

Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

Volume 1, Issue viii

April 2017

For those of you with 3rd graders, the mathematics portion of the MCAS will be given on May 7th and 8th. With that in mind, I thought I would give you a little brain teaser to work on problem-solving skills, measurement, and gathering and interpreting data.

Shannon is one of the greatest cookie bakers of all time. Aside from such obvious ingredients as flour, butter and eggs, her true secret ingredient is water. Shannon says that her cookies must have exactly four ounces of water. To hold the water, she uses a jar that will contain, when full, exactly five ounces and a jar that, when full, will contain exactly three ounces. There are absolutely no markings on either jar other than their 5 oz. and 3 oz. labels. As stated earlier,

Shannon

**MCAS Dates; April 4,6,and 11
May 16 and 18**



wants to have exactly four ounces of water to support her baking needs.

Please know that Shannon has access to all the water she may need by using the tap in the kitchen sink.

Also know that there are no other jars available to her. The problem is therefore, with all of this water available and only a five-ounce and a three ounce jar, how can Shannon be sure that she will have **exactly four ounces of water?**

Hint: This requires some thinking and using your head! Anyone interested in the answer, please check the newsletter next month!

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

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

April 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

SHORT NOTES

Keep up attendance



Good attendance matters all year. Show your youngster that going to school every day is job number one. If you plan to visit relatives or take a vacation this summer, check the school calendar to make sure your trip won't overlap with the end of this school year or the beginning of the next one.

Siblings as roommates

Have more than one child? Consider letting them share a room—even if they don't need to. Sharing space can help siblings bond and teach them about cooperation and respect. Plus, youngsters may be comforted and find it easier to fall asleep with someone else in the room.

Build observation skills

Boost your child's powers of observation during your next walk. Together, gaze at a scene (say, a playground) closely for 1 minute to observe as many details as possible. Then, turn around and take turns asking each other specific questions, like "How many swings are there?" or "What color is the slide?"

Worth quoting

"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop." *Confucius*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do clouds wear in their hair?

A: Rainbows.



Bring learning home

Help your child feel proud of the skills she's learning by giving her opportunities to use them outside of school. You'll boost her confidence—and she'll see that reading, math, and science are useful in everyday life. Pose questions like these for her to answer.

How can we organize our cabinets?

Your youngster may enjoy giving your kitchen cabinets a makeover. Suggest that she draw a "blueprint" for organizing dishes, pots and pans, canned goods, and other items. Review it together, and try some of her ideas—perhaps arranging spices in alphabetical order or stacking plates by size.

What will we do this weekend?

Let your child plan a fun outing for your family. She could start by checking the weather forecast. Then, encourage her to read newspaper listings and community websites to find activities, such as an arts and crafts fair, a free concert, or a minor-league baseball game. She'll need



to read for details like times, locations, and prices before she presents her idea.

Where should we keep the bread?

Ask your youngster to conduct a science experiment to discover how to keep your bread fresh and mold-free the longest. She could use what she's learning in science class to set identical slices of wrapped bread on the counter, in the pantry, and in the refrigerator. What does she find? She'll be excited when you use her results to decide where to store bread. ♥

Develop good money sense

Now is the time to help your youngster manage money wisely—before he gets his first job or has bills to pay. Try these kid-friendly ideas:

- Have regular conversations about money. You might say, "Chicken is on sale this week—we'll save money if we buy extra to freeze," or "I want new curtains, but our car will need tires soon, and I need to save for them."
- Suggest that your child give a stuffed animal a pretend allowance and write a budget for how to manage it. Explain that it should include savings and put *needs* before *wants* (so his stuffed monkey might buy bananas to eat or a tree to live in before purchasing one more ball to play with). *Tip:* If possible, give your youngster a small weekly allowance to work on real-life budgeting. ♥



Practicing patience

In today's world, youngsters often have instant access to information, songs, and movies. As a result, they might not learn patience. Encourage your child to get better at waiting patiently with these tips.

Set an example. Let your youngster see you waiting calmly during challenging situations. In a traffic jam, you could say, "It looks like we'll be sitting here for a while. Would you read your story to me?"

Discover strategies. What does "wait a minute" or "wait 5 minutes" look like? Look at your watch, and have each



faster? Your child will learn that staying occupied will help him be patient. ♥

family member raise his hand when he thinks 1 minute has gone by. They should raise their hands again when they think it's been 5 minutes. Repeat the activity, but this time, ask each person to do something he enjoys like reading or drawing. Does the time seem to go

PARENT TO PARENT

Write a winning argument

My daughter Lucy has been asking for a cat for months. So when she told me that she was learning to write "arguments" in school, I asked her to write me a letter arguing why we should get a cat.

A few days later, Lucy handed me her letter. She had stated her claim—"Having a pet helps kids become responsible." She even gathered evidence. She talked to three friends and wrote about how they care for their animals.



Finally, she considered my side, saying she knew I was worried I'd end up doing all the work. So she proposed a rule: She would have to feed the cat and scoop out its litter box before going out to play.

Lucy's letter worked, and we're going to the animal shelter this weekend to adopt her cat. Now she sees that writing a good argument can pay off! ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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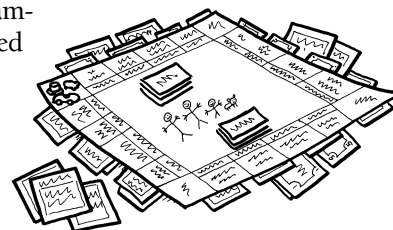
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ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a personalized game

What's more fun than family game night? Playing a game your child designed herself! Consider these suggestions.

1. Family-opoly. Have your youngster create a personalized Monopoly game. She might name properties after people, places, or things that are important to your family (say, her grandparents' native country or her brother's college mascot). After she makes the board and property cards, use Monopoly money and game pieces to play her version.



2. Trivia, Family Edition. Encourage family members to write questions about your family on index cards, with the answers on the backs. *Examples:* "What breakfast dish is Dad famous for?" or "How did we celebrate Mom's 40th birthday?" Stack the cards with the answers facing down. Your child draws one and reads the question aloud. The first person to answer correctly keeps the card and asks the next question. When all cards have been used, the player with the most wins. ♥

Q & A

Believe it—or not?

Q: My child believes everything in TV commercials. How can I help him understand what's accurate and what's exaggerated?

A: Try this eye-opening activity. Let your son take photos around your home. Half should make your house look good, and the other half not so good. For example, he could snap a shot of a freshly vacuumed room with the bed made and one of an overflowing trash can and a dirty wall.



Now, look through the pictures. Have him imagine he is "selling" your house by showing only the flattering pictures. Is he giving the full story?

Explain that this is how commercials work, too—advertisers want to show their products in the best light. Together, watch commercials, and talk about the "other" side that you're not seeing.

You could also read product reviews to get a more complete picture. Your son will learn to think critically about information he sees and hears. ♥

Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

April 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



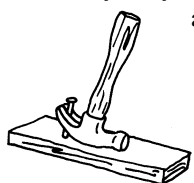
TOOLS & TIDBITS

True or false?

Spark your child's math thinking with this game. Give her an equation with a right answer or a wrong answer. If it's correct ($7 - 2 = 5$), she says, "True." If it's wrong (say, $7 - 2 = 3$), she says, "False" and corrects it. Take turns so she gets to test you, too. *Tip:* Let her use small items (buttons, paper clips) to work out the problems.

Learning about levers

With a piece of wood, a nail, and a hammer, your youngster can explore a lever—a type of simple machine that uses force to move or lift an object. Hammer a nail into the wood, and ask him to try to remove it with his fingers. Then, show him how to carefully use the claw end of the hammer to remove the nail. He'll see that a lever makes the job easier.



Web picks

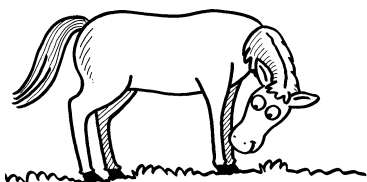
At smartygames.com, your child can do puzzles and mazes or try math games with pirates, Martians, and more.

Enjoy dozens of science activities at peepandthebigwideworld.com about animals, plants, light, and the way things move.

Just for fun

Q: How long should a horse's legs be?

A: Long enough to reach the ground!



Let's play with shapes

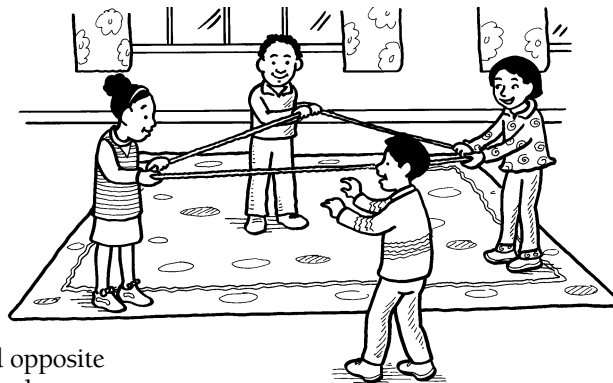
Shapes are the building blocks of our world and of your youngster's understanding of geometry. These activities will let him explore flat, or 2-D, shapes.

Name that shape

This shape-making activity is ideal for a group. Tie a long piece of yarn or string into a circle. Two people should hold opposite sides and stretch the circle to make a straight line. Now a third person pulls out the middle of one side to make a triangle. Keep adding people, and turn the yarn into a square (4 sides), a pentagon (5 sides), a hexagon (6 sides), a heptagon (7 sides), an octagon (8), a nonagon (9), and a decagon (10). With each move, have your child announce the shape formed.


Count the sides

Get your family moving with shape-inspired exercise. First, let your youngster draw shapes (squares, triangles, rectangles, pentagons) on separate scraps of paper. Stack them facedown. Then, take turns naming an exercise (jumping jacks,



squats) and picking a shape from the pile. Count the shape's sides out loud, and everyone does that number of exercises. *Example:* Choose a square (4 sides), and do 4 jumping jacks.


Make and find

Encourage your child to use crayons, pretzel sticks, or craft sticks to create his own shapes. How many sticks will he need to form a pentagon? (It takes 5, or the total number of sides.) What about 1 pentagon and 1 square? (There would be 9 sticks, since $5 + 4 = 9$.) Suggest that he uses shoelaces to make circles. Then, challenge him to find all those shapes around the house. He might locate a triangular wedge of cheese or a round clock face. 

This diet's for the birds!

Here's a fun way to discover how different types of beaks help determine what birds eat.

Find "beaks." Together, look at pictures of birds in books or online. Then, gather materials to represent the beaks. Your child might use a straw for a hummingbird beak, a toothpick for a heron, a spoon for a pelican, and tweezers for a house finch.

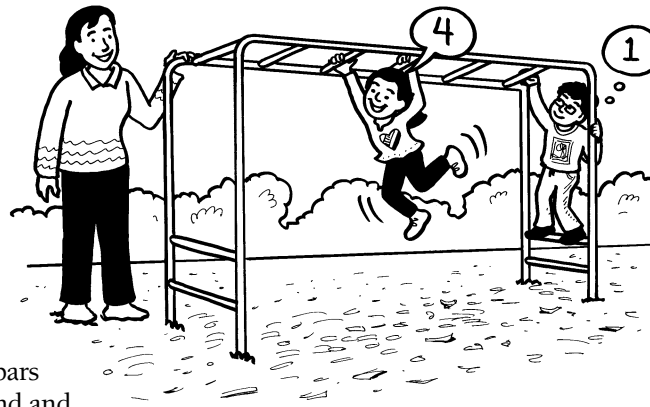
Eat like a bird. Set out juice, gummy fish in a bowl of water, and sunflower seeds. Your youngster can try each "beak" to see which works best. She'll find the hummingbird's beak helps it suck up liquid. A heron's beak is perfect for spearing fish, while the pelican's scoops up the fish. And a house finch's beak lets it pick up and crack open seeds. 



A counting playground

Your child can climb, swing, and play her way to better counting skills at your local playground. Try these ideas.

Monkey bars. Have your youngster count each rung she touches as she moves across the monkey bars (1, 2, 3...). When she turns around and goes back, she could count backward from her last number (6, 5, 4...).



Swings. Let your child practice skip counting with each back-and-forth swing. She'll count 2, 4, 6, and so on for each swing forward and back. See if she can swing, and skip count, all the way to 100!

Slide. How many children are ahead of her at the slide? How many steps are on the ladder? How many times did she slide down? Encourage your youngster to count everything she can about the slide.

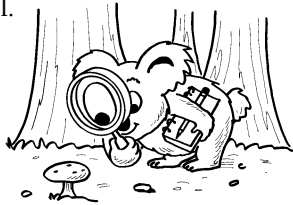
Idea: On the way home, suggest that your child make up a story about your trip to the playground—in numbers. She might say, "The 2 of us walked to the playground. It is 3 blocks from our house. I saw 7 other kids playing."

PARENT TO PARENT

Make a (science) note of that

When my son Caleb came home excited about the science experiments his class was doing, I asked his teacher, Ms. Fletcher, how to encourage his interest. She suggested that Caleb keep a science journal.

We got a notebook, and Caleb put together a bag with colored pencils, a magnifying glass, a ruler, and a timer. Now we go on regular science expeditions—with Caleb's journal in hand. He has found great stuff to examine and write about.



One day in the forest, we spotted some mushrooms. Caleb studied them with his magnifying glass and sketched what he saw. When we went back a week later to inspect them again, he drew how they had changed.

We've had fun measuring shadows, timing how long it takes a snail to move a foot, and more. Caleb has recorded it all! And the best part is that we're learning about science together.

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SCIENCE LAB

Stay dry

Why wear a raincoat? So you stay dry, of course. This experiment will show your youngster what else keeps water away.

You'll need: construction paper, pencil, scraps of materials (tissue paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and wrapping paper), spray bottle of water

Here's how: Let your child draw a big raincoat on construction paper and lay the scraps all over it. Have her predict which materials will be waterproof. To test, she can spray each one with water. She should remove the materials, then observe where the paper raincoat got wet or stayed dry.

What happens? Areas covered by waterproof materials like aluminum foil stayed dry. Items that were not waterproof, such as wrapping paper, allowed water to seep through.

Why? Water beads up and rolls off waterproof materials, while materials that aren't waterproof absorb water. *Idea:* Ask your youngster what she would wrap a sandwich in to keep it dry.



MATH CORNER

Guess my math word

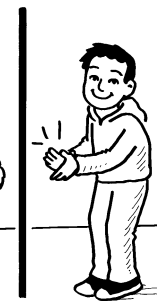
With this clever version of charades, your child will learn and remember math vocabulary words.

1. Help your youngster write about a dozen math terms (*add, subtract, multiply, pattern, sphere, less than*) on separate index cards. Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.

2. One player draws a card and acts out the word—no talking allowed. For *pattern*, he might do this:



jump, clap, jump, clap. Or if he gets *less than*, he could put two groups of objects on the floor and shape his body into a less-than sign (<) pointing toward the smaller amount.



3. The first person to correctly guess his word keeps the card.

4. Take turns picking cards and acting out the terms. When all the cards have been used, the player with the most cards wins.

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Your conversations with your child stimulate language development

Conversations with your child do more than help the two of you stay connected. They also sharpen his language skills and teach him the value of words.

Every time you chat with your child, he learns that:

- **Words are complex.** Your child may not grasp the full meaning of everything you say, but he's still benefiting from hearing you speak. When your child listens to you, he gains an understanding of new words as well as how sentences are structured. As he grows and his vocabulary matures, he'll have a better understanding of the meanings of your words.
- **Words are powerful.** As your child realizes that your words make an impact on him, he'll also discover that his words can have an effect on you (and others), too. This realization can get him excited about language.



Source: "Child Development Tracker: Language," PBS Parents, nswc.com/language_development_four.

"Choose an author as you choose a friend."

—Sir Christopher Wren

Help your child connect with characters

Young children enjoy seeing their interests reflected in the world around them. Show your child how much she has in common with book characters! To help her make connections between herself and the stories she reads:

- **Find titles relating to her interests.** Whether it's frogs or fire trucks, identify the things your child loves and seek out fiction and nonfiction books about them. Ask a librarian for book suggestions.
- **Point out similarities.** As you read together, remind your child anytime she and a character share a bond. "The astronaut said the moon is his favorite thing in outer space. You love the moon, too!"

Get creative with the alphabet

There are countless ways to teach and review the alphabet with your child. You can nurture his creativity and build his alphabet knowledge.

Together:

- **Shape** letters out of pipe cleaners.
- **Bake** letter-shaped cookies or pretzels.
- **Circle** specific letters in the newspaper.
- **Point** out letters on street signs.
- **Play** with ABC stamps.



Use cookbooks to explain reading for information

Cookbooks aren't just full of recipes—they're full of words and pictures. So browse your kitchen bookshelf with your child.

Talk about how the words on the page tell you how to cook the food. Your child will learn that reading has many purposes.



A writer's toolbox makes learning new skills appealing

Help your child develop an interest in writing and begin to practice—even before she actually begins putting words together.

Encourage your child to decorate a shoebox that will become her writer's toolbox. Fill it with paper, pencils and crayons. Suggest that your child use it whenever she writes notes and draws. Even if she just scribbles, she's building the small motor skills she'll need to write later.



Introduce your child to a wide variety of books and writing styles

The more your child is exposed to books, the more chances he has to learn to love reading. Get your future reader on the right track by keeping different kinds of books around your home. If you're not sure where to begin, look for suggestions such as:



- **Concept books** that teach about subjects like counting, colors, shapes and the alphabet.
- **Rhyming stories** with distinguishable patterns and repetition.
- **Simple stories** with predictable plots.
- **Books of poetry** that feature Mother Goose rhymes or other nursery rhymes.
- **Wordless picture books** where your child will be able to follow the plot without needing to read words.

Source: "Types of Books to Read to Young Children," University of California Cooperative Extension, Ready to Succeed, niscw.com/types_of_books.

Get reading inspiration from Mother Nature

Now that the weather is warmer, take language learning outside! Here are three fresh-air activities to try together:

- 1. Read outside.** Grab your child, a blanket and a stack of books and have a story picnic. The change of scenery can renew her enthusiasm for reading!
- 2. Fill a nature jar.** Take a walk outside and gather leaves, flower petals, etc. Back home, have your child put her treasures in a jar or box. Later, you can encourage her to look at the items and retell the story of your walk.



- 3. Learn about plants.** Check out a book from the library about how plants grow from seeds. Read and learn about what plants need to grow.



Q: Some days my child is able to sit and listen to stories for an hour. Others he can only sit still for five minutes. Why is that?

A: Young children naturally have quiet days and fidgety days, so be flexible when it comes to story time. On quiet days, enjoy a long stretch of reading.

But on fidgety days, keep it short and sweet. Squeeze in reading during baths, meals or other times your child may be calmer.

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

Build your child's lifelong love of reading

Turn your budding reader into a lifelong lover of books! Get her to adore books now and forever when you:



- **Have daily story time.** Sharing books shouldn't be a rare treat. It should be a cozy time together every single day.
- **Read with enthusiasm.** Use funny voices when you read. Be dramatic. Show your child that books are entertaining and interesting.

Books to delight your early reader

- ***Please, Mr. Panda*** by Steve Antony (Scholastic Press). Mr. Panda sets out to share his box of doughnuts—but he must find a well-mannered friend to share them with.
- ***Wally Does Not Want a Haircut*** by Amanda Driscoll (Alfred A. Knopf). Wally the Lamb's fleece has grown longer and longer—so long that it is getting in his way of doing his favorite things! What will finally convince Wally to get his hair cut?
- ***Surprise Soup*** by Mary Ann Rodman (Viking). While Kevie and his dad wait for his mom to come home with a new baby, they decide to make some delicious soup, complete with a secret ingredient.



Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ **Rosario's Fig Tree** (Charis Wahl)

A little girl believes her neighbor, Rosario, is a magician because he grows things in his garden. Rosario knows just when and how to plant seeds that give him eggplants, tomatoes, and even figs. When the girl becomes Rosario's helper, she discovers she can do magic, too.

■ **I am Jim Henson** (Brad Meltzer)

As a child, Jim loved to laugh, act out movies he saw at the theater, and draw happy monsters and birds. This picture book biography introduces little readers to the boy who grew up to create *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*.

■ **Armadillo Rodeo** (Jan Brett)

Bo the armadillo is in for an adventure when he wanders off from his mother and follows a new "friend" to a Texas rodeo. The "friend" turns out to be a child's red cowboy boot that Bo mistook for another armadillo! By the time his mom finds him, Bo has had a great time riding a horse and going to a barn dance at the rodeo. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ **The Earth Book** (Todd Parr)

This nonfiction book explains simple ways to help take care of the earth. Read it together, and then celebrate Earth Day (April 22) by starting a new tradition inspired by the book. For example, ride bikes to the store instead of driving, or reduce food waste by enjoying a weekly leftovers dinner.



Keys to better conversations

If discussions with your child mostly involve things like "What should we have for lunch?" or "Please put on your shoes," you're not alone. Here are ways to enjoy rich conversations and help your youngster build speaking and listening skills.



Make a "spark" jar

Fill a jar with questions that will spark fun discussions. Family members can write conversation starters on slips of paper. Then, pull a "spark" out of the jar before you sit down to dinner or get in the car, and you'll have something interesting to talk about. *Example:* "What's the first thing our hamster would say if she could talk?"

Play "piggyback"

Encourage your child to listen closely to what others say and piggyback on their ideas with lines like "That reminds me of..." or "Good idea. What if we also..." Maybe someone suggests that

you celebrate the 100th day of 2017 on April 10. Your youngster might add, "That reminds me of the 100th Day of School party. We could make a 100-link paper chain like we did at school."

Expand your range

Give your child chances to talk to a variety of people. Their different experiences and perspectives will provide new topics to discuss. She might speak with guests at your home or call or video-chat with relatives. Ahead of time, help her think of what to say. ("Aunt Terry works as a nurse, and she lives in Minnesota where it's still cold. What could you ask her?")♥

Let's read the mail

What's in the mail? Opportunities for your youngster to read and write! Try these activities:

- Little ones love to get mail addressed to them. Encourage relatives to send your child letters, cards, and postcards. Read them together, letting him read the words he recognizes. Then, help him write back to each sender.

- Give your youngster catalogs and circulars that come in the mail. He could pick a category, such as clothes or food. Next, he can cut out pictures, glue them on a sheet of paper, and practice writing by labeling each item ("Pajamas," "Socks").♥



Read-alouds boost imagination

Reading to your child can exercise his imagination and sharpen his comprehension. Consider these ideas.

Picture the scene. While you read a story, ask your youngster to close his eyes and imagine what the illustrations look like. He'll practice visualizing the characters, setting, and plot. After you



finish reading, suggest that he draw some of the pictures he "saw." Then, let him look at the real illustrations to see what they have in common with his.

Create an ending. How would your child like the story to end? About halfway through, close the book. Have him use his imagination to make up the

rest—just like when he writes his own stories. Now open the book, and finish reading. Which version does he prefer?

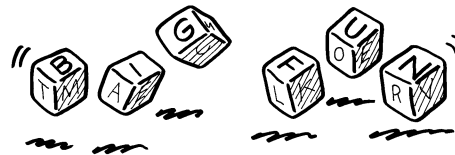
Think deeply. Pose questions that stretch your youngster's imagination as you read. You might ask what he thinks of a character's decision or how the story would be different if it took place in a city rather than in the country.♥



Roll and spell

How many words can you and your youngster make from six letters? Play this spelling game to find out.

Materials: six dice, masking tape, pen, timer, paper, pencil



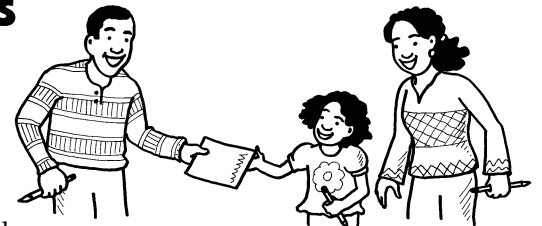
1. Cover the dice with bits of masking tape.
2. Use two dice for vowels (A, E, I, O, U, Y), writing one set on each. The remaining dice are for consonants. Your child should write a different one on each side of a die, leaving one side blank on each die.
3. Let your youngster roll all the dice at once. Set a timer for five minutes.
4. Work together to spell as many words as possible. (A blank can stand for any letter.) Say your child rolls I, O, C, B, L, and X. She might move the letters around to spell *cob*, *boil*, *oil*, *ox*, *box*, and *lox*. Help her write down each word you spell.
5. Roll the dice again, and play with the new letters.♥



Family writing games

Write a sentence—and pass it on. These games encourage your child to practice creative writing as you build stories together, one line at a time:

- Help your youngster write one sentence of a story on a sheet of paper, and hand it to the next player. That person reads the line silently, adds a sentence, and folds the paper so the first line is hidden. Keep passing the paper around, each time adding a line and folding the paper so only the new sentence shows. When the paper is full, let your child unfold the story and read it.
- Have your youngster pick two unrelated objects, such as a shoe and a carrot. Then, she starts a story about one of the items ("Last week, I got a new pair of shoes"), and gives the paper to the person beside her. The goal is to tell a story that makes sense and ends with a line using the second item. Your story might continue: "I put them on and went for a walk. I saw a vegetable garden. There was a cute bunny eating a carrot."♥



Parent to Parent

Our growing home library

I want my son Jason to have his own library of books at home, but we can't afford bookstore prices. When I mentioned this to a friend, she said her family had built a nice collection of books by shopping at yard sales.

So Jason and I started scanning yard sale ads for mentions of children's books. Our new Saturday morning ritual is going to these sales and browsing

through the books together. Jason loves picking out his favorites. And I love that we can sometimes get a bag of books for a dollar!



At one yard sale, another shopper gave me a great tip. She said you can get good books for really low prices at library and church yard sales. Now we're shopping at those, too. Soon our problem won't be that we need more books—it will be needing more bookshelves!♥

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BUILDING READERS®

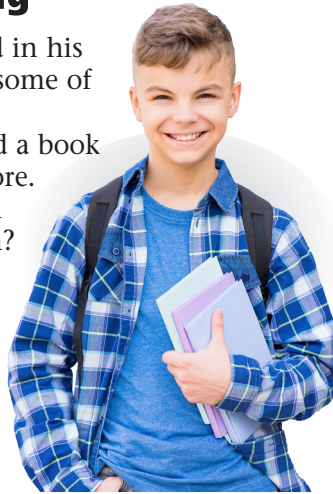
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Everyday activities offer engaging opportunities for reading

Rather than force your child to read in his free time, incorporate reading into some of his favorite activities. For example:

- **Visit local sites of interest**, then read a book about area history to find out more. What additional information can your child learn about your town?
- **Talk about foods you love.** What would be fun to make? Let your child pick a recipe from a cookbook to follow together.
- **Watch or play sports together.** Then visit the library together to find books about famous athletes, statistics and training tips.
- **Go for a walk and bring a nature guide.** How many flowers, animals, bugs or trees can you both identify?
- **Start a craft project that requires following instructions.** Let your child read the directions and take charge of the craft.



"If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all."

—Oscar Wilde

Use journals to encourage creativity

Keeping a journal is a great way to build reading and writing skills. There are lots of ways to journal. If your child doesn't know what to write, give her a notebook and suggest she try:

- **Drawing.** Many kids enjoy sketching things they see or imagine. Suggest that your child add stories or simple captions to accompany her drawings.
- **Reviewing.** What does your child think of books that she reads? What would she recommend to others? Why?
- **Recording.** Your child might like to keep track of the weather, books she reads or facts she collects. Show enthusiasm about what she writes.
- **Creating memories.** Let your child glue favorite pictures and mementos into the notebook—complete with her notes about them. This will be fun to read and remember in the future!

Improve your child's reading skills by reading aloud

Even if your child is able to read on his own, he will still benefit from being read to. When you read to your child, you can:



- **Build enthusiasm** for the story you're reading.
- **Expose him** to new words.
- **Learn more** about his interests.

Source: C. Matthiessen, "The hidden benefits of reading aloud—even for older kids," Great Schools, niswc.com/why_read_aloud.

Help your child practice for spelling tests

You can increase your child's odds of spelling test success by helping him prepare. When practicing, say each spelling word aloud in a sentence, then encourage your child to imagine the word before writing it down. You can also give practice tests in the same format as his real tests.



Context helps give words meaning

When your child gets stuck on a word while reading, show her how to figure out the word on her own. Suggest that she:

- **Sound it out.** Often, kids succeed when they tackle words sound by sound.
- **Finish the sentence.** She can look for clues about the confusing word in the rest of the sentence, then try reading it again.
- **Notice pictures.** Do they give hints about the story?



Source: J. Zorfass and T. Gray, "Using Context Clues to Understand Word Meanings," Reading Rockets, niswc.com/context_vocabulary.

Use textbooks to entertain as well as educate

Does your child think textbooks are boring? Do you? This fun activity might change your opinion. Ask your child to name his favorite subject in school. Then look with him at one of the books he uses in that class. Next:



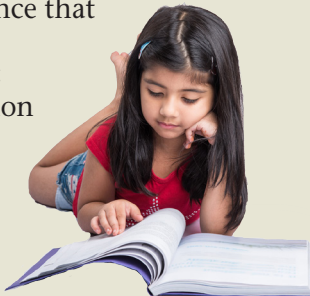
- **Flip through the book** and stop somewhere interesting. Or open to a random page and see what you find. Look at pictures and headings. What do they make you and your child wonder about?
- **Read with your child to satisfy his curiosity.** He can read aloud or you can take turns reading. If he gets bored, switch to a different section and read about a topic that he finds more interesting.
- **Ask each other questions** about what you've read. This will help your child grasp important concepts. Show enthusiasm for the material. This will entice your child to want to learn more.

Dictionary games build language skills

To build your child's vocabulary, have some fun with the dictionary. Use a dictionary that is appropriate for your child's age. Start by making sure your child understands how a dictionary works. Show how the entry word is in bold letters. It's followed by one or more definitions and perhaps a sentence that includes the word.

Then, take turns leading these games:

- **What's the Word?** Read just the definition of a word. Have the other player or players try several times to guess the word. If no one can guess, then tell the word.
- **Guess the Definition.** Find an unusual word in the dictionary. Say the word. Then read its definition and the definition of another word. Ask the players to guess which is the correct definition for the word you read.



Source: P. Kaye, *Games with Books: 28 of the Best Children's Books and How To Use Them To Help Your Child Learn—From Preschool to Third Grade*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



Q: My child has to take notes from a book for a research project. How can I help with this?

A: Discuss how the book is organized. Your child's notes should be organized in a similar way. To show him exactly how this works, look at a chapter or section together. What is the main idea? Have your child write it down. Then notice the supporting details that follow. Your child can summarize them briefly in his own words.

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

Study illustrations and graphics to enhance reading comprehension

To help your child understand what she reads, talk about elements that add to the information in the text. Notice how pictures clarify what she reads. For example, ask, "Why do you think that girl looks sad?" "Why did the author include this chart?"



For lower elementary readers:

- ***The Library Gingerbread Man*** by Dotti Enderle (Upstart Books). The Gingerbread Man runs away from his home at the library, causing the librarian and several book characters to chase after him!
- ***Chowder*** by Peter Brown (Little, Brown and Company). Chowder is an unusual dog with unusual owners. But when he meets the animals at a petting zoo, he strives to fit in with them.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***A Movie in My Pillow: Una película en mi almohada*** by Jorge Argueta (Children's Book Press). This collection of poetry is the poet's reflection on his life after he moved from El Salvador to San Francisco.
- ***When Mischief Came to Town*** by Katrina Nannestad (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Inge travels to live with her grandmother in Denmark, where she must adjust to stark differences in life.

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Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

■ *Phoebe and Her Unicorn* (Dana Simpson)

Phoebe dreams of being special. When she befriends a unicorn, she thinks she's found her chance. But she soon discovers that being friends with the magical creature is tougher than it looks. The first book in the graphic novel series, *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*.



■ *Looking Back: A Book of Memories* (Lois Lowry)

The Newbery Medal-winning author of *The Giver* and *Number the Stars* describes her memoir as a book "about things that happened, which caused other things to happen." Lowry shares personal stories and family photos, and she describes what inspired her to write novels.

■ *Flying Lessons & Other Stories* (Edited by Ellen Oh)

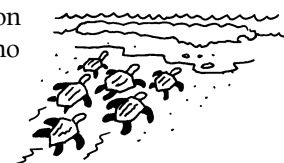
This book of short stories pulls readers into the lives of diverse characters.



From the basketball player with a disability to the poor girl trying to fit in among wealthy kids, readers learn that although we are each different, we are also the same.

■ *Tortuga Squad: Kids Saving Sea Turtles in Costa Rica* (Cathleen Burnham)

Here's nonfiction for children who are concerned about endangered wildlife. The book follows a group of youngsters dedicated to rescuing sea turtles. Each hatching season, the young volunteers protect turtle eggs and help baby turtles reach the ocean safely.



Which book to choose?

Fiona walks into the library looking for a new book to read. But surrounded by rows of books and thousands of titles, she isn't sure how to find one she will like. Sound familiar? Use tips like these to help your child locate her next great read.

Narrow the field

Have your youngster make her own "book search" bookmark. On a strip of sturdy paper, she can write her favorite topics, types of books, and authors. For example, her list may include soccer, animals, mysteries, and authors Shannon Hale and R. L. Stine. Then, your child could browse the library shelves, bookmark in hand, for books that match her list.

Sample the new arrivals

Uh-oh. That book your youngster planned to read is checked out. Now what? Invite her to "taste test" books on the new-arrivals display. She might pull one out that catches her eye and read the front flap, the back flap, and the first few pages. If it snags her interest, she can check it out.

Get recommendations

When your child knows what she likes and wants to find something similar, encourage her to ask a librarian for help. If your youngster mentions a few books she enjoyed, the librarian will guide her toward similar titles. *Tip:* Librarians often feature their personal favorites in a "recommended reads" section—another good place to look for books to take home. 📖



Beyond the books

Books may be what libraries are known for, but they have so much more to offer! Your youngster could consider free options like these:



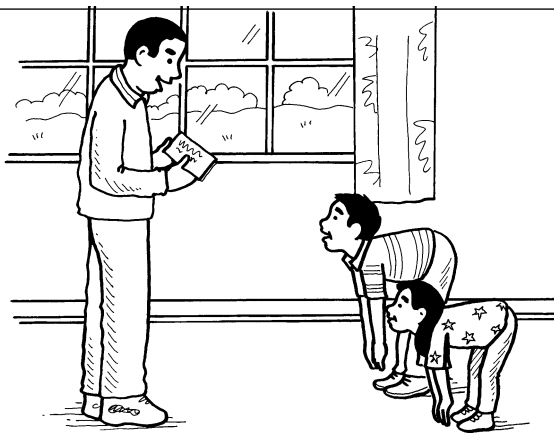
- Join a young writers group.
- Sign up for a theater club, and put on plays and skits.
- Share in a family mystery night.
- Take a workshop to learn Internet search techniques.
- Attend a "meet the author" event.
- Watch a film series based on books.
- Take part in a foreign-language conversation class.
- Drop in for homework help.
- Participate in arts and crafts classes.

Tip: If you live in an area with more than one library branch, check them all out. 📖

Listen “actively”

Children who are *active listeners* absorb more of what’s said—an important skill for understanding lessons, taking notes, and following spoken directions. To listen actively, your youngster needs to concentrate fully on the speaker so he can remember and respond. Try these fun ways to practice.

Outrageous declarations. Start by making three silly claims. “My dog is green. I eat spaghetti with a straw. I’ve got furry purple feet.” Your child repeats



them and adds three of his own. “Your dog is green, you eat spaghetti with a straw, and your feet are furry and purple. I like polka dot asparagus. I’ve been to the moon twice. I have night vision.” Take turns repeating the last three claims and trying to top them with three new ones.

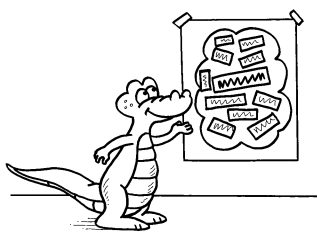
Crazy directions. Together, write 20 random instructions on separate index cards. (“Take two steps left.” “Touch your toes.” “Wink your right eye.”) Shuffle the cards. Draw five cards, and read them aloud to your youngster. He waits until all the directions are read, counts to 10, and acts them out in order. If he succeeds, he scores a point. If not, you score the point. Trade roles, and play again. The winner is the first person with 10 points. ■

Fun with Words

Cloudy with a chance of words

Let your child channel her inner artist with a vocabulary-building “word cloud.” With this fun project, she’ll think of words that are connected in some way and then display them in a colorful cloud-shaped image.

First, she’ll need a subject (friendship, a famous person). Have her brainstorm words related to her choice. Words for *friendship* might include *laughter*, *loyalty*, *confide*, and *understanding*.



Next, she’ll write the words in various sizes, colors, and styles (or type them

in different fonts) to indicate their importance. She might use large letters and a bright color for *loyalty* and smaller letters and a pale color for *laughter* to show she thinks *loyalty* is more important.

Finally, she can cut out the words and glue them into a big cloud on a sheet of paper. She may want to decorate her room with a wall of word clouds! ■

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Use a proofreading checklist

Encourage your child to proofread writing assignments carefully before she turns them in. This checklist will help.



- ☒ **I capitalized...** the first word in every sentence and the first letter in proper nouns.
- ☐ **I punctuated...** every sentence with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point. I checked commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks, too.
- ☐ **I checked for misused words...** like its/it’s, there/their, and you’re/your. And I double-checked words I often misspell.
- ☐ **I examined my sentences...** each one has a subject and a verb. There are no missing words.
- ☐ **I looked for confusing passages...** and made sure that what I wrote makes sense and is easy to understand.

Hint: Suggest that your child take a break (20 minutes or more) between writing and proofreading so she can see her work with fresh eyes. ■



Supporting independent readers

Q When my son was starting to read, helping him was easy. How can I support him now that he reads on his own?

A One way is just to talk about what he’s reading. Have him describe books he reads at school and for pleasure. Telling you about the plots in a novel or the facts in a nonfiction book gives him an opportunity to

think more deeply about their content—and lets you gauge his understanding.

You could also look through his textbooks and library books and ask a question or two. For instance, you might say, “What’s the most important part in this section on fossils?” or “What happened to the knight in this chapter?”

Also, occasionally touch base with your son’s teacher about his reading progress. The teacher can share strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for supporting your child at home. ■



Recipes for Success

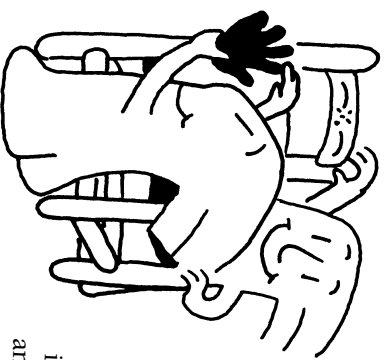
Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

APRIL 2017

MEASUREMENT A "handy" ruler

Your child can use her hand as a "ruler" to learn about measurement.

Ingredients: pencil, construction paper, scissors



Have your youngster trace her hand on paper and cut it out. This "hand" will become her unit of measurement.

Next, ask her to find things to measure and write down her results.

Examples: "TV, 5 hands wide," "Chair, 6½ hands high."

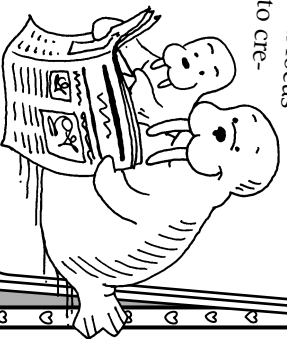
Then, suggest that she measure distance. Perhaps she'll see how far she can jump—as far as the width of the TV or as high as the chair? Help her mark starting and landing points for each attempt, and she can use her "hand ruler" to determine the distance between them.

READING I found a poem!

Exploring "found poetry" is a fun way for your youngster to practice reading and explore word choice.

Ingredients: newspaper or magazine, pencil

Together, read an article in a newspaper or magazine. Then, encourage your child to "find" a poem in the article. To do this, he should focus on one word at a time and decide which words to use to create a poem. He can circle words he wants to keep and cross out the others. **Example:** Dogs can run and play in dog parks. Leashes are required in all other public places throughout the city. The mayor said today. Then, enjoy listening to him read the circled words in order ("Dogs run and play / all through the day"). Now you make a poem to share with him!



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."

HISTORY

Imagining ways to update a historic landmark may inspire your child's interest in learning about the past. Say she chooses the Liberty Bell. Encourage her to read about it and decide what modern twist she'd add. She might say visitors could use wireless earbuds to listen to audio recordings of what the bell sounded like.



SPEAKING

The more your youngster speaks in front of people, the more comfortable he'll be giving presentations in school. Take turns naming a random topic (cars, ice cream) and giving a 30-second speech about it to each other. Remind your child to speak clearly and at a conversational pace.



SCIENCE Floating liquids

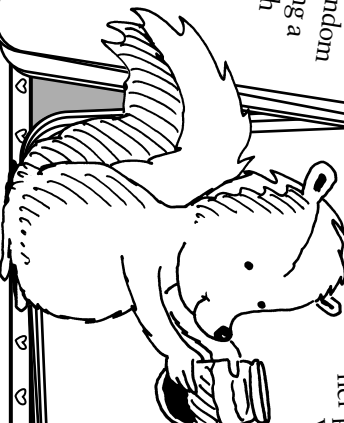
Colorful layers of liquid let your child explore density.

Ingredients: measuring cup, three small cups, corn syrup, vegetable oil, water, three colors of food coloring, clear jar or glass

Help your youngster measure ¼ cup corn syrup, ¼ cup oil, and ¼ cup water into three separate cups. She should add a drop of different food coloring to each liquid (so she will be able to see which liquid is which). Now, have her pour the corn syrup into the jar followed by the oil.

What happens? (The oil is less dense, so it "floats" on top of the corn syrup.) Then she can add the water. What does she observe? Each liquid will be a separate layer, with the densest on the bottom and the least dense on top.

Suggest that your child try the experiment again, pouring the liquids in another order. Do their positions change?



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

APRIL 2017

Character Corner

☐ CURIOSITY

Create a "curiosity zone" where family members can place interesting or unfamiliar objects like a spark plug or a garlic press. Let your youngster try to figure out what they are and how they're used.



☐ DIVERSITY

Learning words in sign language will show your child that people communicate in different ways. Have him write down words you each want to know the signs for, such as *play* or *homework*. Look them up online, and use the signs during conversations.

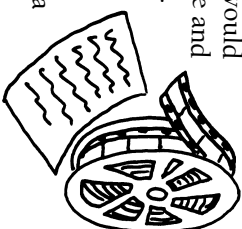
☐ DECISION MAKING

Listing "pros" and "cons" can help your youngster make a good decision. Say she wants to accept a birthday party invitation but has plans with another friend for the same time. A "pro" might be having fun celebrating a birthday, while a "con" could be disappointing her friend.



READING

Invite your child to pretend you're a movie producer and he's "pitching" a book to you. He can choose a book he thinks would make a great movie and summarize its plot. Next, he should explain why he believes audiences would want to see a film based on it.



MUSIC

Ask your youngster to personalize a song for your family. She can make up new words to a familiar tune, perhaps including hobbies or interests. (Example: "Ella kicks a soccer ball, soccer ball, soccer ball..." to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb.") Now let her teach her song to everyone.



SORTING

A treasure trove of tools

Encourage your youngster to learn the nuts and bolts of sorting.

Ingredients: tools, nails, screws, nuts, bolts, washers, variety of containers

Your child can help you do a little spring cleaning by organizing your tools, screwdrivers, washers, nails, screws, and other hardware. Challenge him to sort them by category into separate containers (say, flathead screws in one box and Phillips-head screws in another).

Next, he could break down the categories even further and sort again. For instance, he might sort each group of screws into smaller boxes according to length—short, medium, and long.



PLACE VALUE

Have each family member write any number, 0–9, and hold up her paper. Your child calls out a number with all the digits (say, 361 or 613 for 3, 6, and 1). Players arrange themselves to form the number and name their values. Example: The person holding a 3 in the hundreds place would say "I'm 300."



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

VOCABULARY

Using your child's vocabulary list, take turns making up sentences and leaving blank spaces where the word goes. Example: "The wagon rumbled across the ____." Say your sentence aloud, and your youngster should look at his list to figure out which term belongs in the blank (*prairie*).

