she's reading, it's likely the book will challenge her abilities without frustrating her.♥



## Rhyming dominoes

Forget dominoes with dots—this game uses rhyming words instead! Play it to help your child hear sounds in words.

**Materials:** 40 slips of paper, pencil

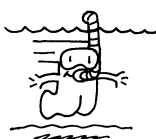
**1.** Have your youngster draw a line on each slip to divide it in half like a domino. On each half, help him write a word ending with one of these letter combinations: *all, et, in, og, un.* (Be sure to have 8 words per letter combination. Repeat words as needed.)



**2.** Spread the dominoes facedown, let each player take three, and flip a starting domino faceup.

**3.** Players take turns trying to form a chain of dominoes where rhyming words touch. Say the starting domino has *met*. If your child has a rhyme (say, *pet*), he links his domino with that one, end to end. If he doesn't have a rhyme, he takes a new domino, and his turn ends.

**4.** Continue taking turns, adding a rhyming domino to either end of the chain. The first player to get rid of all his dominoes wins.♥



## Parent to Parent

### And now...the family news

After a local news anchor visited my daughter's class for Career Day, Amelia wanted to be a reporter, too. I suggested that she interview her grandparents and deliver a news report about their activities. What a hit!

Her grandparents loved being interviewed, and Amelia remembered to ask *who, what, where, when, and why* questions—just like the news anchor said she does. For instance, Amelia asked her grandmother, “When did you start your new job?” and “What do you like best about it?” She listened carefully and wrote down the responses.

Finally, I videotaped Amelia reading her report in her best “anchor voice.” This has been a great way for her to work on writing, speaking, and listening skills.♥



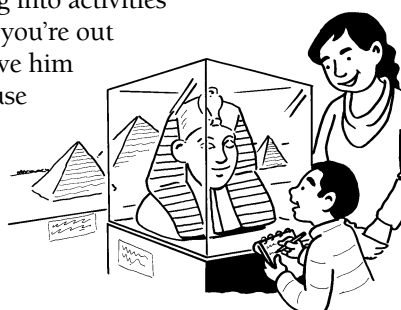
## Q&A Writing on the move

**Q** My son's teacher says he needs more writing practice, but it's a struggle to get him to sit still and write. Any ideas?

**A** Try weaving writing into activities your son can do while you're out and about together. Give him a special notebook to use when you go places together, perhaps to a museum or the park. Encourage him to write about what he sees. At a museum, he

could jot down information about the Egyptian pyramids or a Tyrannosaurus rex. In the park, he might write a description of a carousel or a waterfall.

At home, suggest that he expand on what he wrote. Maybe he'll write a story about visiting a real pyramid in Egypt or making friends with a T-rex. Or perhaps he'll write a “visitor's guide” to the park.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated

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# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Boost school skills while having some reading and writing fun!

There are lots of entertaining reading and writing activities that can help your child strengthen valuable skills. Encourage her to:

- **Look up events that happened** on the day she was born. Your child can write about them in a journal or use the newspaper headlines to make a poster.
- **Invent a new board game.** Have your child design the board and game pieces. Then she can write down the rules.
- **Look at a globe** and pick a country. Challenge your child to discover and share five interesting facts about it.
- **Conduct a nature study.** How many animals, birds and insects can your child find in your backyard or a local park? Have her make a list or take pictures of them so she can research the critters online.



## Reading aloud offers many benefits

Even though your child is beginning to read on his own, continue reading aloud to him. Reading aloud not only gives you quality time with your child, it also exposes him to new ideas, concepts and vocabulary.

Each time you read aloud together, you are developing your child's:

- **Reading comprehension skills.** Talk about what you read. Ask your child to summarize the passage.
- **Vocabulary.** Look up new words together.
- **Listening and speaking skills.** After reading a passage, have your child tell you what he heard. Ask questions.
- **Analytic skills.** Have your child explain why events happened in the story, why a character is his favorite or why he believes the author made specific choices.

## Read about spring cleaning safety

Will your older child be helping you with household cleaning chores this spring? Ask him to read the safety labels on cleaning products before he starts. Then, have him explain the label directions to you so you are both sure he understands.



Reading safety labels is a great example of how reading is essential to our daily lives.

## Exposure to correct grammar improves language skills

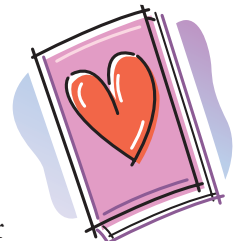
Learning grammar rules can be tough—but reading makes it easier! When your child reads well-written text, she sees how language should be used. She'll soon learn to recognize mistakes in other materials.



## Combine reading with fun

The more fun your child has reading, the more motivated he may be to keep reading! Try these ideas:

- **Play games** that involve reading, such as Boggle, Scrabble and Apples to Apples.
- **Build activities** around what your child is reading. For example, act out the story or do crafts that relate to it.
- **Keep a reading calendar.** Mark the days that he starts and finishes a book.



## Help your child evaluate online information

When your child is doing a research project, help her find reputable and reliable information online. To evaluate the information she finds on the internet, your child should ask herself these questions:

- **Is the source reputable?** Be sure your child does some research on the source to see where the information is coming from.
- **Is the source biased?** Information that comes from a company might be designed to sell their product. Information from an organization might reflect a particular agenda.
- **Is the information accurate?** Do other reliable sites include the same information?
- **Is the information up-to-date?** Science studies, for example, may become outdated when newer research is completed.



## Share five steps to writing success

Whether your child loves or dreads writing assignments, five steps will make them easier. Encourage him to:

1. **Prewrite.** Brainstorm and bounce ideas off someone.
2. **Draft.** Write a first copy—*without* worrying about mistakes!
3. **Revise.** Read through the paper at least once. Does everything make sense? Are there better ways to say things?
4. **Edit.** Check grammar, punctuation and spelling.
5. **Review.** Read the paper aloud to catch other mistakes.



**Q:** My child loves math—but will do anything to avoid reading. How can I combine the two?

**A:** Read books about math subjects together, such as *Why Pi?* by Johnny Ball. You can also do reading activities that involve math. For example, have her read sale signs (such as “20% off all shirts” or “Buy one pair of shoes, get the second pair free.”) Then she can figure out how much you’d pay for certain items. Challenge her to solve interesting word problems, too!

## Serve your community by reading to others

Do you and your child enjoy reading aloud? Maybe you could brighten others’ days by reading to them. Consider being volunteer readers in a school, nursing home or hospital.



## For lower elementary readers:

- ***Hiromi’s Hands*** by Lynne Barasch. This biography tells about chef Akira Suzuki and his daughter Hiromi, as they each discover a passion for making sushi.
- ***Mine-o-saur*** by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen. The Mine-o-saur refuses to share his toys and his snacks—and soon he realizes he has no friends to play with! How will the Mine-o-saur solve this problem?



## For upper elementary readers:

- ***Poem Runs: Baseball Poems and Paintings*** by Douglas Florian. Get ready for baseball season with this collection of poems about various positions and pieces of equipment.
- ***Bronte’s Book Club*** by Kristiana Gregory. When Bronte Bella moves to a new town, she worries about making friends. A book club helps her find things she has in common with girls in the new place.

### Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2019

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



## Book Picks

### ■ **Heartseeker** (Melinda Beatty)

What if you could “see” lies? In this novel, an eleven-year-old girl named Only Fallow can! Now she must help a king determine who is loyal to him. Along the way, she learns some uncomfortable truths about the kingdom.



### ■ **National Geographic Kids Brain Games: The Mind-Blowing Science of Your Amazing Brain** (Jennifer Swanson)

Youngsters will explore the human brain in this book of fascinating—and often surprising—facts. It’s full of brainteasers and challenges for your child to try and includes an



explanation of the science behind each activity.

### ■ **The BFG** (Roald Dahl)

In a land of scary giants, the Big Friendly Giant (BFG) is special. Follow the BFG and a little girl named Sophie as they try to stop the not-so-friendly giants from getting up to no good. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ **Some Writer! The Story of E. B. White** (Melissa Sweet)

This scrapbook-style biography introduces readers to the author of classics like *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte’s Web*. See photos of animals that White’s stories were based on, writing samples from his childhood, rough drafts of his manuscripts, and more.



## Strategies for summarizing

“What was that book about?”

Listening to your child summarize a book shows her teacher (or you) how well she understood it. And the act of summarizing builds comprehension. Suggest these ideas.

### Start with questions

Pretend to be a reporter, and ask your youngster the “5W” questions (who, what, when, where, and why) about her book. She can use her answers to give a brief summary. *Example:* “tiger cub” (who), “adopted” (what), “2018” (when), “India” (where), “orphaned” (why). Her summary could begin, “An orphaned tiger cub was adopted by another mother tiger in India last year.”



solve a mystery belong in her summary, but a description of the detective’s clothing probably doesn’t.

### Draw a picture

A colorful graphic organizer lets your youngster visualize her summary. She might draw an ice cream cone labeled with the book’s title and add a different color scoop for each story element: characters, setting, problem, and solution. Now she could fill in details and look at her cone as she summarizes the story. (“A young girl from a small town moved to a big city. She had to learn how to fit in.”) ■

### Rank importance

Can your child convince you to read a book she enjoyed? Record her making a commercial about it. The catch? She has a 60-second time slot, so she must stick to what matters most. Ahead of time, suggest that she list details, then number them from most to least relevant. For instance, clues that helped a detective

## Write a how-to guide

What’s a fun way for your child to practice his writing and help someone out? He can write a how-to guide for something he’s good at!

Let your youngster choose a topic (say, drawing portraits) and list numbered steps. *Example:* 1. Gather supplies. 2. Find a model. 3. Draw an outline. 4. Refine the outline.

5. Add features. Then, he could expand on each step to explain it thoroughly. “Add features” might become “Add facial features, such as eyes, a nose, and a mouth.”

To see if his instructions work, he should follow them step by step. If they don’t, he may need to add steps or be more specific. ■

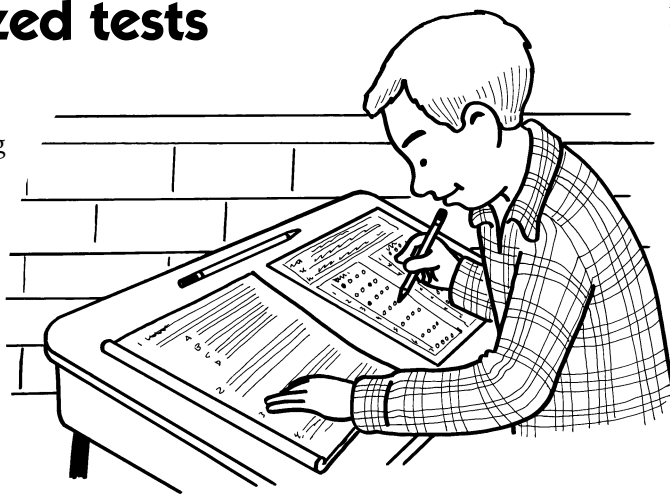


## Tips for standardized tests

Knowing how to approach different types of questions can improve your youngster's performance on state reading and writing tests. Share this advice.

**Multiple choice.** Your child should read the entire passage and all possible answers before choosing one. There might be several options that seem good but perhaps aren't the best choices.

**Short answer.** On some standardized tests, your youngster may have to read



passages and write answers to questions. He could highlight or jot down facts or details on scratch paper first. Then, he can refer to the passages or his notes as he writes and include evidence if required.

**Essay.** Taking his time with each stage of the writing process (planning, rough draft, editing) will make your child's final product better. Encourage him to read the instructions

carefully so he knows what kind of essay he needs to write (narrative, informative, persuasive) and how it will be scored. If sources or samples are provided, he should read through all of them, too. ■



### Vocabulary: Stack the cups

Build towers (and your youngster's vocabulary!) with this cup-stacking word game.

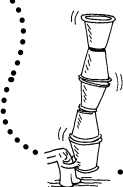
**1.** Have your child get a textbook or another nonfiction book with a glossary. Together, pick 25 words, and write each one on a separate plastic or paper cup.



**2.** Take turns choosing any cup, then reading the word and giving its definition. Another player checks the book to see if your definition is correct. If it is, you keep the cup.

**3.** As players win cups, they stack them to build towers. If the tower falls, they must return all of their cups to the middle of the table.

**4.** When every cup has been claimed, count to see who stacked the most. ■



### Learning to listen

**Q** My daughter's gymnastics coach said Rachel doesn't always listen when he gives instructions to the team. How can I help her be a better listener?

**A** Listening takes practice. In addition to having regular conversations, use these activities to sharpen your child's ears:

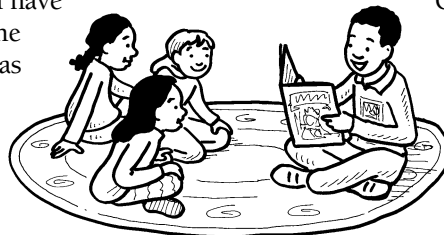
- Have her close her eyes. Make four noises (rustle paper, jingle keys, snap your fingers, stomp your feet). Name one sound, and ask her if it came first, second, third, or fourth.
- Let your daughter listen closely to a song and write down the words, pausing or rewinding as necessary. She can compare what she wrote to the actual lyrics. *Tip:* Search for lyrics online. ■



### Read aloud with confidence

My son Luke loves to read silently, but he's hesitant about reading aloud. I'm trying different ideas at home to make him more comfortable reading out loud at school.

First, I suggested that he read to his younger cousins when they visit. It was cute watching them have "story time." And the book Luke chose was easier than what he normally reads, so I think that helped him feel confident.



Also, I find opportunities for him to read out loud in everyday situations. For example, I'll ask him to read the list of pizza toppings from a takeout menu. Or when we're driving around town, I'll have him turn on the GPS, mute it, and read the directions to me in his best "GPS voice."

Luke's teacher recently mentioned that he volunteered when she asked for someone to read a poem. I guess the practice at home is helping! ■

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# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

MARCH 2019

## READING

### Pictures tell a story

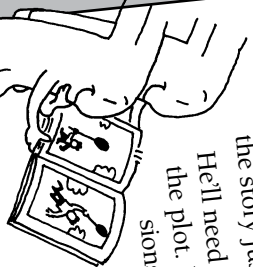
Encourage your youngster to “read” a book using only the pictures. He’ll practice inferring, or “reading between the lines.”

**Ingredients:** picture book

Choose a wordless book, or pick a regular book and cover up the words. Turn the pages, and have your child try to figure out what’s happening in the story just by looking at the pictures.

He’ll need to look at details and make inferences to get an idea of the plot. For example, he might study characters’ facial expressions to infer how they’re feeling and whether something good or bad is happening in the story.

When you reach the end of the book, go back and read the story aloud, or listen as your youngster reads it to you. How accurate were his inferences?



## SPELLING

### Add a letter

In this collaborative game, no one knows what word the players will end up spelling together!

**Ingredients:** magnetic letters or letter tiles

Secretly pick any word (say, *cupcake*) and place only its first letter (c) on the table. Now your youngster thinks of a word beginning with c (*candle*) and she (perhaps *caramel*) and add the third letter (r). Continue adding one letter at a time until you’ve formed a complete word and no more letters can be added (no plural words allowed). The last player who contributes a letter scores a point for each letter in the word and then starts a new word. The first person with 50 points wins.



## DIVISION

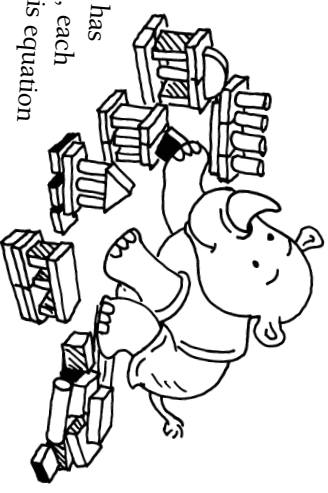
### My village

Constructing this block village can help your child “see” division.

**Ingredients:** building blocks

Suggest that your youngster decide how many buildings his village will contain, then divide up his blocks so each building gets an equal number. Have him tell you the division problem he made. For example, if he has 43 blocks and is planning 5 buildings, each pile should have 8, with 3 left over. His equation would be  $43 \div 5 = 8$ , remainder 3.

**Idea:** Encourage creative thinking by asking how he can make each building look different even though he’s using the same number of blocks



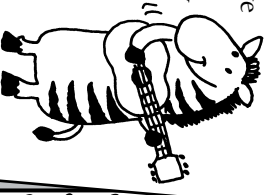
## GRAPHING

Let your youngster sort and graph a handful of trail mix to see which ingredient is the most common. She can make a column for each type, being careful to line them up evenly. Ask her questions (“How many more almonds are there than raisins?”), and have her use her graph to answer them. Now enjoy a treat together!



## LISTENING

Your child will need to listen carefully to finish your tune. Hum a few lines from a song he knows. Then, have him hum or sing the next few lines or play them on a musical instrument. Now switch roles, and let him hum a song for you to guess.



**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.”

# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

MARCH 2019

## Character Corner

### DEPENDABILITY

Help your child learn to be punctual by appointing him as the family timekeeper. Write down what time you need to leave to visit a relative or run errands. Ask him to look at a watch and announce when there are 30 minutes, 15 minutes, and 5 minutes left.



### RESPONSIBILITY

The next time your youngster is invited to a party, give her the job of responding. She can call, email, or write to tell the hosts whether she's coming. She'll learn responsibility—and work on using good manners, too.



### COOPERATION

Turn a crossword puzzle into a family cooperation challenge. One person reads the clues, and anyone who knows the answer says it. Another person fills in the words. Trade roles so everyone gets a chance to read and write.



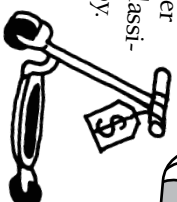
### HEALTH

This “sparkly” activity shows your child why hand washing is important. Sprinkle glitter onto a plate, and have him press a hand shared his “germs” with you. Repeat the activity, but tell him to wash his hands before shaking yours. This time, he won't spread germs.



### WRITING

Let your youngster write a pretend classified ad to sell a toy. She'll practice choosing her words carefully.



First, she could read ads in the newspaper or online for ideas. Point out that each word costs money, so she'll want to use as few as possible to get her message across. *Example:* “Scooter for sale. Like new.”

### WORD PROBLEMS

Ask your child to retell a math story problem in his own words. He might swap in his name or the name of his pet. This will help him relate personally to the problem, and it'll be easier—and more fun—to solve. *Note:* He should keep numbers and math words (*add*, *take away*) the same.



### ART

Spring is around the corner! Invite your young artist to make springtime flowers to decorate your home. She could use materials like construction paper, tissue paper, and pipe cleaners. Then, she can arrange the flowers in colorful bouquets.



### ASTRONOMY

#### Solar system role-play

Act out movement in the solar system—but be careful not to get too dizzy!

**Ingredients:** three sticky notes, pencil or crayons, flashlight

Have your child decide who will be the sun, the Earth, and the moon. She could make a name tag for each person to wear by labeling or illustrating sticky notes.

In a dark room, the “sun” (light source) can hold the flashlight and point it at the “Earth,” who should stand about 6 feet away. The Earth slowly rotates (spins around) while revolving (walking in a circle) around the sun. The “moon” revolves around one side of the

What does your youngster notice? The sun shines on one side of the Earth at a time (daytime) while the other side is dark (nighttime). When the Earth is between the sun and the moon in a straight line, the moon is dark (a lunar eclipse). And when all three are perfectly lined up with the moon in the middle, the moon blocks the sun, and the Earth is dark (a solar eclipse).



## Congratulations!

We finished \_\_\_\_\_ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)