



# Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

## From the Title I Coordinator

### Understanding and Helping your Child with Mathematics Homework

For months I had been baffled by "number bonds," a way of expressing math in circles that my child had to complete for homework. I never bothered to ask the teacher how they work. Instead I soldiered on, demoralized but thinking, "Surely I can do first-grade math." I'm not alone in my conclusion.

1. If you do not know how to do it, ask your child to teach you, to show you how it's done.

Parents across the country are trying to make sense of Common Core standards, a set of academic expectations that call for less focus on memorization and more focus on explaining how solutions were found, in English, a deep probe of text. Before you throw up your hands and walk away from homework—a recent study in *Psychological Science* found that math anxious parents who help children on homework breed math-anxious children—experts say there are several strategies you can try that don't require relearning arithmetic`

2. Don't try to be a math guru!

Math instruction on the part of parents should be low. The teacher is there to explain the curriculum.

3. Talk to the teacher.

Not all children will find solutions on their own, and if they are repeatedly stuck, that's a sign they aren't getting something in class and it's time to talk to the teacher.

4. Ask the child to teach you the concept. Most often the children get it, but the parents do not.

The one thing we can reinforce as parents is that it's ok for children to struggle. This is hard work. It takes time and patience. It is like learning to tie your shoes. It's really painful to see them frustrated and angry, but you are not going to continue to tie their shoes when they are 11 years old.

An interesting point is that **memorizers are the lowest achievers.**

- Adapted from The Hechinger Report, a non-profit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.

**NOTICE:** The Title I Board of Directors Meeting will be on **Thursday Feb. 4th from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the District Central Office at 296 Station Ave. in South Yarmouth.** The representatives from the following buildings are:

**SAE—Nicole Barboza, Rachel Civeth**

**EHB—Lisa Sears, Wayne Mayo**

**MES—Adam Federer**

**All interested parties are invited to attend.**

### THE READING-WRITING CONNECTION

The writing your child does now will help prepare him/her for producing longer and more sophisticated pieces. Here are some ideas to help you help your child with writing:

#### Use writing for family communication.

Keep a family message board. Leave daily notes for each other.

#### Give your child a notebook

Encourage your child to use it as a journal. Assure your child that no one will read it without permission

#### Encourage social writing

If your child has just started school, have him sign his name to birthday cards and thank you notes. If older, encourage him to write notes with his signature

#### Ask for a story

Tell your child that your would like nothing better on a birthday or holiday than a story he has written

#### Be a model

Nothing will teach your child the value of writing as much as seeing you write every day.

Volume 1, Issue v

January 2016



**Reminder: Schools will be closed Friday, January 15th, for teacher in-service day, and Monday, January 18h for Martin Luther King Day .**

**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 M. E. Small  
440 Higgins Crowell Rd.  
West Yarmouth, MA  
02673**



# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

January 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



#### SHORT NOTES

##### Resolution: Success!

This year, have your child make resolutions that will motivate him to do his best in school. For instance, he could pick a subject to improve in or a challenging book series to read. Encourage him to draw a picture of himself meeting his goal and share the drawing with his teacher.

##### Hands-on history

Let your youngster take white paper and an unwrapped crayon on a walk around town. She can place the paper over engravings on historical markers or plaques and rub lightly with the side of the crayon. At home, suggest that she write a caption for each rubbing to tell a “local history” story.

##### Sick time

When your child is sick, notify the school as soon as possible that he will be absent. Then, follow school policy about how long he must be symptom-free before he may return to class. *Note:* He could ask a sibling or friend to bring home his work. Or when he goes back, he can talk to his teacher about making up the work.

##### Worth quoting

“Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas and progress.” *Charles Kettering*

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Can you name three consecutive days without saying *Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday*?

**A:** Yes! Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



## The three Cs of group work

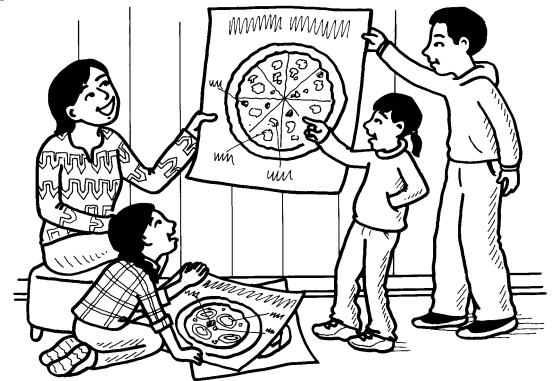
Three kindergartners work together on a mural in art class. Several fifth graders discuss a novel they read in reading group. No matter how old your child is, being able to communicate, collaborate, and compromise is important when she works with others. Consider these ways to practice at home.

### Communication

Group members communicate better when one person speaks at a time. Let your youngster create a “talking stick” by covering a ruler with aluminum foil or decorating a paper towel tube. During a family discussion, pass the stick around—only the person holding it may speak. This will remind your child to wait her turn and listen to what others say.

### Collaboration

Show your youngster that when people combine ideas, they often come up with new or better ones. Pretend you’re a restaurant marketing team in charge of designing a pizza or burger. Start by looking at menus for interesting twists (barbecue pizza, burger with fried egg), and create something different



ent (blue cheese pizza, Caesar burger). Then, work together to make your new menu item for dinner.

### Compromise

When group members disagree on a topic for their presentation or on who will take what role, it’s important to compromise. That means stating what you would prefer—and what alternatives you’re willing to accept. Your child can try this at home when your family makes a decision. For example, maybe one sibling wants to go sledding while another would prefer ice skating. They could agree to sled first—but the one who wanted to ice skate gets to choose the hill they’ll sled on. ♥

## Keep track of progress

By staying on top of how your youngster does in school, you can support his achievements and nip any problems in the bud. Try these strategies.

● **Go over papers.** Look at each graded assignment your child brings home. This is an easy way to see what he’s doing well and what he needs to work on.

● **Use electronic tools.** If the school posts grades online, check them regularly.

● **Communicate with the teacher.** Contact her if your youngster says a subject is difficult or brings home low grades. You could ask about ways to help him. ♥



## Behavior “mysteries”

Is your youngster's behavior sometimes baffling? Here are solutions to common scenarios parents face.

**My child behaves in school but acts out at home.** Your youngster probably feels more relaxed at home and can let his guard down more with you. Rest assured this is normal. Remind him of the consequences for misbehaving at home, and follow through when he acts out. (And be glad that your child behaves at school!)

**After school, my youngster doesn't want to talk about his day or start homework.** Your child may be



struggling to switch out of “school mode.” Try giving him a break first—he may appreciate a few minutes to unwind, just as some adults do after work. Suggest a snack and exercise, such as riding his bike or jumping rope.

**My child only obeys me when I raise my voice.** If

your youngster knows he has to do what you ask only when you shout, he'll probably wait for your raised voice before he listens. Tell him that you'll ask nicely once, and after that, there will be a consequence for not listening. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Experiment with evergreens

Your child may wonder why some trees stay green throughout the year (*evergreens*) and others lose their leaves (*deciduous*). With this activity, she can find out.

Let your youngster cut out two green construction-paper “leaves” and sprinkle them lightly with water. She should wrap one in waxed paper and lay both leaves in the sun for at least two hours. What happens? (The bare leaf stays dry, but the protected one remains moist.)



*The science:* A deciduous tree loses water through its leaves' tiny pores, so it gets rid of the leaves to conserve water in harsh weather. But evergreen leaves have a waxy *cuticle*, or covering, kind of like the waxed paper that protected your child's paper leaf. This coating keeps the water from evaporating, so leaves can remain on the tree through the winter. ♥



### Spell-check pitfalls

**Q:** My daughter says spelling is no big deal because we have spell-check and autocorrect.

How can I convince her that spelling still matters?

**A:** Spell-check and autocorrect are handy tools. But they're not foolproof, and they're not always available.

When your child writes a school report, sit with her while she runs spell-check. Together, look for examples of mistakes caused by relying on the computer. This often happens with homophones (*it's* and *its*, *you're* and *your*), for instance. She'll need to know the difference to use the correct word.

Also, help her think of situations where she won't have spell-check or autocorrect, such as taking a test or using special software that doesn't include the feature. And if she can't spell a word, she may not recognize it when she reads, which can interfere with her comprehension.

Finally, point out that if she studies her spelling words, thinks carefully about how words are spelled, and proofreads her work, she'll find that the best spell-check is in her own head! ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Helpful strategies for ADHD

My fourth-grader, Ryan, has ADHD, and he often loses books and papers and forgets to turn in assignments or to bring home slips for me to sign.

I talked to a fellow PTA parent whose oldest son has ADHD. She said her son puts sticky-note reminders everywhere—on his desk and binders and beside the front door. He also does better in school if he gets 11 hours

of sleep, about two hours more than his siblings need.

I got colorful pads of sticky notes for Ryan, and he came up with a system for color-coding his reminders. Also, we are moving up his bedtime by a few minutes each night until we notice a difference. I know Ryan

will still forget things from time to time, but it's helpful to know that we have strategies to try. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1540-5621

# Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

January 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Think about design

Discussing the design of everyday objects

will get your little one thinking about engineering. For example, ask, "What features make my coffee mug work well?" (He may say the handle keeps you from burning your hand.) How might he design a better coffee mug? (Maybe he would add a second handle so you could hold it with both hands.)

### Shape search

This activity will encourage your child to notice shapes. On separate index cards, have her draw these seven shapes: square, circle, rectangle, triangle, trapezoid, pentagon, and hexagon. Put the cards in a small baggie to take in the car or on a walk. Can she match each shape to something she sees in the real world?



### Book picks

Teach your youngster about "taking away" with the fun rhyming rap in *The Action of Subtraction* (Brian P. Cleary). Part of the Math Is Categorical series.

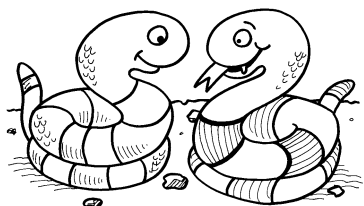
Read about the life cycle of a tree, and how trees provide shelter and food for creatures and plants, in the richly illustrated *A Log's Life* (Wendy Pfeffer).

## Just for fun

**First Snake:** I hope I'm not venomous.

**Second Snake:** Why?

**First Snake:** I just bit my tongue.



## Put math on the calendar

Happy New Year! Open your 2016 calendar, and let your child start off the year with some calendar-inspired math fun. Try these ideas.

### Number recognition

Have your youngster number slips of paper 1–31 and shake them in a paper bag. Lay down the January calendar. Take turns pulling out a slip and placing it on the matching date. Ask your child to say each number as it's placed: "This is a 7. It goes on January 7th."

*Idea:* Have him say the day, too ("Thursday, January 7th"). He'll learn more about how calendars are organized.



### Counting

For this game, each player places a token on January 1. Take turns rolling a die and moving the number of squares shown. For instance, roll a 5 and move to January 6, counting as you go. The first player to reach January 31 (exactly) wins. For extra fun, continue your game each month, and play through the whole calendar year—the first one to December 31 is the grand winner!

### Addition

Help your youngster make a large January calendar on poster board. Put it on the floor, and get two pennies. On each turn, toss the pennies, one at a time, onto the calendar. Add together the two numbers they land on. *Example:* Land on January 4 and January 14, and add  $4 + 14 = 18$ . (If they're on a line or off the calendar, toss again.) Whoever scores highest each round gets a point. The first player to 10 wins the game.

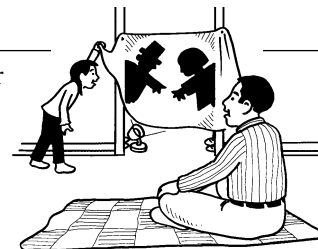
## Shadow puppet theater

Enjoy imaginative family fun while your youngster experiments with shadow science.

**1. Make puppets.** Draw or print out characters and props. Color them black, or glue to black paper. Cut out the silhouettes and tape to rulers or sticks.

**2. Create your theater.** Hang a white sheet from a door frame. Shine a lamp or flashlight onto the back of the sheet.

**3. Put on your show.** Turn out the room lights, and take turns working the puppets behind the curtain. Encourage your child to test the effects of the light on the shadows. She'll learn that the closer the puppets are to the light source, the bigger the shadows are. What happens if she tilts the light source? Or if she uses a stronger or weaker light?



# Snow days

Snowfalls are not only a chance for making snowmen and drinking hot chocolate, they're also an opportunity for learning about measuring and melting.

**Measure.** Suggest that your child tape together markers, end to end, and stick her "marker ruler" in the snow. About how many markers high is the white stuff? Or have her stand a regular ruler or a yardstick in the snow, and help her read the exact height. Encourage her to record her measurement and compare it with later snowfalls. She'll be able to tell you the biggest snowstorm of the season.



**Melt.** Let your youngster bring 1 cup of snow inside. Ask her to predict how long it will take to melt, and then she can time it to find out. Does the melted water fill the cup? (She'll be surprised to find it doesn't.) Have her experiment to see how much snow she needs to melt to make a full cup of water.

*Explain the science:* There's empty space between the snowflakes because their points keep them from getting too close. When the snow melts, that space disappears. To demonstrate, have your family stand close together with your arms sticking out. You'll see it's hard to get right next to each other. Now, "melt" by putting your arms down—you'll be able to get much closer together!

## SCIENCE LAB



## Where did my sense of touch go?

Wearing gloves will keep your youngster warm in the winter, but how do they affect his sense of touch?

**You'll need:** pillowcase, household objects (golf ball, small bouncy ball, cotton swab, pear, apple), gloves

**Here's how:** Place the objects in the pillowcase. With the gloves on and his eyes closed, have your child remove the items, one by one. Each time, he should feel the object with his hands and say what he thinks it is. Record his guesses. Then, he could remove the gloves and, with his eyes closed again, repeat the experiment.



**What happens?** When he's wearing gloves, it's more difficult to feel the objects and harder to identify them.

**Why?** His skin is covered with *touch receptors*—tiny cells that send messages to his brain about what he's touching. Those receptors are particularly sensitive in fingertips. When gloves cover the receptors, they hinder his sense of touch.

## Q & A A graph a week

**Q:** My daughter came home from school excited about how they had graphed the children's birthday months. I thought it would be fun for her to graph things at home, too. What do you recommend?

**A:** Graphing at home is a great idea—you could even put your daughter in charge of a weekly family graph. Together, brainstorm what to graph, perhaps favorite types of books, top snack choices, or family traits like hair color or eye color. Help her write the ideas on slips of paper to keep in a jar. Each week, she can pull out one to use.

Then, she should list choices for the topic (say, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for books) and survey family members. Encourage her to contact grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, too—the more people, the more interesting her graphs will be.

Once she has her data, she can create her graph. She might draw a picture graph or make a bar graph. Let her display it and tell you all about her findings.



## MATH CORNER Facts to 5

With this delicious activity, your child will see all the different ways he can add to 5.

Give your youngster two different colors of food, such as green grapes and red grapes. How many ways can he use the grapes to "build" the number 5?

For instance, he could put down 1 green grape and 4 red grapes. Help him write the equation to match ( $1 + 4 = 5$ ). Encourage him to continue combining different numbers of green and red grapes until he's made all the equations that equal 5.

He could even write an organized list.

0 + 5 = 5
1 + 4 = 5
2 + 3 = 5
3 + 2 = 5
4 + 1 = 5
5 + 0 = 5



Can he spot a pattern? (The numbers on one side of the plus sign increase by one number, while the numbers on the other side decrease by one number.) Now, let him practice subtraction as he enjoys eating the grapes ( $5 - 1 = 4$ ).

**Idea:** Have your child try this activity for other numbers from 1 through 20. Instead of snacks, he could use different-colored toy cars and trucks or other playthings.

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[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1942-910X



# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

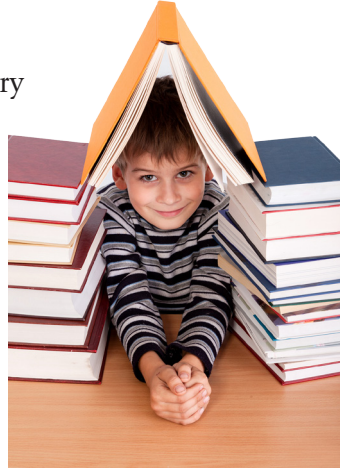
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Take a fresh approach to reading routines in the new year

January is a great time to take inventory of your reading routines. Which routines are working for your child? What needs to be changed?

To refresh your reading routines:

- **Stockpile story starters.** Tear the fronts off leftover holiday cards and put them in a box. Have your child pick one during story time. Together, invent a tale based on the illustration.
- **Create a reading clubhouse.** Throw a blanket over the kitchen table or make a cave in your child's closet. Just find a snuggly spot to read together during your daily reading time.
- **Look for new materials.** Expand your child's horizons by moving beyond books. Some days, spend story time browsing through magazines or newspapers.



*"I owe everything I am and everything  
I will ever be to books."*

—Gary Paulsen

## Help your child choose the right books

Encourage your child to read exciting books that are just right for her. Let your child select the books that she wants to read. When she likes the books that you read together, she'll want to read more and more.

To help your child choose books, explain that:

- **There is a purpose for reading.** Whether for fun or to learn something, knowing *why* she is reading will help her narrow down the type of book she should be looking for.
- **It's OK to stop reading a book.** If your child isn't interested in the book she selected, it doesn't make sense to keep reading it! To keep your child's interest in books, don't force yourselves to finish a book just because you started it.
- **She can use her favorites for inspiration.** If your child loves a certain book, look for similar ones, such as others by that author or about the same topic.

**Source:** "Tip: Help a Child Choose a Book," ReadWriteThink, [nswc.com/choosebook](http://nswc.com/choosebook).

## Provide your child with a variety of reading opportunities



Expose your child to a large range of reading materials. The more types of writing your child reads, the more chances he has to enjoy reading!

With your child, read books and other materials that:

- **Represent different categories**, including fantasy, poetry and nonfiction.
- **Are written in many styles** by a wide range of authors.
- **Cover interesting topics**, from butterflies to baseball.

**Source:** "Best Books for Little Ones," Scholastic.com, [nswc.com/readingopportunities](http://nswc.com/readingopportunities).

## Singing helps your child's language development



When you sing songs with your child, you're helping her develop language skills—and having fun! Singing will help your child:

- **Remember** important information through song lyrics.
- **Enjoy** a creative activity.
- **Exercise** the muscles in her mouth, which are important for speaking.

**Source:** "How singing can support children's learning," TheSchoolRun.com, [nswc.com/singingbenefits](http://nswc.com/singingbenefits).

## Send your child on a letter-sound search around your home

Write a few letters on index cards or pieces of paper (each card should have just one letter written on it). Ask your child to choose one card.



Together, see how many objects you can find around your home that begin with that letter. When you've found all that you can find, try another letter!

## Play listening games with your child

Listening is an important part of literacy. But telling your child to “listen well” isn’t enough to boost this key skill. Help him practice listening in fun ways. Have your child:



- **Help out at home.** Choose tasks that interest your child. Then give specific directions. If he likes watering plants, say, “Fill the watering can. Touch the plant’s soil. If it feels dry, water the plant.” If he likes setting the table, say, “Place three bowls and three spoons on the table.”
- **Fill in story details.** Read or tell your child a detailed story several times. Make it one he loves. Then pretend you can’t remember part of it. Can he complete it for you? You may be surprised!
- **Play Simon Says.** Children love listening to “Simon’s” instructions (Simon says, “Raise your right hand!”) and doing what he says. When Simon doesn’t give his permission (“Raise your left hand”)—kids can ignore the instruction.

**Source:** “5 Preschool Listening Games,” Discover Explore Learn, [nswc.com/listeninggames](http://nswc.com/listeninggames).

## Remind your child about these library tips

The public library is a great resource for your child. With an abundance of reading materials to enjoy, as well as fun activities to participate in, the library provides plenty of opportunities to build your child’s love of reading.

Remind your child about these important rules so that she—and the library’s other patrons—will be able to enjoy the library:



- **Treat library books with care and respect.** Library books are everyone’s property. It is important to take care of them so that everyone can enjoy them.
- **Return books on time.** Libraries often charge for overdue books. Keep your books in a
- **Use quiet voices.** Everyone in the community may use the library. Speak softly so that others won’t be disturbed.

special place so your family gets them back on time.



**Q:** My preschooler already takes good care of her books. How else can I make her a responsible reader?

**A:** Let her be in charge of story time. Have your preschooler choose which books to read and where to sit while sharing stories. It may help her feel more grown-up to take the lead on something as important as story time!

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Build thinking skills by comparing and contrasting different stories

Boost your child’s cognitive skills by finding similarities and differences in two fairy tales. Read two stories together, such as *The Three Little Pigs* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. After you read, make a list with your child of the elements in the stories that are the same or different. Think about characters, setting and plot.



You can also compare and contrast different versions of the same story.

## Books to delight your early reader

- **Flabbersmashed About You** by Rachel Vail (Feiwel & Friends). When Katie’s best friend chooses to line up with someone else, Katie is more than angry—she’s flabbersmashed. That is, until she finds someone new to play with.
- **The Jellybeans and the Big Dance** by Laura Numeroff and Nate Evans (Abrams Books for Young Readers). Emily can’t wait for her first dance class. When she begins, she finds out special things about her new classmates.
- **What Pet Should I Get?** by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers). A brother and sister can pick any pet they want in a pet store. With so many options, how will they ever make up their minds?



### Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.  
Editor: Stacey Marin.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474  
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299  
[www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com)

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

January 2016

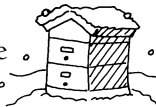
Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

## Book Picks

### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ **Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold** (Joyce Sidman)

How do animals like bees and swans survive the long, cold winter? This collection of beautiful poems explains that even though we may not see some animals in winter, they are alive—and busy! Includes boxes with scientific facts and a glossary.



#### ■ **The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend** (Dan Santat)

On a special island, imaginary friends are born and wait for children to imagine them into the real world. Beekle, an adorable marshmallow-like creature, gets tired of waiting. Read about his adventures as he swims to the real world and meets a little girl who is just right for him.

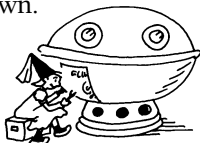


#### ■ **Only One You** (Linda Krantz)

Although the characters in this story are made up, your child can use its advice in real life. A boy named Adri listens to his mother and father as they lovingly urge him not to follow the crowd, to look for beauty everywhere, and to make new friends. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ **Interstellar Cinderella** (Deborah Underwood)

In this space-age fairy tale, it's Cinderella who rescues the prince. Cinderella loves to repair broken appliances in her stepmother's castle, and her talent comes in handy when the royal spaceship breaks down. What will happen when the prince asks for Cinderella's hand in marriage?



## Build vocabulary with books

A book is the perfect place to find new words. That's one reason children who love reading tend to have rich vocabularies. Here are ways to help your youngster learn words from books.

### A well-rounded reader

To expose your child to different words, choose different kinds of books to read. For example, in folktales and historical fiction, she may notice old-fashioned words (*alas*, *blacksmith*). In books about plants or animals, she'll see science terms (*sprout*, *nocturnal*). And stories set in other countries can teach her words from around the world (*crepe*, *sari*).

### Vocabulary-rich retellings

While you read to your youngster, help her jot down unfamiliar words. Talk about their meanings, or look them up in a dictionary together. Then, encourage her to retell the story to you—using the words on her list. (“The tortoise moved at a *steady* pace. The hare was too *boastful*.”) Saying the words in sentences of

her own will help her understand and remember them.

### Favorite words

Ask your child to pick out her favorite new word in a book, and have her be on the lookout for the same word in other books or in conversation. For instance, she might read about a “*precious* little kitten” and notice “*precious* gems” in a non-fiction book on minerals. Seeing and hearing a word in various settings can help her “get” all its meanings. *Idea:* Suggest that she draw pictures showing a word in several contexts. ♥



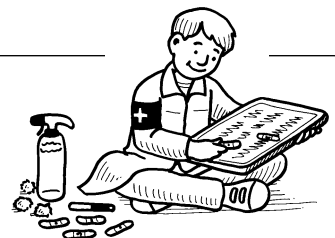
## Sentence “first aid”

An author's job isn't finished when he writes the last word—he still needs to edit! Encourage your child to practice editing by using fun first-aid supplies to fix sentences.

Start by having him put punctuation marks (periods, commas, quotes, question marks, exclamation points) on small bandages. Also, get cotton balls and a spray bottle of water.

Then, write a sentence on a dry-erase board or chalkboard, making a few mistakes for him to correct (uncapitalized name, missing punctuation). He can use wet cotton balls to clean up “boo-boos,” write his corrections, and add bandages to punctuate your sentence properly. Next, let him write a sentence for you to fix.

*Note:* Have him remove only half of the paper backing so bandages can be removed from the board more easily. ♥

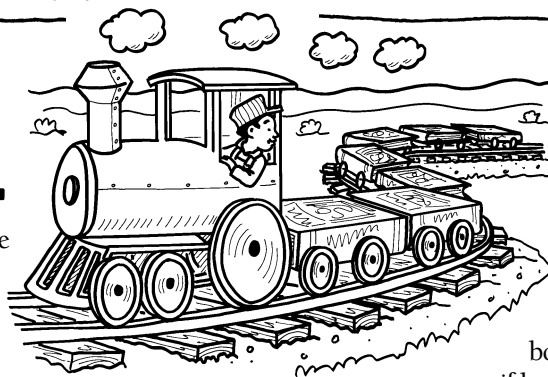




# This book reminds me of...

Making connections between two or more books, or “text-to-text” connections, can boost your youngster’s reading comprehension. Try these ideas.

**Connection train.** Suggest that your child line up books that are connected into a “train.” For example, he might put *Beezus and Ramona* (Beverly Cleary) next to *Where the Wild Things Are* (Maurice Sendak) and say, “They both have kids with big imaginations.” Perhaps he’ll place *Franklin’s Baby Sister* (Paulette Bourgeois) next because it and



*Beezus* are both about getting along with younger siblings. How long can your youngster make his book connection train?

**Book pairs.** Let your child pick out a fiction book and a nonfiction book that are related. For instance, if he chooses a story with kangaroo or koala characters, he could find a nonfiction book on Australia or marsupials. Read both books together, and ask him to tell you how the fiction and facts are connected. (“Real koalas love to be around other koalas, just like the ones in the storybook.”)♥



## Q&A Be a reviewer

**Q** My son loves to write stories, but he’s not as excited about opinion writing—which his class is doing a lot of this year. How can I help him enjoy it more?

**A** Would your son like to be a food critic? How about a book reviewer? He can practice sharing his opinion by writing reviews.

First, suggest that he jot down notes while eating in a restaurant or reading a book. He might write, “Creamy cheese sauce, spiral pasta too chewy” or “Funny part on page 4.” Then, help him write his review, using his notes to back up his opinions. What kind of noodle would have been better with the sauce? Why did he think the book was funny?

Finally, let him mail or email the review to his friends or relatives. He could ask them to reply with their own opinions, and that may motivate him to write more opinions in the future.♥

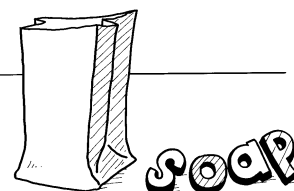


## Fun with Words

### Play with letter patterns

Encourage your child to explore common letter patterns that can help her recognize words. Play this game together.

1. Get a set of magnetic letters or letter tiles. Have your youngster lay a, e, i, o, u, and y (the vowels) on the table and place the consonants in a paper bag.
2. Ask your child to pull two consonants from the bag and put them on the table.
3. She should combine those two letters with any two vowels to make a four-letter word. (A younger child can use one vowel to make a three-letter word.) If she draws s and p, for example, she could make *soap*. Help her say the word—she will hear that *oa* makes the long o sound.
4. Then, she puts the vowels back. Take turns using the same consonants and any two vowels to form new words (*say*, *pose* or *pies*).
5. When you can’t make any more words, return the consonants to the bag. Pick two new ones, and play again.♥



## Stellar speaking roles

Good oral language skills help lay the foundation for reading and writing. Suggest that your youngster take on these fun roles to practice speaking.

**Tour guide.** Let your child take you on a tour of your neighborhood or town. She can point out landmarks, businesses, and tourist attractions. (“And here’s our legendary Pancake Palace.”)

**Auctioneer.** Have your youngster pretend she is auctioning off household items. Her job is to describe each

item, take bids, and announce, “Going once, going twice, sold!”

**Air traffic controller.** Ask your child to give you instructions for flying a toy or paper airplane. She’ll need to speak clearly and be specific about when you should take off, how high to fly, and where to land.

**Weather reporter.** Help your youngster check the weather forecast for tomorrow. In her own words, she can give a bedtime report so everyone can choose the right clothes for the next day.♥



## 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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ISSN 1540-5648

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Include reading in your family's New Year's resolutions

The new year offers an opportunity to think about the past and set goals for the future. This includes family reading goals!

Take time with your child to talk about books or stories you've enjoyed in the past year. If the books are nearby, look through them together. Have your child choose her three favorites. Ask, "What was the best part of this story? Why?"

Or, "What is your favorite picture in this book?"

Discuss future reading plans. Are there ways you can refresh or improve your reading habits? Could you read more often? Could you read new things together, such as children's magazines?

Build daily reading time into your family's schedule. Make 2016 your family's best year ever for reading new and exciting materials!



*"Reading brings us unknown friends."*

—Honoré de Balzac

## Encourage your child to be a book critic

Suggest that your child keep a list of all the books that she reads. She should include the title of each book and its author. She can also create a rating system with numbers or smiley faces. Encourage her to write a short review of each book as well.

Offer your child sentence starters to help with her reviews, such as:

- **I liked this book** because ...
- **My favorite part** of this story was ...
- **I wish the author** would have ...

Help your child compile all of these reviews into a "Book Review" notebook. Keeping track of completed books will give your child a sense of accomplishment. It will also help her remember which books she liked—which will give her suggestions of what books to read next!

## Suggest many ways for your child to enjoy writing

Reading and writing go hand in hand. Have your child try different writing activities. She could:

- **Write about things** she likes to do or things that are happening in her life.
- **Make up new endings** to favorite stories.
- **Write song lyrics** or a script for a movie.



## Use the dictionary with your child

Demonstrate how useful a tool the dictionary is. When your child isn't sure of what a word means or how to spell it, help him look it up! He can use a dictionary online or one in book form. Show him how the dictionary includes the word's definitions, its part of speech and other forms of the word.



## Enjoy the benefits of the library as a family

Libraries are wonderful places for children to learn. To make sure your child gets all the benefits of the library:

- **Help him get his own** library card.
- **Schedule regular visits** to the library. Try to go at least once every two weeks.
- **Explore a new section** of the library each time you visit.
- **Look for children's activities** at the library.



## Thinking aloud can help build your child's comprehension abilities

One major factor in understanding what you read is *thinking* about what you're reading. When your child thinks about what she is reading, she'll be able to connect the story to other things she knows. Help your child build these comprehension skills by modeling some "think-aloud" strategies:



- **Discuss the book.** Connect it to an experience your child understands. "This story reminds me of the time when ..."
  - **Talk about books** with similar settings, characters or themes. "What other books that we've read does this story remind you of?"
  - **Help your child** see the connection between the story and something similar that may be happening in the real world.
- By talking through your thoughts on the book, you're helping your child learn to make these important connections herself.

**Source:** J. Gold and A. Gibson, "Reading Aloud to Build Comprehension," Colorín Colorado, [niswc.com/thinkingcomprehension](http://niswc.com/thinkingcomprehension).

## Review prefixes and suffixes with your child

Help your child learn to look for easily recognizable parts of a word. Teach him that when a word starts with a certain prefix or ends with a particular suffix, he will get a clue to the word's meaning.

- **A prefix is at the beginning** of the word. Adding a prefix to a word changes its meaning. Common prefixes are *bi-*, *hemi-*, *un-* and *in-*.
- **A suffix is found at the end** of the word. It often tells the part of speech, which will help your child understand how that word is being used. Common suffixes are *-tion*, *-ize*, *-able* and *-er*.



**Source:** "Teaching Word Parts," Annenberg Learner, [niswc.com/prefixsuffix](http://niswc.com/prefixsuffix).



**Q:** My child gets frustrated when he struggles to read a word. How can I help?

**A:** Suggest that he become a reading detective. He can look for clues, such as chunks of the word that he recognizes or nearby pictures. You can also discuss similar words he knows. Sometimes it helps to reread the sentence or to skip the troublesome word and keep reading. Then say, "What word would make sense there?"

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Read and write about science experiments

Hands-on learning is a fun way to improve reading and writing skills.



Look for books at your library that contain science experiments you and your child can do at home.

Then, read the directions, gather materials, write predictions and conduct the experiment together. Have your child take notes on the outcome.

## For lower elementary readers:

- ***Stalling*** by Alan Katz (Margaret K. McElderry Books). Even though it's time for bed, Dan has plenty of things to do. He devises several ways to stall bedtime for just a few more minutes.



- ***The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*** by Mordicai Gerstein (Square Fish). In 1974, Philippe Petit had a dream to walk on a tightrope between the World Trade Center towers.

## For upper elementary readers:

- ***The Road to Oz: Twists, Turns, Bumps, and Triumphs in the Life of L. Frank Baum*** by Kathleen Krull (Knopf Books for Young Readers). Learn all about the life of the famed author of *The Wizard of Oz* including his inspiration for the land of Oz.
- ***Moon Runner*** by Carolyn Marsden (Candlewick Press). Mina is nervous when she must start track at school, until she discovers that she loves it—and excels.

### Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Publisher: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Stacey Marin.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302

[www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com)

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2016

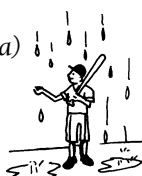
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## Book Picks

### ■ **Mudville** (Kurtis Scaletta)

It has been raining for 22 years in Roy McGuire's hometown, interfering with the 12-year-old's dream of playing baseball. The rain suddenly stops when Roy's new foster brother arrives, ending what some called a curse. Sturgis isn't easy to get along with, but as Roy discovers when he puts together a team, the boy can throw a baseball.



### ■ **Fearless! Stunt People** (Jessica Cohn)

How do stunt performers survive death-defying tricks? This nonfiction book explains how they spend years training and learning safety precautions. Read about different fields in the stunt world and the history of the profession, too. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ **The Geography Book: Activities for Exploring, Mapping, and Enjoying Your World** (Caroline Arnold)

This collection of hands-on geography projects lets readers discover maps, landforms, water, and weather. Follow step-by-step instructions and use household items to make a balloon globe, salt crystals, a mini-greenhouse, and more.

■ **Words with Wings** (Nikki Grimes)  
Gabby's daydreams help her escape from real life after her parents split up and she moves to another town. When her new teacher reaches out, Gabby discovers that her vivid daydreams can make her a good writer—and that writing gives her strength. A novel written as a series of poems from Gabby's point of view.



## Read-alouds for big kids

Reading aloud to your child is entertaining and helps her grow as a reader, no matter how old she is. Expose her to more complex plots and new vocabulary—and enjoy discussing books together—with these ideas.

### Choose challenging books

Sometimes, pick books that are a little above your youngster's reading ability (you can ask a librarian for advice). For example, understanding a plot that goes back and forth in time may be easier for her if you read it aloud. As her comprehension and vocabulary grow, she'll start to read more complex books by herself.

### Learn together

If you come to a word you don't know or a sentence or paragraph you don't understand, say so. Then, try to figure it out along with your child. You might look up the word in a dictionary or reread the passage, for instance. She'll see that there

are strategies she can try when she gets stumped while reading alone.

### Talk it over

After you finish a book, discuss it. Which character would you like to trade places with? What do you imagine the story's setting looks like? Talking allows your youngster to think more deeply about the plot. *Tip:* For more ideas, look for reader's guides with discussion questions in the book or on the publisher's website. ■

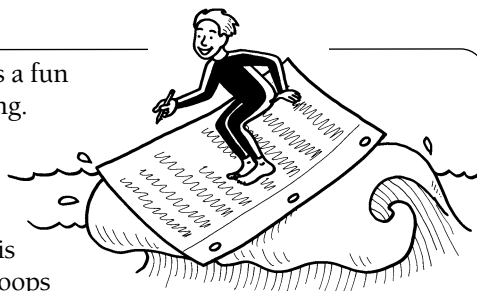


## An alternate ending

Making up a new ending for a book is a fun way for your youngster to practice writing. Here are two approaches he might take:

- Suggest that he change the ending completely. Maybe he is sad that the pet died, and he wants a happy ending. In his new chapter, perhaps the pet's owner swoops in at the last second to prevent an accident.

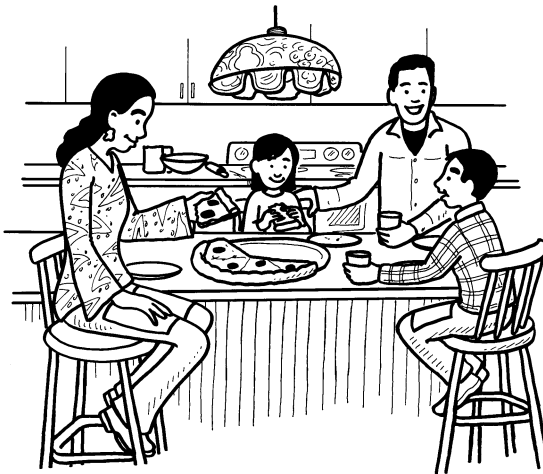
- Encourage him to write an additional chapter that continues the action and wraps it up. Based on what he knows about the characters, what does he think they will do next? A teenage character who loves surfing could become a professional surfer or an instructor as an adult, for instance. ■



## Tips for family conversations

Everyday conversation develops your youngster's speaking, listening, and thinking skills. Use these strategies from other parents to keep family chats from fizzling out.

**Quiet space.** "Distractions were a big issue whenever I tried to start conversations with my son Jake. Now when we sit down to talk, anything with a screen—phones, computers, video games—is turned off and put away. That way we focus on each other."



**Interesting topics.** "Like many families, a lot of our discussions revolve around homework, chores, and who needs a ride to where. We agreed to set that stuff aside at dinner and talk about something different for a change. Now, we choose topics like current events, animals, or science. We learn from each other, and the kids really enjoy our discussions."

**On track.** "Our toughest problem was getting our youngest to stay on topic. To practice, we take turns talking and see how many turns we can go without changing the subject. Sometimes I ask questions to help him, such as 'What do you think about that idea?' or 'Could you explain that a little?' It lets him know I'm listening and keeps him focused." ■

**Fun  
with  
Words**

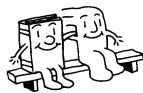
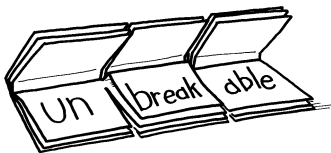
### Make a flip book

Breaking words into parts makes it easier for your child to *decode*, or figure out, their meanings. Suggest that she create this flip book to practice using prefixes, suffixes, and root words.

Ask your youngster to stack three sheets of paper, fold them in half horizontally, and staple along the fold. Keeping the pages folded, she should make two vertical cuts through all the layers (stopping just before the fold) to create three flaps.

On each flap on the left side, she can write a different prefix: *re*, *un*, *dis*, *de*, *in*, *pre*. Each flap on the right gets a suffix: *tion*, *able*, *ful*, *ed*, *ing*, *er*. On the center flaps, have her write root words that will go with the prefixes, suffixes, or both. For instance, *play* would go with *re* (*replay*) or *ful* (*playful*), and *break* will go with both *un* and *able* (*unbreakable*).

Can she use every prefix or suffix at least once? Let her flip through and write down each word to see all the ones she made. ■



## Learning to synthesize

When a reader adjusts her thinking over the course of a book to include new ideas and information, she is *synthesizing*. This "ripple chart" can help your youngster if she is asked to synthesize for a school assignment.

After she reads the first chapter of a book, she could write her impression of what's going on in a small circle in the center of her paper. ("I think *The Giver* by Lois Lowry is about a perfect world because no one feels pain.") Each time her thinking changes, have her draw a larger ring around the circle and write her revised thoughts. ("It appears perfect on the surface, but it's disturbing that citizens can't choose their own careers.")

Her completed chart will show how her thinking developed and changed as she read. ■



## Books for life's challenges

**Q** My son seems drawn to books with heavy topics like kids getting cancer or becoming orphans. Should I be concerned?

**A** It's common for children to use books as a safe way to explore sad or frightening issues. And indeed, many popular books for young readers address these topics.

If you see your son reading a book on a tough subject, invite him to tell you about it. He might be

worried that something similar will happen to him. Sharing his feelings could help relieve anxiety and clear up any misconceptions he may have.

Also, encourage him to focus on the strength that characters showed and on ways they handled the obstacles they faced. For example, a character may have formed a relationship with another child going through the same thing. Your son will learn life lessons through the books he's choosing. ■



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5583



# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

JANUARY 2016

## READING

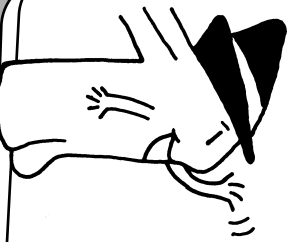
### Fairy tale swap

Build your child's reading comprehension—and imagination—with this activity.

**Ingredients:** book of fairy tales

Let your youngster choose two fairy tales. Read them aloud. Then, ask her to pick a character from one story and pretend that it appears in the other. For example, how would *Jack and the Beanstalk* be different if Rapunzel were in it?

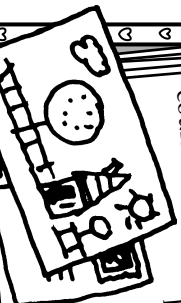
Have your child tell you the new story. Maybe Rapunzel lets her hair down to help Jack climb the beanstalk. Then, instead of having a goose that lays golden eggs, perhaps Rapunzel's hair turns into gold whenever it's cut—and the couple lives happily ever after.



## WRITING

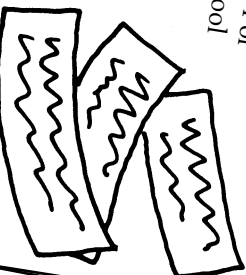
Homemade postcards let your youngster practice writing. On a blank index card, she might sketch a landmark or scenic view from your area. Have her divide the other side in half and put a friend or relative's address on the right. On the left, she could write a few sentences about her winter break.

Now she can add a stamp and mail her postcard.



## SEQUENCING

Clip a recipe from a magazine or print one from the Internet, and cut apart the steps. Ask your child to put them in the correct order. Help him think about what would make sense. For instance, "Cool completely" would come after "Bake at 350° for 30 minutes."



## ADDITION

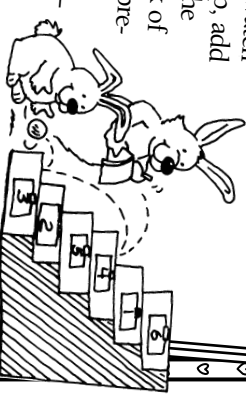
### Bounce and add

Your youngster can practice multi-step addition with a ball and a staircase.

**Ingredients:** 10 index cards, pencil, stairs, tape, small ball, paper

Have your child number the cards 1-10 and tape one card to the front of each step in random order.

Take turns gently tossing the ball up the stairs, and watch it bounce back down. Each time it bounces on a step, add that number to a running total. So if it bounces on a step, add steps with 3, 2, and 7, add  $3 + 2 + 7 = 12$ . Keep track of your scores on paper, and add each new sum to the previous one. The high score after five rounds wins. **Tip:** Encourage your youngster to "bounce" strategically—he should try for the steps with the largest numbers.



## SCIENCE

### A jar of clouds

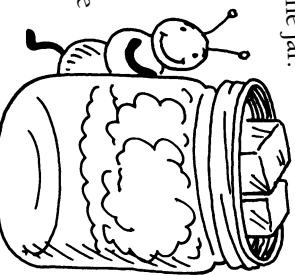
Let your child make this cloud-in-a-jar to discover how clouds form in the sky.

**Ingredients:** glass jar with metal lid, very hot water, 2-3 ice cubes, hairspray

Fill a glass jar about halfway with hot water, and swirl it around so it heats the sides of the jar. Tell your youngster to turn the jar's lid upside down, place 2-3 ice cubes in it, and lay the lid on top of the jar.

Wait about 45 seconds. Then, have her lift the lid, squirt hairspray into the jar, and quickly replace the ice-filled lid.

Watch as clouds form. The hairspray particles give water droplets something to condense onto as the warm, moist air in the jar rises and is cooled by the ice. This is similar to how warm air rises outside, cools in the atmosphere, and combines with particles (mainly dust) to create clouds.



## 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

JANUARY 2016

## Character Corner

### ☐ CURIOSITY

Spark your child's curiosity with a weekly question on the refrigerator. ("How many seeds are in an average orange?") Share your ideas, and then find the answer by reading, asking people who might know, or experimenting.



### ☐ SYMPATHY

If a friend, teacher, or someone in your family loses a relative or pet, suggest ways your youngster might comfort them. She can write a poem to let her teacher know she's thinking of her. Or she could put together a box of pictures of a friend's dog.



### ☐ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Have family members each share a time they resolved a conflict. Your child might tell how he and a friend both wanted the last jump rope at recess, so they found another student who had a jump rope and teamed up for double-dutch.



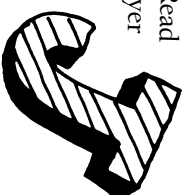
### FINANCIAL LITERACY

Tear out a blank page from your checkbook register, and write "\$50.00" at the top. Then, have your child "shop" from a catalog (buy sale items, skip expensive name brands) to afford more. She can write each item and its price and subtract the amount from the total. How many items will she "buy"?

\$50

### CAPITALIZATION

This game will help your child remember to capitalize proper nouns. Let him choose a letter (say, J). Then, have each player list 10 proper nouns beginning with that letter (*January, Jack, Jupiter*). Read your lists aloud. The player with the most items no one else wrote picks the next letter.



### TIME

A hula hoop (or a length of string in a circle) makes a great clock face. Your youngster can number sticky notes 1-12 and attach each one around her "clock." Use strips cut from poster board for the hands. Now from poster activities (wake up, eat dinner), and have her move the "hands" to show the time.



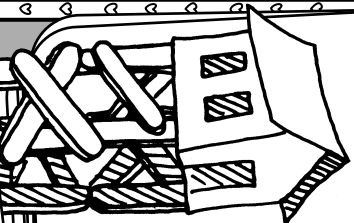
### SOCIAL STUDIES Home sweet home

Your youngster will explore houses from all over the globe with this building activity.

**Ingredients:** books or Internet, craft supplies (clay, craft sticks, construction paper, scissors, glue, cardboard boxes)

In textbooks, library books, or online, you and your child can find examples of different kinds of homes. Then, have him build his own mini world village. He might use brown clay to create a mud house from West Africa or craft sticks and construction paper to make a house on stilts like those in Southeast Asia. He could also stack boxes to form a high-rise apartment building—common in many big cities around the world.

Talk about the models your youngster built and about their real counterparts. Why would people build with mud? Why might a house need to be on stilts?



### RYHMING

Let your youngster place an object on a table, and count how many rhyming words he can say for it. **Example:** fish and wish for a dish. The next player gets a different item and says rhyming words for his object. Put away the item with fewer rhyming words. Take turns selecting an object and naming rhymes to see which item is the "rhyming-est!"

## Congratulations!

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

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)