

Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

How to Help Improve Your Child's Attendance:

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



Ways Busy Parents Can Help Children Succeed in School

- ✓ **Use time in the car** with your child or other pockets of time to squeeze in a little more learning. Your child can not read library books in the tub, but he can count his toes. He can't write an essay in the car, but he can talk about what he's going to write, or review spelling words.
- ✓ **Set priorities.** Decide what's most important to you. Then consciously decide how to spend your time. Make sure your decisions reflect what matters. Have a choice between cooking a fancy dinner or reading with your child? Order pizza and read the book!
- ✓ **Spend one-on-one time.** Kids need both "quality" and "quantity" time with you. There's nothing like spending time alone with a parent to make a child feel special. Every week make an appointment to spend some time alone with each of your children.
- ✓ **Find your child's "Prime Time" for studying.** This may be a key to his success in school. It might be early in the morning or late at night or any time in between. Work with your child to find the homework time that is best for him. It just might work to your advantage too!

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March 2016



Parent conferences, for elementary youngsters are early release are on **March 8th and 10th**

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. West Yarmouth, MA 02673



Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

March 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



SHORT NOTES

Car chats

If you carpool, your child's conversations with the other kids can shed light on what's happening at school or with activities. Later, use what you heard to start a conversation. ("You mentioned something about a new science club. Is that an activity you'd be interested in?")

Double-check homework

Looking over completed assignments carefully will help your youngster turn in her best work. She should check for skipped questions and math errors like adding numbers instead of subtracting them. Suggest that she pay attention to mistakes she often makes. Then, she could write reminders ("Put my name on my paper!") to post in her homework area.

Which group am I in?

As your child gets older, you may notice him placing more emphasis on how he fits in with peers. Explain that it's natural for youngsters to form groups, but it's nice to be friends with a wide variety of people. For example, he might have friends in class, friends from soccer, and neighborhood friends.

Worth quoting

"You can observe a lot just by watching." *Yogi Berra*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

A: Of course. The Empire State Building can't jump!



In real life: Beyond screen time

Today's children—and parents—are spending more and more time in front of computers, tablets, smartphones, and TVs. And that means fewer opportunities to interact as a family. Try these steps for cutting back on screen time and increasing the amount of time you enjoy together.

1. Track habits

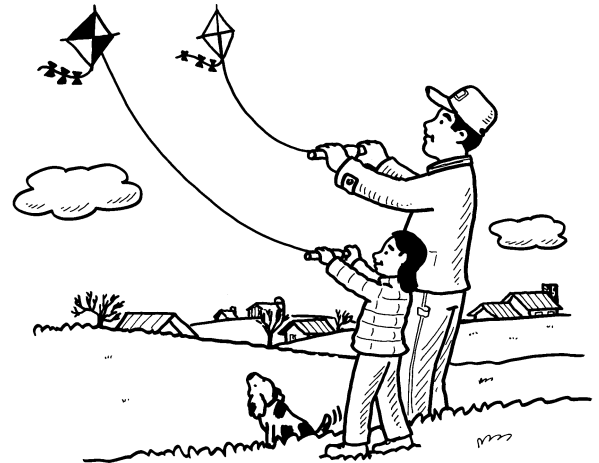
A little screen time here and there really adds up. For one week, have each person carry a small notebook to log usage. Every bit counts—your youngster might write "Music video on laptop, four minutes," and you could write "Facebook on phone, two minutes."

2. Set ground rules

Share your logs to see how you spent your screen time. Then, come up with rules to help you cut back, and ask your child to write them down. Her rules might include doing homework first, turning off screens an hour before bed, and not using devices in the car. A whole-family rule could be no screens during meals.

3. Brainstorm alternatives

Together, think of screen-free activities for home and on the go. *Examples:* Fly kites, play hangman on restaurant napkins, read aloud to each other from magazines in the doctor's office. *Tip:* Post the list. Have your child refer to it regularly—and add ideas to it, too. ♥



RE + MANIA


Encourage your youngster to explore word parts and sounds by making his own *rebuses*, or puzzles that use pictures, symbols, and letters to represent words and phrases.

Take turns making rebuses for each other to figure out. For instance:



 +  = tree house

 +  + U = I love you

Suggest that your youngster say words aloud to get ideas. He will hear word parts that may help, such as *arrow* in *wheelbarrow*:

 + B + →

Mention that he can subtract letters, too! What does he think this one means?

 - s + 

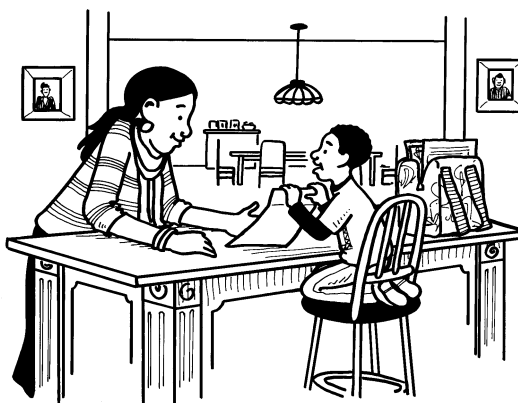
Answer: *unlock*



How to talk about report cards

Report cards are one way that teachers communicate with parents about how their youngsters are doing. Use these ideas to discuss grades with your child.

Start out positive. First, ask your youngster to tell you about his report card. Have him show you something he is proud of, such as maintaining a good grade in writing or bringing up his social studies mark. Then, point out something positive you noticed.



but his effort grade went up. He'll appreciate hearing, "You're really trying in math. Keep up the good work."

Note: Avoid paying your child or giving him prizes for grades. Instead, help him focus on the built-in rewards of doing his best. ("Your reading grade improved—soon you'll be able to read that new series you saw at the library!")♥



Understanding state tests

Q: My daughter will be taking "performance-based" tests this month. What are these, and how can I help her prepare?

A: These tests ask students to perform tasks based on information they're given. For instance, your daughter may have to read a graph, answer questions about it, and then create her own graph. Or she might need to read two nonfiction articles on the same topic and compare the facts in them.



The best way for your child to prepare is by working hard in school each day and by reading regularly for pleasure. If the teacher sends home a test review packet or a practice test, look it over together when your youngster has finished—this will give both of you an idea of what to expect.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Pin the magnet on the map

Where in the world is Iceland? How about South Africa? This version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey will help your youngster learn locations on a map.

Hang a world map on the refrigerator, and stand with your backs to it. One person names a continent or an ocean. Each player takes a turn closing her eyes, spinning around, and trying to place a refrigerator magnet on the correct location. *Variation:* Call out countries or states, and have players "pin" small sticky notes onto them.

Who came the closest? Let your child use a length of string or a ruler to measure the distance from each person's magnet to the place. Older students could use the map's scale to calculate how many miles away it is. The person who wins that round picks the next spot.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Parent volunteering: A first-time experience

I recently changed to the second shift at work, and the first thing my son Tony said was that now I could be a classroom volunteer like some of his friends' parents. I figured it was too late in the year, but I sent a note to the teacher anyway. I was glad when he called and said he'd love to have my help.

It turns out that my ability to speak Spanish and my sewing skills have come

in handy. First, I worked with a group of Spanish-speaking students who are learning English. Now I'm sewing costumes for the class play.

Mr. Brown told me that even if my hours at work change again, he has ways for me to lend a hand.

Tony was happy to see me at school, and he and his classmates are excited about wearing the costumes in the play.♥



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Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

March 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

TOOLS & TIDBITS

Sort the fruit

After grocery shopping, ask your youngster to sort the fruit you brought home. She might organize it by color, size, shape, texture, or whether the fruit has seeds or a pit. Ask her to explain her “sorting rule” each time. (Note: Make sure she washes her hands before handling the fruit.)

Tail tales

Why do animals have tails? Lots of reasons, actually. Take turns naming animals and what they do with their tails. For instance, horses, cows, zebras, and elephants swat away flies. Squirrels use tails for balance, monkeys hang onto branches, and dogs wag them when they’re happy. Let your child draw pictures of the animals you discuss—with their tails in action!

Book picks

■ *Three Pigs, One Wolf, Seven Magic Shapes* (Grace Maccarone) tells a three-little-pigs story with tangrams. Includes a set of tangram puzzle pieces and ideas for using them.

■ Follow along with a grandmother and grandson working in the garden in *Yucky Worms* (Vivian French)—and learn about all the good that worms do. Part of the Read and Wonder series.

Just for fun



Q: Why was the painter hot?

A: Because he put on an extra coat.

Quick! How many?

Subitizing is a big word for a simple but important skill—the ability to recognize the number of objects in a small group without actually counting them. Being able to instantly recognize quantities will allow your child to count, add, subtract, multiply, and divide faster and more easily. Use these ideas to help him develop this skill.

Finger “flash”

Put your hand behind your back, quickly bring it out, holding up a few fingers for your youngster to see—but not count—and return your hand behind your back. Can he correctly name the number? *Idea:* Try this with straws or chopsticks, too.

Boxes of dots

Divide a sheet of paper into 30 boxes. In each one, draw 1–7 dots, varying the designs (arrange dots in rectangles or circles, line them up, or scramble them). Have your child place a square of construction paper on each box. Then, lift up a square for 3 seconds, and put it back down. Your youngster calls out the number he saw. If he’s right, he keeps



the paper square. Take turns, and whoever collects the most squares wins.

Ten frame

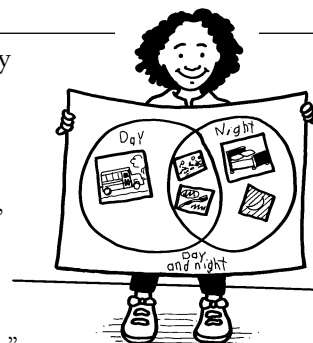
Help your child glue 12 craft sticks into a *ten frame*—a grid with two rows of 5 boxes each. While he closes his eyes, put small objects (game tokens) into a few boxes, one per box. Have him open his eyes and instantly tell you the number. Play again, filling different boxes. He’ll practice *chunking*—or automatically grouping, for example, 5 tokens on the top and 3 on the bottom to “see” 8. 🐛

Day and night

Help your youngster understand patterns of day and night with this activity.

Let her cut out pictures from old magazines. Then, she can make a big Venn diagram by drawing two circles that overlap in the middle. Have her label one circle “Day,” the other circle “Night,” and the overlapping part “Day and night.”

Now, tell her to glue the pictures where they go. For example, she might paste a picture of a school bus into “day,” a photo of a bed into “night,” and one of people eating into the “day and night” section. Ask her why certain activities are better suited to day or night. 🐛

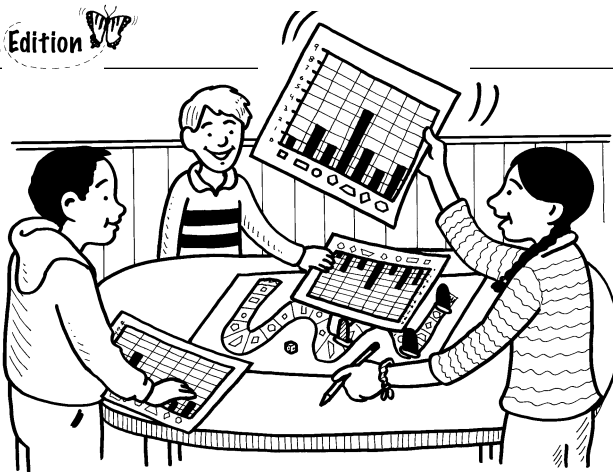


Graph the shapes

Which shape will win the race? Play this game to practice shape recognition, patterns, and graphing.

1. Have your child design a game board with a snaking path from “Start” to “Finish.” Help her divide the path into boxes and draw a shape in each one, creating a pattern. She could use these shapes: square, rectangle, circle, triangle, pentagon, trapezoid, rhombus, and hexagon.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, each player should start a bar graph with a column divided into boxes for each shape.



the shape with the most boxes wins the game.

Idea: Make a game board with 3-D shapes: cube, prism, cone, cylinder, pyramid, sphere. Your youngster can draw or cut pictures of objects with these shapes from catalogs.

3. Now, roll a die, and move the number of spaces rolled. Color in a box on your bar graph for the shape you landed on. (Note: Be sure to line up the boxes evenly.)

4. Play until everyone crosses the finish line, and compare your graphs. Tally the totals—

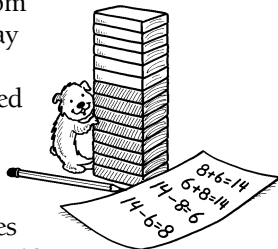


MATH CORNER

Subtraction strategy

When your child is working on subtraction, encourage him to “think addition.” He’ll learn about the *inverse relationship* between addition and subtraction—and gain a strategy for solving subtraction problems.

Give him a subtraction problem, or he might use one from his homework, say $14 - 8$. Have him snap together 8 red Legos. Then, he could add blue Legos, counting on until he reaches 14 (“9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14”). How many blue blocks did he add? That number gives him the answer to his subtraction problem: $14 - 8 = 6$.



Suggest that your youngster write all the addition and subtraction sentences he can make from the problem. Encourage him to use the blocks to create them: $8 + 6 = 14$, $6 + 8 = 14$, $14 - 8 = 6$, $14 - 6 = 8$.

Note: For older children, try double-digit subtraction, such as $28 - 11$.

Q & A

Talk up math

Q: I’ve never been a numbers person. How can I make sure my daughter feels better about math than I do?

A: For starters, be enthusiastic about math. Never let on that you don’t enjoy numbers, or she’s likely to take that as permission to feel the same way. Then, consider all the math you do every day—and you’ll see that you really are a numbers person. For instance, you use math as you pay bills, follow a recipe, calculate a tip, or take measurements for window blinds.

When kids are little, math is naturally fun for them. Take advantage of that by playing games that involve math, such as Yahtzee or gin rummy. Read storybooks with math themes. And here’s another idea: At the store, pay for small purchases with cash, and let your daughter handle the money. She’ll feel grown up, and she’ll learn about coin values and counting change.



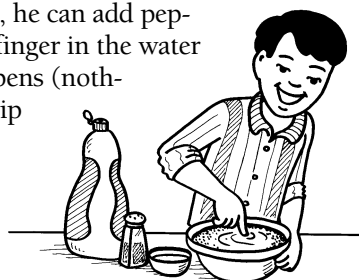
SCIENCE LAB

Chase away the pepper

This fun experiment teaches a powerful chemistry lesson about *surface tension* and how water behaves.

You’ll need: bowls, water, ground black pepper, dishwashing liquid

Here’s how: Let your child fill the bowl with water. Then, he can add pepper. Have him put his finger in the water and observe what happens (nothing). Next, have him dip his finger into dishwashing liquid and immediately place that finger into the bowl of water.



What happens? The pepper will “run away” from his finger—moving to the sides of the bowl.

Why? There is surface tension on top of the water that acts like a stretchy “skin.” But add something dense like dish soap, and the surface tension is reduced.

The water molecules scatter, which your child can “see” by watching the pepper that rides along the top of the water. *Fun fact:* In everyday life, surface tension allows insects like the water strider to “walk on water.”

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BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Build reading skills by talking with your child

Speaking and listening are important parts of literacy. When you have conversations with your child, you are preparing him for reading and writing as well. To help your child build critical speaking and listening skills:

- **Expand on what your child says.** When your child tells you that he wants to read together, say, "What would you like to read about? What have we read recently that you enjoyed?"
- **Give him clues** to identify an object. "What yellow fruit do we sometimes put in our cereal?"
- **Have him practice following** multi-step directions. "Put away your toys, then get your shoes and put them on."

Remember to give your child your full attention when he's talking to you. It shows him that you think what he's saying is important.

Source: "Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development," American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, nswc.com/speechdevelopment.

"Books shouldn't be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage."

—Roald Dahl

Be sure to involve your child in story time

When you read aloud to your child, it is important to keep her interested and engaged in the story. You can do this by interacting with her while you read. Here are some specific strategies to try:

- **Ask your child questions about the book.** See what she thinks will happen next and what her favorite parts are. Let her know when she makes good predictions and interesting points about the story.
- **Expand on what your child says.** Use her questions as a starting point for discussions.
- **Continue your conversation about the book.** Ask your child what she would do differently if she were the main character. Or, you might discuss what connections she has to the characters in the book.

Teach your child to associate letters with sounds

Help your child develop her knowledge of the sounds that letters

make. Together, play this simple game: Tell your child, "I'm thinking of the sound /b/ like in *bubble*."

Have her name as many words as she can that start with the same sound. Then, have your child give you a letter to brainstorm!



Spring into reading with homemade bookmarks

Take a nature walk with your child and collect blades of grass and leaves. When you get home, have your child glue the items to a strip of construction paper. Place clear packing tape around the front and back of the paper. Now your child has her own special bookmark to use all season!



Build your child's fine motor skills by asking for help with writing

Scribbling is one of the ways children get ready to write. Give your child a sheet of paper and a pencil, and ask him to help you write a grocery list or a letter. Whether he draws pictures or writes actual letters, he will be building the muscles in his hands, which will increase his fine motor skills. All the while, he'll be learning a practical use for writing!



Explore new ways to build your child's vocabulary

A strong vocabulary is essential to your child's development as a reader. The more words that he knows, the more he'll understand when listening to books—and later when reading them himself. He will also have the words he needs to say exactly what he means.

To help your child build his vocabulary, encourage him to:

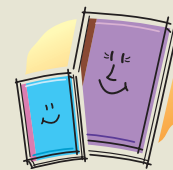
- **Think of some examples.** When you teach him a new word, such as *tiny*, have your child think of something that is tiny.
- **Brainstorm within categories.** For example, have your child think of as many ocean animals or modes of transportation as he can.
- **List synonyms and antonyms.** Encourage your child to think of words that mean either the same thing as a given word, or the opposite of it. For example, how many synonyms and antonyms can your child list for the word *big*?

Source: D. Swallow, "10 Ways to Build Your Child's Vocabulary," North Shore Pediatric Therapy, niswc.com/vocabularybuilding.



Allow your child to move around during reading time

Just because your child may not enjoy sitting still to read books together doesn't mean that you shouldn't read to him! To make sure you're giving your energetic child quality reading time:



- **Allow him to walk around** with books.
- **Act out the stories** you're reading together.
- **Break up reading time** into smaller chunks of time.

Books to delight your early reader

- **Art** by Patrick McDonnell (Little, Brown and Company). Art loves art—drawing squiggles, zigzags and scribbles in all of his favorite colors!
- **Not Norman: A Goldfish Story** by Kelly Bennett (Candlewick Press). A little boy wants a furry pet. The goldfish he gets, Norman, is not what he has in mind! So he sets out to trade Norman for what he thinks will be a better pet.
- **The Gruffalo** by Julia Donaldson (Puffin Books). A clever mouse wards off a fox, a snake and an owl by telling them he's having lunch with the frightening Gruffalo. All of a sudden, the mouse meets the Gruffalo in the deep, dark woods.



Create a love of reading by reading aloud

Reading aloud to your child is one of the most important things you can do to stimulate your child's love of reading. When you read aloud together, your child:

- **Develops vocabulary.** Books introduce your child to a variety of new words and phrases.
- **Learns how spoken words** can vary from written text.
- **Learns about a variety** of topics, from nonfiction subjects to elements of friendship.
- **Sees that books** are made up of words which convey meaning.
- **Learns that reading** is a wonderful thing that brings enjoyment!



Source: Reading is Fundamental, "Tips for Reading Aloud with Preschoolers," Education.com, niswc.com/readaloud_tips.



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

A: Try pointing out any short, simple words and phrases you see over and over when reading stories. Look for phrases like *the end* and *once upon a time*. Also show her common words on greeting cards, such as *dear* and *love*.

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

March 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Biscuit Finds a Friend*

(Alyssa Satin Capucilli)

In this adorable story for beginning readers, Biscuit the puppy befriends a lost baby duckling. Even after Biscuit helps him find his family, the little duck continues to follow his puppy friend. Part of the Biscuit series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *The Listening Walk*

(Paul Showers)

A girl takes a walk with her dad and enjoys all the sounds of their neighborhood. From crickets to lawnmowers to woodpeckers, the book features many familiar sounds—and it just may inspire your family to go on a listening walk of your own.

■ *Before We Eat: From Farm to Table*

(Pat Brisson)



Food doesn't grow in a supermarket! Using simple language, this nonfiction book explains to children where food comes from. Your youngster will discover how farmers plant seeds, grow crops, and tend animals to give us fruit, vegetables, grains, and milk.

■ *How to Draw a Dragon*

(Douglas Florian)

"Dragons, when they wake, are grumpy, and their heads are rather bumpy." Through clever rhymes, this how-to book teaches young artists to draw dragons. Your child will be eager to try his hand at drawing his own dragons after reading the book!



Read with an eagle eye

Close reading is reading carefully and thoughtfully—really thinking about what a passage says and what it means. Noticing and reflecting on the words an author chooses is one way for your youngster to practice reading closely.

Senses

Which words or phrases appeal to your child's five senses? On a sheet of paper, have her draw a large eye, ear, mouth, nose, and hand to represent seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. As you read a book aloud, she can write words on the pictures to match the senses. For example, if she hears "bowls of spicy chili," she might write "spicy chili" on the mouth.

Feelings

Your youngster can use clues from a story to tell how characters feel. Encourage her to listen for words that describe or hint at emotions. ("The bunny hopped in *delight*." "The queen *sighed*.") Then, ask her to act out each feeling. She might hop around to show the bunny's delight.



Can she explain why the character felt that way? ("The bunny was happy because she found a carrot.")

Time and place

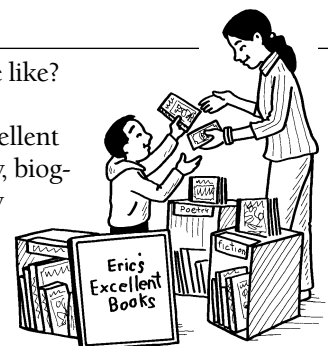
Authors add details to give readers a sense of when and where the story happens. A sentence like "Mornings were cold and dark now when she woke for school" suggests that it's winter. Read a book without showing your child the illustrations. Next, let her draw a picture of the setting. She could use details about the weather, clothing, and activities to imagine the time and place. ♥

My own bookstore

If your child opened a bookstore, what would it be like? Suggest that he find out by creating a pretend one.

He could start by making a store sign ("Eric's Excellent Books") and arranging books by type (fiction, poetry, biographies), topic (animals, sports), or alphabetically by author. Then, he could add price tags ("50 cents") and write a calendar of events ("Story Hour").

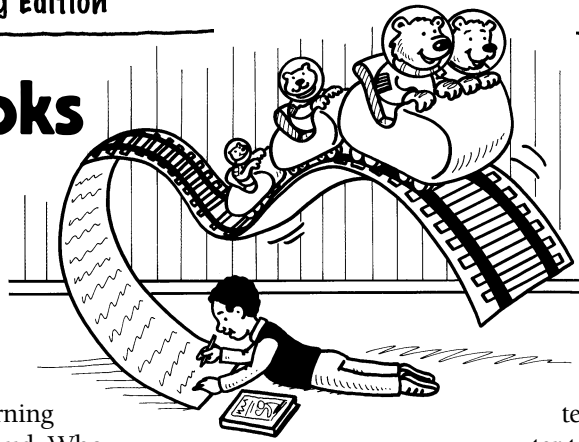
Now it's time for family members to shop! Ask your youngster to recommend books—he'll practice summarizing stories and giving opinions. Finally, "buy" a book with play money so he can make change. *Idea:* Have him hold story time. As he reads aloud, he'll work on reading smoothly and with expression. ♥



Write about books

Books can inspire your child to write. Suggest these ideas for having fun with writing after he reads fiction or nonfiction.

Hold a quiz show. Read a book to your family. Have your youngster write questions about it on separate index cards. Spread them out facedown, and take turns pointing to one. Your child plays “host,” turning over the cards and reading the questions aloud. Whoever correctly answers the most chooses a new book to read. Then, let your youngster write new questions, and play again.



Continue a series. What if the Berenstain Bears went to Mars, or Frog and Toad rode a roller coaster? Your child can use the familiar plot format from a series he loves to write the next installment. For example, he may know the bear cubs always run into a problem and their parents teach a lesson about good character to help solve it.

Write an argument. Encourage your youngster to look critically at an author’s decision or a piece of information in a book. Maybe he thinks Jack should not have climbed up the beanstalk, or perhaps he believes Pluto should be considered a planet again. He could explain his viewpoint and give reasons to support it. ♥

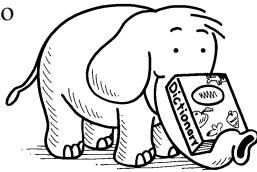


Dictionary games

When your youngster is familiar with the dictionary, she’ll be comfortable looking up words. Use a children’s dictionary to play these games.

Word detective

Together, flip to any page. Take turns secretly choosing a word for the other player to guess. Give clues like “I start with E. I am an animal. I have three syllables.” After your child finds the word (*elephant*), she can read the definition. She’ll discover that a dictionary also gives a word’s part of speech and shows how to pronounce it.



Speed search

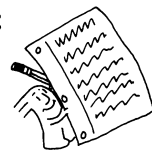
Give your youngster practice using the dictionary’s *guide words* with this game. Show her the words at the top of the page, and explain that all the words on a page fall between those two words in ABC order. Then, browse through the dictionary and pick a random word (*lilac*, *pumpkin*) for her to find. When she spots your word, help her read the entry. Next, she can give you a word to locate. ♥

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Sing, read, and write

You can use songs to help your youngster practice reading and writing. Here’s how:

- Check out library books of songs. Your child can sing along while you run your finger under the words in a book, such as *The Wheels on the Bus* (Paul O. Zelinsky) or *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* (Salina Yoon). Look back through the pages, and ask her to point out words she knows like *round* or *cow*.
- Encourage your youngster to create her own songbook. Have her write each line of a favorite song on a separate sheet of paper. She could illustrate the lyrics and staple the pages together. Or she might make up her own version (“The Wheels on the Bike” instead of “The Wheels on the Bus”). Then, let her turn the pages as you sing the song together. ♥



Q&A Spelling confusion

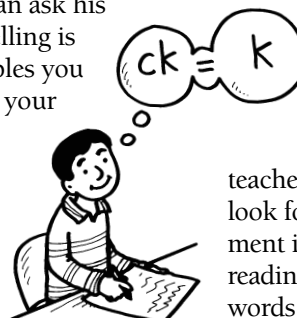
Q My son often spells words in unusual ways. He’ll write *laeck* instead of *lake* or *wight* for *white*. Should I be concerned?

A Probably not. You can ask his teacher whether his spelling is on track, but the examples you gave actually show that your son knows a lot about how words are spelled.

When a child first learns a spelling pattern, he might try to use it every time he hears the sound it

represents. Your son knows that a vowel plus silent *e* (*lake*) makes a long vowel sound—he just forgot that a consonant goes between them. He also learned that *ck* sounds like *k* and *igh* makes a long *i* sound.

Teachers call this “using but confusing”—and they look at youngsters’ misspellings to decide what to teach next. If his teacher isn’t concerned, then you can look forward to seeing steady improvement in his spelling. In the meantime, reading regularly will expose him to words that are spelled correctly. ♥



BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Expose your child to rich, varied vocabulary

Having a robust vocabulary is essential to your child's development as a reader. The more words she knows, the more she'll understand when she's reading!

To build your child's vocabulary:

- **Read aloud often.** Even when your child is older, reading aloud is one of the best ways to expose her to new words.
- **Model curiosity.** Ask questions about new words. Talk about what they might or might not mean. Explain your reasoning to your child. When she is reading on her own, she'll be able to imitate this process in order to figure out the meanings of new words.



Source: G. Pappalardo, "Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary Students," edutopia.com, niswc.com/vocabularytechniques.

"Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection must finish him."

—John Locke

The newspaper encourages critical thinking

When kids read, they benefit from thinking critically and analytically about the material. To help your child build his critical thinking abilities, get a newspaper. Then, you can:

- **Look through the newspaper** and choose something age-appropriate to discuss with your child. Does he find your choice of articles interesting? Why or why not?
- **Scan the paper together.** See what topics appeal to your child. Guide him to articles that may interest him, such as ones on science or sports. Talk about what he reads. How does it relate to his life? Would he like to read more articles like that?
- **Start a scrapbook of favorite clippings.** Perhaps you laughed about a comic or debated a certain article's viewpoint. Make a weekly habit of adding clips to your collection.

Source: S.D. Garrett, "Developing Comprehension and Research Skills with the Newspaper," Reading Rockets, niswc.com/newspapercomprehension.

Task your child with reading the weather

Put your child in charge of the weather report. Each evening, ask him to read tomorrow's forecast in the paper or online. Then he can tell the family how to dress the next day. Not only will he be practicing a bit of reading each day, he'll also see science in action as he observes trends in the weather.



Show off your child's writing

Post your child's writing efforts on the refrigerator alongside his drawings! Or "publish" his collected written work in a special volume. Make a construction paper cover and punch holes in the paper. Tie everything together with string. When your child sees his work showcased, he may be more inclined to write!



Let license plates inspire letter-based fun!

Use the license plates you see while on the go to inspire a letter-based game. Have your child call out the letters on a license plate she sees. Take turns thinking of silly phrases that use words beginning with those letters.

For example, if the letters on the plate are YPZ, you might say, "young painted zebras" or "yellow potted zinnias." The person who thinks up the wackiest phrase wins!



Source: "License Plate Lingo," PBS Between the Lions, niswc.com/licenseplatealphabet.

Teach grammar lessons by allowing your child to correct mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes, and it can be fun for your child to see you make mistakes—especially if he can correct them! To help your child practice basic grammar skills, challenge him to “edit” your work:



- 1. Write down several sentences** that contain errors. Leave out a period, for example, or use lowercase letters when you should capitalize. Also add incorrect punctuation marks, such as a period instead of a question mark. (“i went to the store on friday” or “did you see that dog today.”)
- 2. Have your child review your sentences.** He should mark his edits on your paper.
- 3. When your child is finished,** review and admire his work. Need to simplify the task? Make the same mistakes in every sentence. For example, “All of these sentences need to start with a capital letter and end with a period. Can you fix them?”

Use coupons to turn shopping into a reading experience

If you use coupons while grocery shopping, let your child help you—and work on her reading skills. Before going to the store, ask your child to write a shopping list based on the coupons you plan to use. At the store, have her read the list aloud to you, find the coupons you need and match them to the correct products.



For lower elementary readers:

- ***My Teacher is a Monster (No, I Am Not)*** by Peter Brown (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers). Bobby thinks that his teacher, Mrs. Kirby, is a monster! But when he sees her in the park, his views begin to change.



- ***Whale Trails: Before and Now*** by Lesa Cline-Ransome (Christy Ottaviano Books). Hop aboard the *Cuffee* and go whale watching with a child and her father. Along the way, learn about how whale expeditions have changed over time.

For upper elementary readers:

- ***Starring Jules (as Herself)*** by Beth Ain (Scholastic Press). Jules has a lot of pizzazz. And she has a lot to accomplish, from writing jingles to starring in TV commercials!
- ***Yellowstone Moran: Painting the American West*** by Lita Judge (Viking). Tom Moran was a talented artist who became a great explorer in a land called the Yellowstone.

Graphic organizers are helpful while reading

Graphic organizers are tools your child can use in order to keep track of and visualize what she has read! Explain how the following organizers work:

- **Venn diagram.** A Venn diagram compares and contrasts with interlocking circles. Put similarities between objects in the overlapping parts of the circles and differences in the outer areas of the circles.
- **KWL charts.** A KWL shows what you Know, Want to Know, and have Learned. Have your child make three columns and fill out the K and W parts before reading and the L column after reading.



- **Time line.** Keep track of the order in which events happened. This helps when memorizing their sequence.

Source: “Graphic Organizers for Reading Comprehension,” Scholastic, nswc.com/graphicorganizers.



Q: How can I help my child remember the difference between synonyms and antonyms?

A: Remind your child that *synonyms* have the same, or similar, meanings (such as *happy* and *cheerful*). Point out that synonym, same and similar all start with the letter s. *Antonyms*, on the other hand, are words with opposite meanings (such as *fast* and *slow*).

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

March 2016

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

■ *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Brian Selznick)

Twelve-year-old Hugo is determined to find out how his dead father, a broken robot, and an old toy-maker are connected. But while he does, he must keep a secret—he lives alone in a Paris train station. Will Hugo be able to repair the robot without getting caught? A mystery novel with stunning illustrations. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*

(Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore)



This is the true story of one of the world's most endangered birds, the Puerto Rican parrot. Your child can read about the history of the island, learn how humans have affected the parrots, and discover what scientists are doing to save the beautiful birds.

■ *The Tapper Twins Go to War (With Each Other)*

(Geoff Rodkey)

Twins Claudia and Reese Tapper are waging a prank war against one another.

The twins each tell their side of the hilarious story through emails, interviews, cartoons, text messages, and chat logs. When the dust settles, does anybody really win? The first book in the Tapper Twins series.



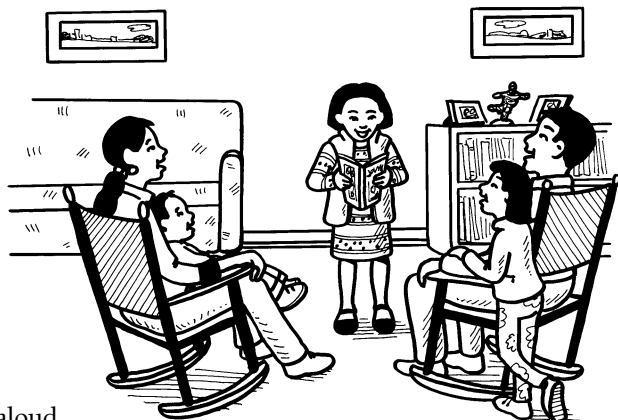
■ *Making Books That Fly, Fold, Wrap, Hide, Pop Up, Twist & Turn* (Gwen Diehn)

Your child can learn to create home-made books with this guide. Eighteen projects include books with secret compartments, books made into scrolls, and pop-up books. Features diagrams and photographs, along with suggestions for writing and illustrating each type of book.



The road to fluency

When your youngster reads fluently, she recognizes words without much effort, understands the material, and uses good expression. Reading this way will help her do better in all subjects. Here are fun suggestions for building fluency by reading and rereading books and other material.



Be a comedian

Have your youngster read aloud from a joke book, looking up unfamiliar words so she won't stumble over them and so she "gets" the humor. She can rehearse until she's comfortable and then hold a stand-up comedy night where she reads favorite jokes to friends or relatives.

she's not satisfied with. *Idea:* Let her entertain your family by playing the recording at dinner or in the car.

Record a story

Ask your child to read a short story aloud a few times, and watch for places where the meaning might change if she reads with different expression. For example, should "That's just fantastic!" sound enthusiastic or sarcastic? Understanding the passage will determine her tone. Next, record her reading the story. She could listen and re-record any parts

Do impressions

Together, list six characters your whole family is familiar with. *Examples:* Scooby-Doo, the Queen of Hearts, Little Orphan Annie. Write each character's name on a separate index card and stack the cards facedown. Now, pick a magazine or newspaper article your child can read. Take turns drawing a card and reading a paragraph in that character's voice. When all the cards are used, start over with a new article. ■

Writing together

Turn writing into a family affair with these activities:

- Write about a simple activity or task you do regularly—it can be something you like or don't like. Each person chooses his own topic, perhaps playing hopscotch, riding the school bus, or washing the dishes. Swap papers, and see what you learn about each other's days.
- Let your child choose a sentence from a magazine, and have family members each put it into a story. The twist: One person has to use the sentence as his opening, another has to make it the ending, and the others have to put it in the middle. Read your stories aloud. How did the placement of the sentence change the plot? ■



Research strategies

Knowing how to find information is a skill that will serve your child well throughout school—and in his career and life. These tips can help him find and keep track of facts when he writes reports.

Know what's inside. Will a book, an article, or a website contain the facts your youngster needs? Have him list information he wants. For a report on hippopotamuses, his list might include “diet,” “habitat,” and “lifespan.” Then, he could check his list against the table of contents or index in each book or use the search feature on each website.



Organize before taking notes. Have your child set aside a separate sheet of paper for each category of facts and jot his notes on the appropriate sheet as he reads.

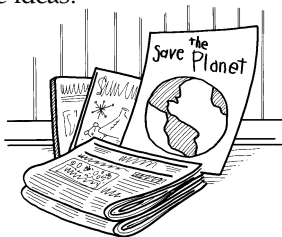
For instance, a report about a famous person may include sheets for “childhood,” “education,” and “accomplishments.” That way, his facts will already be sorted—and easy to find—when he's ready to write.

Tip: Remind your youngster to use his own words when he takes notes. He should put quotes around any information he copies directly and cite the source. ■

Read and write for a cause

There are many reasons for your youngster to read and write. Here's a good one: to make a difference in the world! Try these ideas.

1. Suggest that your child find an event your family can participate in. She could read neighborhood newsletters and bulletin boards to learn about a stream cleanup day or a race to raise money for cancer research. Remind her to write down the details, including the date, time, and location.



2. Give your youngster brochures or newsletters that your power or water company sends or the inserts that come in your bills. Based on what she reads, can she write up a plan for your family to use less energy or water?

3. Clip or print out news articles about issues she feels strongly about, such as animal rights or pollution. Then, encourage her to write a letter to the editor expressing her views and stating what she believes the community should do. ■

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Fun with Words

Singular or plural?

Should that verb be singular or plural? If the subject of the sentence is a pronoun, it can be tricky for youngsters to decide. Play this game to help your child match pronouns with the correct verbs.

On separate index cards, you and your youngster should write:

- six singular pronouns, such as *I, she, he, you, everybody, someone*
- six plural pronouns like *we, they, few, many, several, both*
- six singular verbs, such as *loves, dances, or giggles*
- six plural verbs like *eat, swim, or tell*

Hint: Singular verbs end with *s*, and plural ones don't—even though that might seem backward!

Place all the cards facedown in rows. Take turns flipping over two at a time. If you get a singular subject and a singular verb, use them in a sentence. (“Everybody loves chocolate.”) Keep the cards, and turn over two more. If the words don't go together (“Everybody love”), flip them back over, and your turn ends.

When all the cards are used (or you can't make any more sentences), the player with the most pairs wins. ■



Q&A

Jog your memory

My son says it's hard to remember information that he studies. Any suggestions that might help?

A Encourage your child to use memory strategies to remember facts. For example, he can try visual devices, like picturing a girl named Georgia swimming in the Atlantic to recall Georgia's capital (Atlanta).

Also, have your youngster think up acronyms as memory aids, such as JEL for the three branches of government

(judicial, executive, legislative). Or he could link each word he needs to remember with a familiar item. For the presidents on Mt. Rushmore (Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Lincoln), he might use favorite drinks—water, juice, root beer, and lemonade.

Idea: Suggest that he illustrate the memory devices and post them.

Writing them out—and having them in view—are memory builders, too. ■



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

MARCH 2016

READING

My reading list

Motivate your youngster to read a variety of books with this never-ending "bucket list."

Ingredients: pencil, paper, large sand bucket, tape, library books

Together, brainstorm types of books for your child to try. He can write the ideas on a long sheet of paper and tape it around the outside of the bucket. **Examples:** A nonfiction book about a rain forest animal, a biography of a scientist, stories set in each of the seven continents. Just making his list will encourage him to think about all there is to read in the world!

Then, head to the library, and help him find a few books that meet his criteria. He can keep them in his bucket at home. As he reads and checks off each one, have him add another idea for a book.

PATTERNS

Coins are a handy tool for working with patterns. Make an "AB" pattern (penny, nickel, penny, nickel), and have your child continue it. Next, let him make a pattern for you to follow. For bigger challenges, use three or four coins, and make more complicated patterns.



VOCABULARY

Roll two dice, and add the numbers together. Players think of a word with that many letters. So if you roll 10, your youngster might call out "Bedazzling!" The first person to say a word that matches the number earns one point per letter— (Use a dictionary to check.) Play to 100 points.

bedazzling

PLACE VALUE

The biggest number

Use strategy (and a little luck) to form the largest number.

Ingredients: index cards, pencil, playing cards (10s removed, face cards = 0, aces = 1)

Stack the playing cards facedown. Each player lines up four index cards and labels them, left to right: "thousands," "hundreds," "tens," and "ones." Take turns drawing a card from the deck and placing it faceup on one of your index cards. The goal is to create the largest number possible. If a player turns over a 3, she might place it in the ones spot, saving the hundreds and thousands for higher cards.

After each player has drawn four cards, say your numbers aloud. The highest one wins. Put the cards back, shuffle, and play again.

GEOGRAPHY

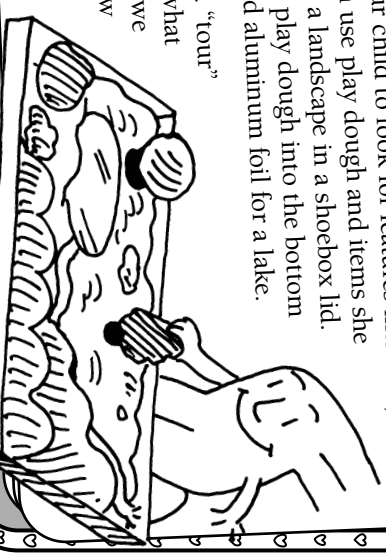
Sculpt landforms

What landforms and bodies of water are in your area? Take a drive or ride a bus with your youngster to find out, and then let her make a model.

Ingredients: play dough, household items, shoebox lid

While you're out, encourage your child to look for features like hills, rivers, and bays. Back at home, she can use play dough and items she finds around the house to make a landscape in a shoebox lid. She might press a layer of green play dough into the bottom and add blue yarn for a river and aluminum foil for a lake.

Have your youngster give you a "tour" of her model, connecting it to what you saw on your ride. ("When we went over the mountain, we saw the lake in the valley.")



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

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MARCH 2016

Character Corner

☐ FLEXIBILITY

When something unexpected happens, brainstorm ways to adjust. Maybe you planned a picnic, but it's chilly out. You could spread out a blanket and eat on the living room floor, or you might bundle up and have a "brrrr picnic" outdoors.

☐ EFFORT

Have your youngster describe something she did recently that took a lot of effort (memorized a poem for a presentation, put together a big Lego set). Suggest that she draw herself accomplishing the task to use as inspiration for the future.

☐ FAMILY UNITY

Together, plan an outing that includes something for everyone. Say you like hiking, your younger child loves dolls, and your older one enjoys photography. Go on a scenic hike, let your little one carry a doll in a backpack "baby carrier," and stop for photo opportunities!



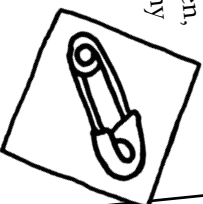
ASTRONOMY

Step outside together, and gaze at the night sky. Ask your child to draw what he sees. Using chalk on black construction paper, he might make a crescent moon or a constellation. Stand in the same place at the same time each night, and have him sketch more pictures. How do the scenes change?



GEOMETRY

How big is a square inch? Your child can find out by drawing a square in which each of the four sides is one inch. Then, have him find as many things as possible that could fit inside the square inch. Examples: safety pin, stamp, ring.



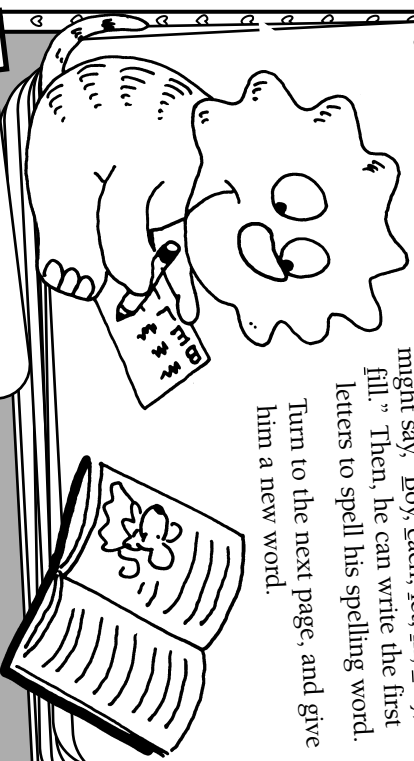
SPELLING Letter sleuth

Finding words in a favorite book can help your youngster learn his spelling words.

Ingredients: spelling list, book, paper, pencil

Give your child a spelling word. Have him open a book to the first page and write down a word that begins with each letter of the spelling word. (If he can't find a word for a letter, he could check the next page.) Then, he reads the words aloud in the order the letters appear in his spelling word. For belief, he might say, "Boy, each, let, in, easy, fill." Then, he can write the first letters to spell his spelling word.

Turn to the next page, and give him a new word.



LOGIC

Let your child make a 10 x 10 grid of boxes on a sheet of paper. Take turns writing your initials in a box.

Each player tries to claim five boxes in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) before the other person's initials block her.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

FITNESS

Experts recommend at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Have your youngster create a chart to log her exercise bike and write the minutes for each. Can she complete an hour or more of exercise each day?

