



Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

A bit about writing:

Stylish Writing

Your children should be interested in writing about topics that have to do with clothing. You might want to open the discussion by telling an embarrassing clothes moment story of your own. Then have your child share his/her stories. You may orally want to discuss the following topics before you begin to write about them.

The topics are:

- Your favorite outfit
 - A time you hated what you wore
 - How you feel about "labels" and designer clothing
- Ask your child to describe



fabrics and colors in great detail. Was the material scratchy or soft? Did it smell of moth balls or dryer sheets? Remind them to write using their senses (look, touch, taste, feel, hear).

More related topics:

- What article of clothing did your child wear every day as a youngster?
- What fad do they think is ugly?
- Be a trend setter. What will be the next fashion craze?
- If they had to wear an outfit for an entire month, what would they choose? (Yes, they have to wear it everywhere and yes, it is washed regularly.)

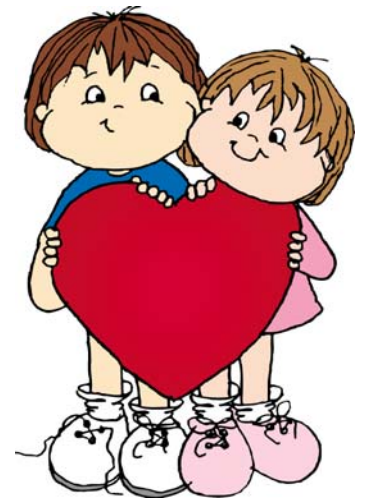
Just like clothing, sentences should be well coordinated. Similar sentences are grouped into one paragraph.

Just like clothing, overused, worn-out phrases and clichés become old very fast in our writing. Try to come up with something new and different.

Many designers say that accessories are essential to good style. In writing, a well chosen adverb, adjective, simile, or metaphor can be just what is needed to turn your writing from flat to fabulous. Be careful, though. Just as with real accessories, you do not want to overdo it!

Volume 1, Issue vi

February 2016



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 Or at MES 440 Higgins Crowell Rd W. Yarmouth, MA 02673

Reminder:

Title I Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday Feb. 4,
2016 at Central
Office 296 Station
Ave. from 2:00—3:00
All interested parties
welcome!

Home & School

CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



SHORT NOTES

Groundhog Day

When was the first Groundhog Day? How often is the groundhog right about the weather? Encourage your child to find the answers to these questions and more by researching Groundhog Day in library books or online. Then, she can make her own predictions about when spring weather will arrive—and see if she and the groundhog agree!

Illustrate a feeling

Drawing or painting a picture is often an easier way for youngsters to express difficult feelings. If you sense that your child feels nervous, sad, or afraid, try getting out art supplies. He might sketch a portrait of himself with butterflies across his stomach if he's nervous or a scary monster if he's afraid.

Family workouts

On cold winter days, your youngster can still get the 60 minutes of recommended daily physical activity—while enjoying family time. Play “baseball” with snowballs, scoring one run for each ball you hit. Build an indoor or outdoor obstacle course. Or hold “yoga class” by following a video.

Worth quoting

“You can’t stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.” A. A. Milne

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What musical instrument can you hear but not see or touch?

A: Your voice!



Read, create, and retell

In school, your child will be asked to think deeply about books and to pay close attention to details as he reads. That means doing activities like analyzing characters, visualizing book settings, and retelling stories. Let him practice at home with these fun projects.

Character cereal

Have your youngster cover an empty cereal box with paper and decorate it based on his favorite storybook character. For example, *The Rainbow Fish* (Marcus Pfister) learns to be a good friend, so your youngster could name his cereal “Friendly Flakes.” Encourage him to draw the character on his box and describe the cereal (“Sparkly and colorful”). He could add an activity on the back, such as a quiz. (“Why did the other fish ignore him at first?”)

Setting map

Suggest that your child draw a map of a book’s setting. He’ll imagine what the setting might look like and think about how each part is important to the story. If he’s mapping *Holes* (Louis Sachar), he could



use a circle to represent Camp Green Lake, where the prisoners dig holes. He can add an onion for the field where onions grow and are used as medicine.

Plot bag

Let your youngster fill a paper bag with items related to a story and use them to retell the tale aloud. After he reads *A Chair for My Mother* (Vera B. Williams), he might put a fabric swatch and coins in a bag. He can pull out each piece and explain its significance as he retells. (“I added coins because the kids saved money to buy their mom a chair. She worked hard and needed a place to relax.”)♥

School pride

If your youngster takes pride in her school, she’s likely to feel more connected to it—and more motivated to learn. Help her develop strong school ties with these tips:

- Make school events into family events by attending as many as you can. Your child will feel proud to show off her school to you.
- Post school news and announcements on the refrigerator. Providing a place of honor for these items reminds her that school is an important part of your family’s life.
- Encourage your youngster to get involved in a school activity. Being a member of the chess club or safety patrol squad will give her a sense of pride—and of belonging.♥



A respectful student

School is more pleasant for both students and teachers when children behave respectfully. Share this advice with your youngster so she can do her part in creating a respectful place to learn.

Respect for all. Point out that everyone—from the principal to the custodian, and from the popular kid to the unpopular one—deserves to be treated with respect. Encourage your child to smile or wave at school staff members and fellow students. You can set an example by letting her see you give everyone (receptionists and doctors, cashiers and store managers) the same respect.



Respect for property. In school, students share library books, playground space, restrooms, and more. And these things will be nicer to use when youngsters take care of them. Suggest that your

child do simple acts that show respect for school property. Examples: Returning library books so others can read them, putting trash in wastebaskets so the playground and restrooms look nice and stay clean.♥

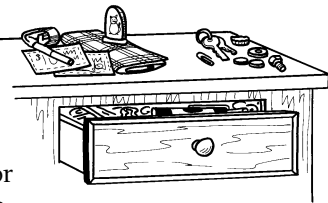
ACTIVITY CORNER

Junk-drawer creativity

Look no further than your kitchen junk drawer to give your youngster's creative thinking a boost. Try these ideas.

Reuse

Suggest that your child come up with different uses for objects in the drawer. He could use rubber bands to make a ball or turn a cork into a pincushion, for example. Take turns thinking of ways to reuse a bottle cap, a handheld mirror, and other junk-drawer items.



Sort

Let your youngster sort items according to a secret criterion, and you try to figure out his rule. Say he puts a paper clip and a key in one group, and a coupon and a gift bag in another. You might guess that he's sorting by materials (metal, paper). Next, you sort objects into piles, and have him determine your rule.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A

Strong study habits

Q: My third grader has to spend more time studying this year. How can I make sure he studies effectively?

A: Set your son up for success by helping him find a distraction-free study spot. Also, have him come up with a study routine. For instance, he could reserve time each evening to review his textbook and notes in the days leading up to a test or quiz.

Then, many students find it helpful to jot down a purpose each time they study at home. Your child might write: "I will learn the definitions of all the bold-faced words in chapter 7, section 1."

Finally, encourage him to experiment with study strategies to find what works best for him. He could close his eyes and imagine how a word is spelled or draw a grid with 9 squares to solve 3 x 3. Or he might find it easier to spell or recite math facts aloud in rhythm or to a familiar tune.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Perfect...or close enough

My daughter Sasha gets upset if her handwriting isn't "perfect" or if her shoes aren't tied a certain way. My mother pointed out that I'm kind of a perfectionist, too. While it helped me work hard in school and now at my job, she said it often led to frustration when I was Sasha's age.

She suggested that I try what worked with me: Have Sasha think about what might happen if something isn't perfect. So the next time I found my daughter retying her laces over and



over, I asked, "What's the worst that could happen if the knot is a little off-center?" At first she said she would trip and fall, but then she smiled and said, "I guess nothing." Another day, she wanted to rip up her homework because every letter wasn't perfect. I encouraged her to do a different assignment and look at the first one again later—she did, and she decided she could live with it after all.

Sasha may always be a perfectionist, but I hope she's learning to tell the difference between what really matters and what she can let go.♥

Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

February 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

TOOLS & TIDBITS



One more, one less

Draw 3 circles, and put 5 dots in the middle

one. Can your youngster draw 1 less in the left circle (4 dots) and 1 more in the right circle (6 dots)? Now ask if he can

show another way that 5 is 1 more than 4 and 1 less than 6. He might arrange objects, such as books or socks, in rows of 4, 5, and 6.

Kitchen chemistry

Making dinner? That's a great time for your child to witness kitchen chemistry firsthand. Have her touch and taste a raw carrot and describe it to you (*hard, crunchy*). Then, cook it. Let her touch, taste, and describe it again (*soft, mushy*). She'll learn an important science concept: Heating can change a substance.

Web picks

Visit numbernut.com to let your youngster quiz himself, play memory games, and more. Also includes helpful explanations of math concepts for parents.

Your child can watch an animated video of how the water cycle works at epa.gov/safewater/kids/flash/flash_watercycle.html.

Just for fun

Q: What do you get when you cross a rooster and a giraffe?

A: An animal that can wake people on the top floor of a building.



Even or odd?

Knowing the difference between even and odd numbers will help your child understand number patterns and get ready for division and other advanced math. Start with these activities, and then practice with the game below.

Find a partner

Put small toys into a bowl. Have your youngster scoop up a handful and arrange them into pairs of 2. If each one has a partner, the total will be an even number. But if there's an "odd man out," it will be an odd number. Let her count by 2s (2, 4, 6, 8) and say whether the total is even or odd. Then, she can put the toys back and try again with a new handful.

See the pattern

Help your child draw 2 rows of 10 boxes and number them across (1–10, 11–20). She could color the even-numbered boxes with one color and the odd boxes with another. She'll see that every other number is even and every other number in between is odd. *Idea:* Together, count the numbers



aloud—she might roar the even numbers like a lion, while you use a squeaky mouse voice for the odd ones. Ask her what 21 would be, and she'll be able to say, "Odd."

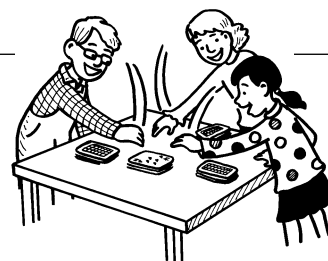
Discover the rule

Pick a number from 1 to 20, and ask your youngster to count that many paper clips. Can she divide them into two equal piles? If so, the number is even. If not, it's odd. Have her write the number under the heading "even" or "odd" on a sheet of paper. Continue until she has listed all the numbers up to 20. What does she notice? (Even numbers end in 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8, and odd numbers in 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9.)

Slap the card

Who can be the quickest to slap the even (or odd) cards? Play this game to find out.

1. Deal a deck of cards (aces and face cards removed) equally in facedown piles. Set a timer for two minutes.
2. Have each player add one card facedown to a single stack in the middle of the table. Then, one person turns the top card faceup.
3. If it's even, everyone races to slap the stack (using one hand). Whoever slaps first gets the stack and puts it at the bottom of his pile. If it's odd, the cards stay in the middle.
4. Keep adding cards, turning over the top one, and slapping until the timer rings.
5. Play again, this time slapping odd-numbered cards.
6. Count your cards. The person with the most after both rounds wins.



Score a touchdown!

As teams and fans gear up for the biggest football game of the year, your family can throw a *Math Super Bowl*. Here's how.

Measure your passes. Starting from the same point, take turns tossing a football. With each throw, have your youngster pace off the distance by walking heel-to-toe. Who will pass the football the most “feet”? *Idea:* Have different family members walk off the same distance. Your child will see that the answer changes with the person's foot size—that's why we use rulers.



Make a pictograph. Your child could poll family and friends to predict the Super Bowl winner. To graph his results, he can label a column for each team and draw a football for each vote. (*Note:* Remind him to line up the footballs evenly across the rows.)

“Call” the game. On game day, let your child announce the action—using numbers. “Number 84 fumbled the ball!” “The red team needs 6 points to tie the game.” He could keep his own stats, too. For instance, he might record the number of times each player carried or caught the ball. 🦋

SCIENCE LAB

Blue skies

At some point, just about every child wonders, “Why is the sky blue?” Help your youngster understand this phenomenon by doing this experiment.

You'll need: 2-liter clear plastic bottle, water, flashlight, milk, teaspoon measure

Here's how: Have your youngster fill the bottle $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. Shine the flashlight down into the water as she adds milk to the bottle, 1 tsp. at a time.



What happens? The mixture will appear blue.

Why? White light—from the sun in the atmosphere or from the flashlight here—is actually a mixture of all the colors of the rainbow. When that light collides with gas molecules in the atmosphere (or milk molecules here), the light scatters. Blue light scatters more than any other color, so the sky looks blue.

Idea: Change the “sun's” position by shining the flashlight toward the middle of the bottle. The water will appear red, orange, or pink—like a sunrise or sunset. When the sun's position in the sky changes, the color of the scattered light changes, too. 🦋

MATH CORNER

I ♥ math

Encourage your youngster to use hearts for math fun this month. Try these ideas.

Line them up

Suggest that your child draw different-size hearts on construction paper and cut them out. She could line them up from shortest to tallest or narrowest to widest. Cut out another heart, and ask her to insert it where it should go in the lineup.

Create number sentences

Together, cut 20 hearts out of red and pink construction paper. On each one, your child can write a number to make two sets of 0–9. Then, have her make addition, subtraction, and equal signs (+, −, =) on separate slips of paper. Use the hearts and slips to make number sentences for her—leaving one space blank. She has to fill in the missing number. *Tip:* Leave out numbers in different spots, not just the answer. 🦋



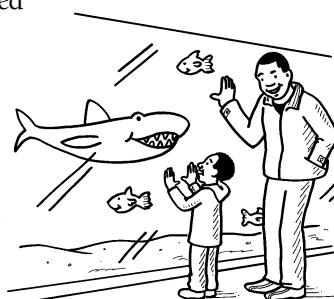
PARENT TO PARENT

Let's take a science field trip

My son came home so excited about his class's field trip to the local science center that it gave me an idea. Why not take science field trips as a family? We're always looking for fun and inexpensive things to do on weekends.

Our first one was to the aquarium downtown—once a month there's a free day for families. Brendan loved seeing the sharks, and he was fascinated when he learned that starfish can regrow lost arms.

Then, last weekend we visited our town's recycling center. We saw the sorting process and talked about how



More field trip ideas...

- Farm
- Wildlife refuge
- Power company
- Botanical garden
- Water treatment plant
- Nature preserve
- Orchard
- State park
- Planetarium
- Dam
- Zoo
- Fish hatchery

conveyor belts work. We also learned how paper is processed and sold to paper mills to be used again—giving Brendan incentive to put paper into our recycling bins at home! 🦋

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BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Finger plays help your child build motor and listening skills

Finger plays are short rhymes or songs that include finger motions. Not only are finger plays fun, they also help your child's development in numerous ways! Finger plays:

- **Strengthen fine motor skills.** Your child has a ton of small muscles in her fingers, and it's important to build their strength. This will help with writing as well as daily tasks, such as tying her shoes.
 - **Build listening skills.** Some finger plays require actions, such as clapping on certain words. Your child will need to practice listening for those words.
- Some common finger plays that your child may enjoy include:
- **Five Little Monkeys.**
 - **Here Is the Beehive.**
 - **This Little Piggy.**



Source: D.J. Stewart, M.Ed., "15 Fabulous fingerplays and facts," Teach Preschool, nswc.com/whatarefingerplays.

"A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it."

—Samuel Johnson

Read with your child to get him thinking

You can help your child learn to think about what the words in stories mean even before he can read them himself.

Pick an interesting book to read with your child. Read a page, pointing to the words as you read them. Talk about the picture on the page. Ask if your child notices anything special about the picture.

Then, ask your child some more questions. Ask him how he felt about what happened in the book or what he thinks will happen next. Ask him how he thinks the main character feels. These questions build his comprehension and analysis skills, which will help him understand and interpret what he has heard.

Practice sounds to get ready for reading

Learning the sounds that letters make is an important part of getting ready to read. Here are some ways you can help your child practice:

- **Read books** with words that rhyme.
- **Learn songs** and short poems.
- **Help separate** the sounds in words and listen for beginning and ending sounds.
- **Put different sounds** together.



Look for key elements when choosing books

When helping your child decide what books to read, keep in mind that children enjoy books with:

- **Large,** clear pictures.
- **Positive** messages and outlooks.
- **Fast-paced** plots.

Source: C.R. Tomlin, M.Ed., "Factors to Consider When Choosing Preschool Books," Earlychildhood NEWS, nswc.com/choosingpicturebooks.



Make a set of sandy alphabet letters

For a touchable way to review the alphabet, make a set of sand letters. You need index cards, glue and sand. Then:

1. **Use the glue to write** one letter on each card. While the glue is still wet, sprinkle the letters with sand. You can also use glitter or salt.
 2. **Lay the cards** flat to dry.
 3. **Shake off** any excess sand.
- Have your child practice tracing the letters of the alphabet with her finger!



Your child isn't too young to start keeping a personal journal

Even though your child isn't writing on her own yet, you can still encourage her to enjoy journaling! It's a useful habit to build, it will help her get ready for reading and writing, and it's a great way to begin building memories, too.

Staple several pieces of paper together to make your child's special notebook. Have her decorate the front however she'd like. Help her to write her name on the cover, too.

Set a regular time to work on the journal together. You can write the journal entry as your child dictates what she wants to say. Entries can be about anything—for example, what your child did at school, something she saw during the day or something that her pet did.

Source: "Writing," Between the Lions: Parents & Teachers, niswc.com/journalwriting.



Build communication skills while grocery shopping

Young children need to hear lots of words to help them learn to communicate well. And good verbal skills are vital for reading.



A grocery shopping trip is a great opportunity to surround your child with meaningful talk. Talk to her about where you are. Name the items you see. Let her touch things. Let her "help" you by holding things, pointing to things or making choices.

Source: N. Paulu, "Helping Your Child Get Ready for School," KidSource Online, niswc.com/learnwithshopping.

Reading aloud should be fun for your child

Reading aloud with your child should be an enjoyable time for both of you. When your child looks forward to your daily reading time, he'll learn to love reading! When you're reading aloud with your child:

- **Take on the voices** of the characters. Roar like a lion or growl like a bear. Have your child mimic the voices, too.
- **Give him time** to point to pictures and ask questions about the story.
- **Stop occasionally and ask** him to predict what will happen next in the book.
- **Encourage him to turn** the pages.
- **Discuss what you're reading.** You should both share your opinions on the book.



Books to delight your early reader

- **Wazdot?** by Michael Slack (Disney Hyperion Books). Blip the alien is on a field trip and finds a pig, vegetables and more. Where is he?
- **Isabella's Garden** by Glenda Millard (Candlewick Press). See all the natural elements, big and small, in Isabella's garden. Everything works together, from the clouds that cry rain to the seeds that sleep in the soil.
- **Whopper Cake** by Karma Wilson and Will Hillenbrand (Margaret K. McElderry Books). It's Grandma's birthday, and Grandpa has devised a plan to make her the ultimate cake.



Q: My preschooler doesn't seem to like story time. How can I spark her interest?

A: Instead of choosing books for *her*, have her choose books for you. "I don't know what to read to myself for story time. Can you find something?" Eagerly read aloud whatever she brings you, but don't ask her to listen. Chances are, you won't have to!

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Bridges Are to Cross* (Philemon Sturges)

Llamas cross a rope suspension bridge in Peru, big ships pass beneath a drawbridge in England, and trains travel over a double-cantilever steel bridge in Scotland. In this nonfiction book, young readers will see pictures of bridges around the world and learn how they're designed and used.



■ *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* (Laura Numeroff)

When an adorable piglet climbs through the kitchen window, a little girl offers him a pancake. Then the pig wants one thing after another, including a bubble bath, a field trip—and more pancakes. Your child can predict what the pig will request next as the story comes full circle. Part of the *If You Give* series. (Also available in Spanish.)

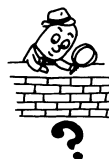


■ *Ling & Ting Share a Birthday* (Grace Lin)

Six-year-old twins Ling and Ting face a few mishaps on their birthday as they dress up and open gifts. Their creativity and cooperation save the day in this collection of short stories for early readers. A cute look at similarities and differences between twins.

■ *What Really Happened to Humpty?* (Jeanie Franz Ransom)

Did Humpty Dumpty really fall off the wall, or was he pushed? This sequel tells the story from the point of view of Humpty's detective brother, Joe. Now several nursery rhyme characters are suspects in his investigation! A funny read-aloud sprinkled with egg jokes.



The magic of graphics

Charts, tables, graphs, and more—your child will read a lot of graphics in school. Help him prepare with these ideas for reading graphics in everyday life.

Name the facts

Your youngster may be surprised by how much information a graphic can provide at a glance. Have your family look at the weekend weather chart. Together, make a list of all the facts you learn from it. If your child sees a snowflake in the "Friday" column, for instance, he may want you to help him write, "It might snow on Friday!" How many facts will you list?

Go on a nutrition mission

While grocery shopping, tell your youngster he's on a nutrition mission. First, show him how to read the table on a nutrition label. For example, tell him that "4g" next to "protein" on a box of rice means 1 serving has 4 grams of protein. Can he find yogurt with fewer than 10 grams of sugar per serving? How about bread with more than 2 grams of



fiber? He'll practice reading tables—and get an introduction to nutrition labels.

Match it up

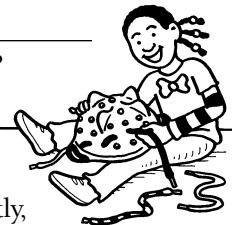
Let your child see how text and graphics work as a team. Find three kid-friendly newspaper or magazine articles that include graphics. Cut out the articles and graphics separately, and mix them all up. Read the articles to him, and see if he can match each graphic with its article. For instance, he might say that a graph showing Asian elephants and Bengal tigers goes with the article about endangered species.♥

Colorful handwriting boosters

What does finger paint have in common with a colander? Both can improve your youngster's handwriting! Try these suggestions for building hand strength and coordination:

- For a squishy yet mess-free paint activity, help your child spoon finger paint into a small freezer bag. Seal the bag tightly, and have her move her finger gently over the bag to form letters, numbers, and shapes in the paint.

- Give your youngster a colander and shoelaces or a ribbon. She can weave the material in and out of the holes. Add even more fun by encouraging her to use different colors and to weave up, down, or diagonally.♥



Family storytelling

Anyone can be a storyteller! Here are creative ways to enjoy family storytelling as your youngster practices language and writing skills.

Story stones. Collect rocks outside, draw simple chalk pictures (stick figure, sun) on them, and put the stones in a basket. Then, the first person selects one and begins a story based on the drawing. (“The alien came from a planet with a purple sun.”) She passes the basket to the next person, who picks a rock and adds a line to the story. Keep your story going until you run out of stones. Erase your drawings, make new ones, and play again.



Memory beads. Tell a story based on a family memory. You’ll need a bowl of beads and a ball of yarn. Decide what your story is about (say, adopting your dog). Take turns choosing a bead, saying one line of the story, and stringing the bead onto the

yarn. (“When we saw Maisie wagging her tail for us, we knew she was the one.”) Once your story is complete, tie the yarn so the beads can’t fall off, and hang it in a special spot to remember the tale.♥



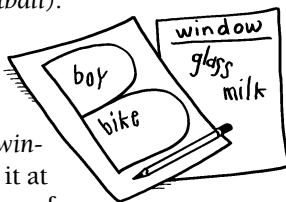
Word brainstorm

Stretch your child’s thinking and vocabulary with these two word activities.

1. Fill the letter. Ask your youngster to choose a letter (say, B) and write it large enough to fill a sheet of paper. Take turns writing words inside it that begin with the letter (boy, bike). Can you fill up the entire letter? *Variation:* Make it more challenging by using only words with more than one syllable (balloon, basketball).

2. Play a word association game. Pick a

word, such as window, and write it at the top of a piece of paper. Underneath, your child writes the first word he thinks of (glass). Based on that, you write the next word that pops into your mind (milk). Continue for two minutes. Look over your list, and talk about why you chose each word. Now, start over with a new word.♥



Parent to Parent

A reading playdate

Recently, my son Tyler mentioned that he loves reading with his friends in school. I suggested that the next time a friend visits, they could read together. Secretly, I thought it would be a great alternative to the video games they usually ask to play.

Tyler invited his friend Jack over, and they decided to read a book that Tyler had checked out of the school library. They took turns reading the pages aloud. I noticed that Jack read more smoothly than Tyler, who tripped over a few words. I was impressed to hear how patient Jack was—he even helped Tyler sound out the words. When they finished the book, I heard them reading riddles to each other from a joke book and cracking up.

The boys had fun, Tyler got in some good reading practice—and not once did they ask to play video games!♥



Q&A Write to a pen pal

Q When I was little, I had a pen pal in another state. This sounds like a good way for my daughter to practice writing and to learn about life in a different place. Any ideas?

A Start by talking to neighbors or family friends. Someone may have a niece in another country or a grandparent in assisted living who would enjoy exchanging letters with your child.

Once you find someone, help her write her first letter.

She could introduce herself by writing about her family, school, or hobbies, for example. Explain that she should also ask questions to show interest and to give her pen pal something to respond to. (“What is it like to live where it’s warm all the time?” or “What was your favorite school subject when you were my age?”)

She’ll be excited to receive a letter in reply! Help her read it. Then, she can keep the fun going by sending another letter to her pen pal.♥



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

Suggest ways for your child to practice writing every day

Reading and writing go hand in hand. The more your child reads, the better his vocabulary and ability to construct complex sentences will be. In turn, your child's improved writing ability will improve his reading ability! To encourage your child to write every day, suggest that he:



- **Keep a journal** in which he writes about his thoughts and his day's activities.
- **Write notes and letters** to friends and family members.
- **Create text** to go along with wordless picture books.
- **Continue a favorite story** by writing a sequel.
- **Convert a book** into a play by writing a script. Then, he can perform it for the family!
- **Maintain a log** of all the books he reads.

"Sleep is good, he said, and books are better."

—George R.R. Martin

Teach your child how to read for meaning

Even though your child may be able to sound out all the words on a page, it's important that she understand what those words mean. To make sure your child is reading for meaning:

- **Set aside a regular time for reading** every day. This indicates to your child that it's time to grab a book.
- **Encourage reading aloud.** When your child says the words on the page out loud, it may help her focus on the meaning of those words.
- **Suggest ways to interact** with the text. When your child asks questions or makes predictions about what she reads, she is thinking critically about the text. That helps her understand its meaning.
- **Keep a dictionary handy.** This way, your child can easily and quickly look up unfamiliar words to ensure she knows what they mean.

Mnemonic devices help kids remember information



To help your child remember long lists of information, teach her how to use *mnemonic* devices. A mnemonic device is a memory aid. For example, if your child is learning the names of the Great Lakes in her social studies class, she can use the acronym HOMES to remember Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior!

Source: "Using Mnemonics to Improve Your Memory," Psychologist World, nswc.com/usingmnemonics.

Offer a variety of reading material

Suggest that your child read books and magazines on many different topics. This will help her learn about new things and discover new interests. And she'll be strengthening her reading skills in the process!



Patience pays off in textbook reading



Some kids rush through reading assignments just to be finished quickly. But when they do that, they miss out on learning. When reading a textbook, your child should:

- **Skim the text**, noticing main ideas.
- **Turn headings into questions**, and then answer them by reading the text.
- **Restate main ideas** after each section.
- **Pause and review** what he learned.

Source: "Textbook Reading Systems," Center for Learning & Teaching, Cornell University, nswc.com/textbookreadingmethod.

Build your child's vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms

One of the best ways to expand vocabulary is by looking for *synonyms*—words that have the same or almost the same meaning—and *antonyms*—words that mean the opposite. For example, instead of saying something is *large*, your child could say it's *colossal* or *gigantic*. And instead of the opposite of large being *small*, he could also say that it's *miniscule* or *infinitesimal*.

A thesaurus is a useful reference work for children who want to improve their vocabulary because it contains both synonyms and antonyms. Show your child a thesaurus online and look for one in print the next time you're at the library.

Encourage your child to use synonyms and antonyms by playing a word game. You give a word and ask him to give you a synonym (or an antonym). Then switch places.

Source: "Challenge Your Child to Learn and Use Synonyms and Antonyms," *What Parents Can Do to Help Students with Vocabulary*, The Parent Institute.



Encourage rereading to improve fluency

When your child rereads a favorite book, it builds her *fluency*, or the ease with which she reads. Familiarity with the words she's reading helps your child pick up speed. And this will help your child become a more confident reader!



For lower elementary readers:

- ***A Second is a Hiccup: A Child's Book of Time*** by Hazel Hutchins (Arthur A. Levine Books). How long is a second, a day or a week? This book explores all a child can do within certain lengths of time.
- ***Ish*** by Peter H. Reynolds (Candlewick Press). Ramon loves to draw, but he's discouraged when his brother tells him his drawing of a vase doesn't look realistic. That is, until his sister tells him that it looks vase-ish!

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Nuts*** by Kacy Cook (Two Lions). When Nell and her brothers find two baby squirrels in their yard, the children's lives change. Together, they figure out a way to take care of the animals.
- ***Rosalie, My Rosalie: The Tale of a Duckling*** by Jacquelyn Mitchard (HarperCollins Publishers). Henry wants a little more excitement in her life—like a baby sibling or a cat. Instead, she gets a pet duck she promptly names Rosalie.



Integrate TV time and reading time

With a little planning, the television can become an effective tool for learning. You can even use it to encourage your child to read. To use the TV to promote reading:

- **Have your child read** reviews and descriptions of TV shows and movies with you. Decide together if you'll watch them.
- **Encourage your child to look** up new words and concepts that she hears on TV.
- **Watch the news with your child** (making sure that it's age-appropriate). Then, look in the newspaper or online to learn more about current events.



- **Look for books and articles** that relate to a story that interests your child.

Source: "Learning Partners – Let's Use TV!" KidSource Online, nswc.com/usingtv.



Q: My child has trouble reading. Will his reading struggles hurt his comprehension?

A: When kids struggle to read, sometimes they're so busy trying to figure out words that they don't absorb information. Work with the teacher to find ways to increase your child's fluency (ease of reading). As his fluency improves, so will comprehension. You can also talk with your child about the material he's reading before, during and after he reads it.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks



■ *A Dragon's Guide to the Care and Feeding of Humans* (Laurence Yep and Joanne Ryder)

Miss Drake the dragon tells the story of her new pet human, a 10-year-old named Winnie who refuses to behave like a pet. But watch what happens when Winnie's drawings of magical creatures come to life and terrorize the town!



■ *Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France* (Mara Rockliff)

Bright illustrations, historical details, and a healthy dose of fun are packed into this nonfiction book. After Dr. Franz Mesmer claimed that waving an iron wand over sick people cured them, Benjamin Franklin used the scientific method to prove Mesmer a fraud.



■ *Zack Delacruz: Me and My Big Mouth* (Jeff Anderson)

Being a "nobody" keeps sixth-grader Zack Delacruz out of trouble. Then, he defends a classmate from a bully's attack and gets more attention than he can handle. Suddenly he's responsible for the school dance fund-raiser—can he pull it off?

■ *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* (Miranda Paul)

When plastic bags piled up along roadsides in Gambia, Isatou knew something needed to be done. This book tells how her campaign to recycle the bags by crocheting them into purses benefited both the environment and the community.



Read the instructions

Whether your youngster is doing a school assignment or building a model car, he needs to be able to follow written directions. Suggest these three steps for success.

1. Repeat and rephrase

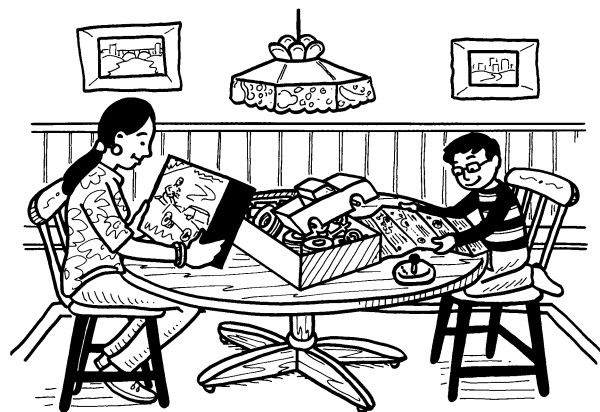
First, your child should read the instructions all the way through for an overview of what to do. Repeating them in his own words can help, too. If he reads, "Identify the point of view, and give your opinion on why the author chose it," he might say, "Name the narrator, and explain why he was the best one to tell the story."

2. Clear up confusion

Now, have your youngster do a quick self-check. Does he understand everything the instructions tell him to do? He can reread any confusing parts and look up words he doesn't know. If he's still stuck, he could ask someone for help.

3. Underline key words

Next, encourage him to underline each action. *Example:* "Insert tab A into slot B,



and glue it in place." When they're all marked, he could number the steps to ensure he doesn't skip one. Finally, have him check off each step as he completes it.

Name those directions!

To practice reading and understanding instructions, play this game: Read aloud instructions from objects around the house (cake mix, washing machine)—but don't tell your youngster what they're for. Can he identify the source? Then, let him find and read a set of instructions for you to guess. ■

Journey to a fictional setting

Neverland, Oz, Narnia...there are lots of fantastical fictional settings to explore! Let your child take you on an imaginary trip to one—the journey will boost her reading comprehension.

After she reads a book, have her describe the setting with lots of colorful details ("sparkly green castle") to help you imagine it. Get her recommendations on what to pack for your "trip." She'll need to consider the climate and the surroundings to advise you on clothing and supplies.

She might even suggest a souvenir to bring home. That will encourage her to think about the landmarks, scenery, or other interesting details she read about. Now, take her on a journey to the last place you visited in a book! ■



Infer with mysteries

Mysteries are great tools for practicing *inferring*, or combining details and personal knowledge to understand things the author doesn't say outright.

Write down clues. Take turns reading aloud from a book of short mysteries (ask a librarian for suggestions). You can each point out clues you see in the text. Have your child jot notes in a “detective notebook” to keep track. *Example:* “It is raining outside, but the stolen bicycle they found is dry.”



the bike is dry, what could that mean?” (The bike has not been outside since it started raining.)

Talk it out. Before reading the solution, go over her notes together, and discuss the clues. Try to pose questions that will help her read between the lines to uncover information that's not stated. For instance, ask, “If it is raining but

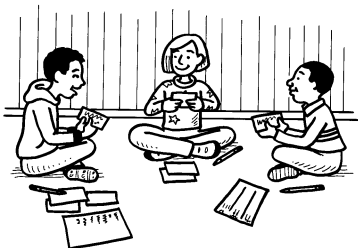
Solve the case. Encourage her to use what she has inferred from the clues to come up with an answer. “Since it was raining outside but the bike is dry, it must have been stolen before the rain started!” *Note:* If your youngster is stumped, she can go back and reread for missed clues. ■

Fun with Words

Bluff-ulary

Is a *carnivore* an animal who loves carnivals or one who eats meat? This bluffing game is a fun way for your child to use his imagination while learning new vocabulary.

Use a vocabulary list from school (or a list of fun words that you brainstorm), and write each word on an index card. The leader turns one word faceup and, on a separate index card, secretly writes its definition.



Next, each player (including the leader) writes a made-up definition on a separate index card. The trick is to write a definition that other players will think is real! The leader shuffles the cards, including the one with the correct definition, and reads them aloud. Vote for the one you think is real—and score a point if you're correct. You also score a point if someone chooses your fake definition.

Continue playing, word by word. Score the most points to win. ■

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Parent 2 Parent

When writing is a struggle

My son Nick has dysgraphia, a learning disability that makes it difficult for him to express himself in writing. Doing reports is especially overwhelming because while he focuses on getting the words on paper, he forgets what he wanted to say.

Nick's teacher is working with us to make things easier. The most helpful strategy was her suggestion that Nick talk before he writes. First, he captures what he wants to say by dictating into a recorder. Then, he plays back the recording and writes or types his words. This allows him to write at a comfortable pace, and it's less stressful because Nick can pause or rewind the recording if he needs to.

Nick is proud of the improvements he is making, and I'm glad he has a way to tackle his writing assignments. ■



Q&A

Be creative with book reports

Q My daughter is excited because she can decide on her own format for her next book report, but she's not sure where to start. Any suggestions?

A It's great that she gets an opportunity to be creative. Encourage your daughter to consider different ideas to find one that's the best fit for her book.

For instance, she could make a “Who's who?” booklet by drawing portraits of

the characters and describing their roles in the story. Or she might mimic a favorite magazine's format. She can summarize the plot in a news article, write up an interview with the main character, and publish letters to the editor with reader opinions about the book.

Or perhaps she'd rather do a video book report. Suggest that she write a script and film herself delivering it, even interviewing a few “characters” using different voices. ■



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2016

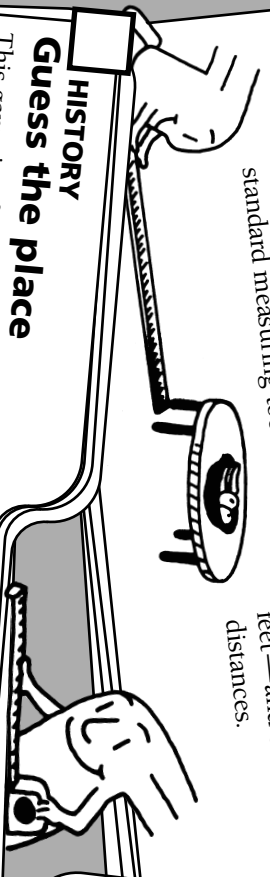
MEASUREMENT

How many feet?

Long ago, people measured distances using their feet. This activity shows your youngster why that wasn't an accurate way to measure.

Ingredients: yardstick, measuring tape, or ruler
Have all players stand at one end of a room, and ask your child to pick a spot to walk to (coffee table, doorway). Then, each person walks heel-to-toe to that location while counting his steps.

Let each player tell how many "feet" he traveled. What does your youngster notice? (The numbers will vary.) Now, help him measure the distance with the yardstick, measuring tape, or ruler. He will see why we use standard measuring tools rather than our feet to measure distances.



HISTORY

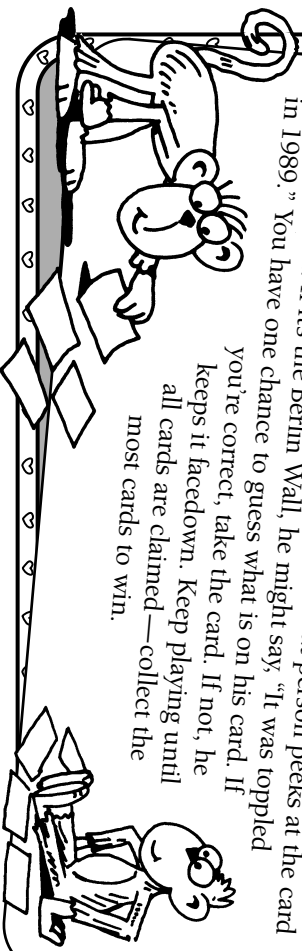
Guess the place

This game is a fun way for your youngster to learn about important places in history.

Ingredients: history books, 5-10 index cards per player, pencils
Take turns looking through a history book. On each of your cards, write the name of a place along with a fact about it. Spread out your cards facedown in front of you.

On your turn, point to any other player's card. That person peeks at the card and reads the fact. If it's the Berlin Wall, he might say, "It was toppled in 1989." You have one chance to guess what is on his card. If

you're correct, take the card. If not, he keeps it facedown. Keep playing until all cards are claimed—collect the most cards to win.



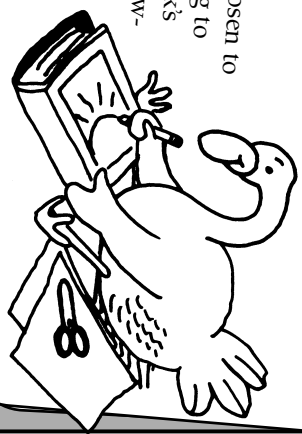
READING

A new book cover

Making a new cover for a book can boost your child's reading comprehension skills.

Ingredients: book, paper grocery bag, pencil, scissors, tape, crayons or markers
After your youngster reads a book, have her tell you how its cover relates to the story. If it's a funny animal tale, it might show laughing animals in bright colors. A book on a serious topic may have a dark-colored cover with a lonely landscape.

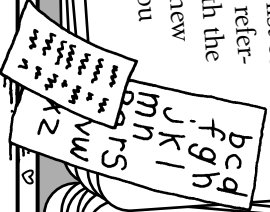
Then, ask her to imagine she is the artist chosen to design a new cover. Let her cut the paper bag to fit over the book. Have her consider the book's plot, message, or mood to decide how to show-case the story. She could decorate a cover with a sunrise to foreshadow that characters faced obstacles but never lost hope.



PHONICS

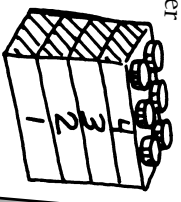
Name a vowel sound, such as the long *e* in *eat*, and set a timer for 3 minutes. Challenge players to go through the alphabet and write a long *e* word for as many consonants as possible (*beam, chetah, deep*).

Tip: Have your child list consonants on paper for reference. The person with the most words picks a new vowel sound, and you can play again.



NUMBER SENSE

Let your youngster use a washable marker to label 20 Legos by writing a number, 1-20, on the side of each one. Mix them up, and have her snap them together in order as she counts from 1 to 20. Next, ask her to take them apart and make a tower by counting backward.



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."

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DIVISION

Your youngster can practice division by playing Go Fish—with a twist. Deal five cards to each player, and stack the rest face-down. But instead of asking “Do you have a 3?” to make a match, players create a division problem: “Do you have 18 divided by 6?” If the person has the card, she gives it to you. If not, you “go fish” by drawing a card from the stack.

PERSEVERANCE

Have your youngster decorate an empty paper towel tube and label it “The stick-with-it stick.” Each week, award the “stick” to a family member who stuck with a difficult assignment or project, such as memorizing a speech or shoveling the driveway.

FORGIVENESS

The next time your child has trouble forgiving someone, encourage him to write about how he feels. Maybe a teammate never passed him the basketball during last night’s game. Working out his feelings on paper may motivate him to talk to—and forgive—the person.

TOLERANCE

Let your youngster pick two stuffed animals (a cat and a lizard) and hand one to you. Chat from the point of view of your animal about what makes you different and the same. (“I have fur, and you have scales.” “We can both be pets.”) They might find they’re more alike than different!

READING

Write a random sentence, scrambling the letters in each word. (“The knechic unscreamble to read the sentence?” It may take just a few—he can use *context clues* for the rest road”). Then, let him write a scrambled sentence for you.

ENGINEERING

Boat building
Which family member will make the most seaworthy boat? Your child can practice engineering skills with this friendly competition.

Ingredients: aluminum foil, ruler, pennies

Fill a bathtub with a few inches of water. Have each “engineer” shape a 1-foot sheet of foil into a boat that she thinks will carry the most pennies without sinking.

Place the boats in the water. Take turns putting one penny at a time into your boat until it sinks. The last boat sailing wins! Look closely at the design of the winning boat. Which features does your youngster think helped it float and hold the most pennies? For instance, does a short, wide boat float better

than a long, narrow one? Now, get more foil, and use what you learned to redesign even better boats.

Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

ART

Playing “park ranger” is a fun way for your child to build observation skills. Visit a park, and have him lead a “tour,” pointing out details about the wildlife, plants, and trees. “High in this tree here, you’ll see a squirrel’s nest. Just ahead, notice the frog hopping by.”

Suggest that your child celebrate family members’ interests by creating a family crest. She could divide her crest into four parts, illustrating each with a family hobby. If her brother plays tennis and his favorite color is green, she might draw a green racket. Display the crest, and ask her to tell you about it.