



# Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

## Important Big Ideas for Reading

### Read to Children

Read aloud – this builds language, vocabulary, and background knowledge.

Go to the library together

Read recipes out loud as you are cooking together

### Read with children

Listen to children read the books they bring home

Share the reading with children

Get lost in a book together

### Talk with children about the books

### you read together

Children's talk is their thinking

Sing songs together

Recite favorite poems together

Initiate everyday conversation with kids

### Explore print with kids

Show the child their name in print

Find words in public: street signs, grocery store, ads, news, etc.

Create word games to play together



Children like to get into the holiday spirit of giving presents. Unfortunately, most of them do not have any money to purchase a "store bought" item. A gift coupon book of promises makes a great gift and best of all, it doesn't cost anything.

Materials:

1. 8 1/2 by 11 heavy paper or cardboard for the cover.
2. 10 pieces of 8 1/2 by 11 paper
3. Glue
4. Stapler

Method:

1. Cut the cover and paper into a large oval.
2. Have the child draw his or her face on the cover.
3. Print the words "I promise" on a separate piece of paper and cut out in the shape of a cartoon dialogue bubble.
4. On each of the interior pages have the child draw a picture of a chore or activity that they will willingly do when asked. These become the "I promise" coupons.

(Examples include: set the table, take care of

a pet, dry the dishes, clean the table, make the bed, help with the laundry, sing a song or tell a story, write a note to a relative, help put away the groceries, give a parent a hug or kiss before going to school, help clean

the

car, etc.)

5. Glue the words "I Promise" onto the face picture
6. Staple the packet together.

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If you have any questions, please contact me, Cookie Stewart, at 508-778-7599 ext. 6204 or [stewartv@dy-regional.k12.ma.us](mailto:stewartv@dy-regional.k12.ma.us)



# Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

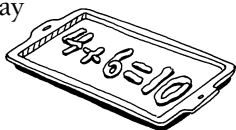
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Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Cookie sheet facts

With this idea, your youngster can form numbers, add, and subtract. Take turns creating play dough number sentences on a cookie sheet for each other to solve. You might make  $4 + 6 = \underline{\quad}$ , and he would form 10 for the answer. Then, he sculpts a problem for you.



### Move it, move it!

Can your child move like a cow or a snake? Let her try, then have her describe how animals use their body parts to move. She might say a cow walks on four legs and a snake slithers across the ground. Challenge her to move like other animals—only she might have trouble swinging from tree to tree without a tail like a monkey's!

### Web picks

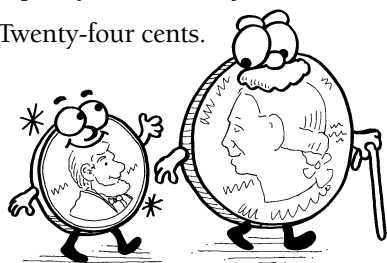
☐ Starring familiar characters like the Cat in the Hat, the activities at [pbskids.org/games/math](http://pbskids.org/games/math) will help your youngster work on counting, sorting, and more.

☐ Your child can make a spinning top, a rubber-band ball, and other homemade toys while exploring science at [sciencetoymaker.org](http://sciencetoymaker.org).

## Just for fun

**Q:** What's the difference between a new penny and an old quarter?

**A:** Twenty-four cents.



## Measurement for the win

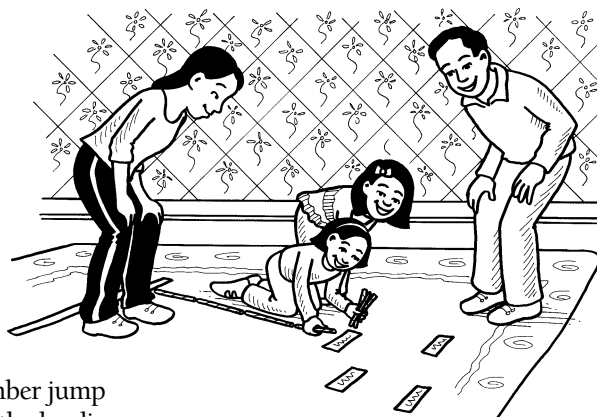
See which family member can jump the farthest, accurately predict the length of household items, or build the tallest block tower. Your child will practice measuring with these contests.

### Jump forward

Let your youngster mark a start line on the floor. Have each family member jump as far as possible, and mark the landing spots. Now, ask your child to choose a unit of measurement all the same size (straws, juice boxes) and line them up to measure each jump. She can announce the winner. ("Susie's jump was 7 juice boxes long!")


### Compare lengths

Take turns choosing two objects and predicting which is longer. Then, your child can measure one item with yarn, cut it to fit, and compare it with the second object. After each family member has



measured six pairs of items, the person with the most correct predictions wins.

### Stack blocks


Who can make the tallest block tower? The trick is to stop before yours topples over—and request that your youngster measure it. Help your child put the 0 end of a yardstick or measuring tape on the floor or table beside each tower to measure its height in inches and then in centimeters. This will help her become comfortable with both units of measurement. 

## Reversible—or not?

Some foods change from liquid to solid (or vice versa) when they're heated or cooled. Which foods change, and which changes can be reversed? Let your youngster observe to find out.

First, help him crack a raw egg into a bowl, and have him draw what he sees. Then, place the egg in a pan over medium heat until set, and ask him to draw the cooked egg. Next, he should observe and draw what butter looks like before and after you heat it.

Now let your youngster put the egg and butter into the refrigerator for an hour and observe again. What does he notice? (The cooled butter becomes solid again, but the egg doesn't go back to being liquid.)

Encourage him to observe heating and cooling other foods to see which ones change—and change back. 



# Skip that

"Two, four, six, eight, what do we appreciate?" Skip counting! This activity is great for building skills that help with number sense, math fluency, and even early multiplication.

**Number.** Have your youngster make a set of skip counting sticks by numbering 10 craft sticks by 2s from 2 to



20. He can line up the sticks as he skip counts in order.

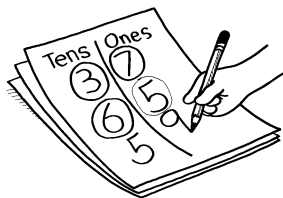
**Arrange.** Next, mix up the sticks, and scatter them on a table. Can your child put the numbers back in order? *Idea:* Make two sets, and race each other to do it.

**Count on.** Scatter the sticks again, and have your youngster pick one at random. Ask him to start at that number and skip count to 20. If he drew 12, he would say, "12, 14, 16, 18, 20."

## MATH CORNER Name the digits


How many tens? How many ones? Play this guessing game to practice place value together.

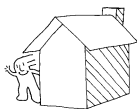
First, ask your child to divide a sheet of paper into two columns labeled "Tens" and "Ones." Now, secretly think of a two-digit number for your child to guess, such as 54. She writes a random guess on the sheet. If she guesses 37, she would put the 3 in the tens column and the 7 in the ones column.




Use this code to "score" her guess, and she'll use your answers to make her next guess:

- Draw a red circle around any digit that is not in your number. For 37, you'd circle both digits in red.
- Draw a yellow circle around a digit that is correct but in the wrong column. If she guesses 65, circle 5 in yellow (and 6 in red).
- Draw a green circle around any digit that is correct *and* in the correct place. Say she guesses 59—circle 5 in green (and 9 in red).

Have your youngster continue guessing until she gets your number. Next, she can choose one for you to guess. 



*Variation:* Let him make skip counting sticks for 5s and 10s, and play again. 


## SCIENCE LAB Blizzard in a jar

Your child can create the magic of a snow globe with this experiment that demonstrates principles of chemistry.

**You'll need:** a clean jar (baby food jar, canning jar), rubbing alcohol, decorations (glitter, sequins), vegetable oil

**Here's how:** Fill the jar about  $\frac{1}{4}$  full with rubbing alcohol. Let your youngster drop in the glitter and sequins. Then, have him pour in vegetable oil to the top and close the jar tightly. He can turn the jar upside down and gently shake it back and forth, then turn it right side up.

**What happens?** He will see "snow" falling.

**Why?** When he shakes the jar, the oil breaks up into tiny drops and the decorations move around. Because the oil is denser than the alcohol, the drops sink to the bottom along with the decorations—creating the "snowy" effect. 




## Q & A Parent involvement in math

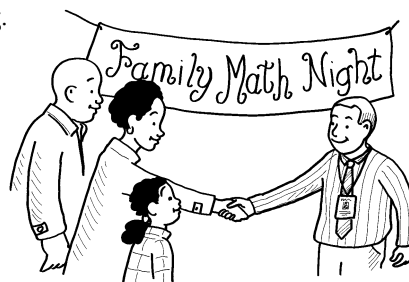
**Q:** I've read that it's important to be involved in my child's education. How can I play a role in what she's doing in math?

**A:** The best—and easiest—way to be involved is to express interest in what your youngster is learning. Ask her to show you her math papers and explain her work. Let her be the "teacher." She'll enjoy sharing her knowledge, and going over the steps will boost her learning.

Also, support math activities at school. Attend functions like family math nights, and volunteer in math class if you can.

Finally, bring math into everyday life with your youngster. You might point out how many stamps you need for your mail or how

many slices of bread it takes to make lunch. Let her know that you use math all the time—and that you love numbers! 



### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's math and science skills.

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# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Enrich your child's vocabulary this winter with holiday stories and crafts

The winter holidays aren't just for fun. They're also a perfect time to grow your child's vocabulary.

To expose her to new words during the holidays:

- **Read old-fashioned tales.** The original versions of holiday stories are often more complex than the modern editions. So read a few with your child. Ask the librarian for good ones to try. Your child is sure to hear some new words.
- **Make a winter dictionary.** Staple several sheets of paper together to make a booklet. Label it *My Holiday Dictionary*. Write one word—such as *sled*—per page. Have your child draw pictures of each object under its name. She can also trace over the letters of the words you have written to build both fine motor and pre-reading skills.



*"Show me a family of readers, and I will show you people who move the world."*

—Napoleon Bonaparte

## Help your child learn about nouns

Even though your child will not learn formal grammar for several years, you can still help him learn about *nouns* (a part of speech that names people, places and things).

Create flash cards with pictures of people, places and things your child is familiar with. Then:

1. **Show your child** a flash card and have him identify what the picture shows (a book, for example).
2. **Ask your child** if that picture is a person, a place or a thing. (A book is a thing.)
3. **Have your child** place the card in the correct category: person, place or thing.

## Go beyond X's and O's when playing tic-tac-toe

The next time you and your child are playing tic-tac-toe, mix things up a little. Instead of using the letters X and O as your markers, why not use A and B? Or Z and W?

Let your child choose new letters each time you play. Keep changing letters, and soon he may recognize the whole alphabet!



## Dial up the drama by slowing down

Are you coming to a big, dramatic point in the story you're reading to your child? Slow your voice down. It'll let your youngster know that something serious is about to happen!



## What are sight words?

Sight words are the short, common words (such as *the*, *to* and *of*) that rookie readers should know "by sight." They are so common, in fact, that they're said to make up 50-75 percent of the words kids will encounter when reading.

These words don't always follow the rules of phonics, so they can be difficult for your child to sound out. And that makes helping your child learn to recognize them on sight even more important. The more sight words your preschooler knows, the more fluent a reader she is likely to become!

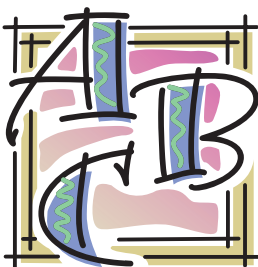




## 'Tis the season for some alphabet fun

Add some seasonal activities to your child's alphabet fun. Here are a few to try:

- **What starts with this letter?** Choose a letter and remind your child of the sound it makes: "OK, Tamara, the letter S makes a sss sound." Together, look around your home for items—such as a *sofa* or a *star*—that begin with that letter. If you and your child are going shopping later, continue your game at the store.
- **Holiday letters.** Glue sheets of gift wrap—the more festive, the better—onto cardboard. Draw big letters and cut them out for instant holiday ABCs.
- **Letter cookies.** If you are baking cookies, include some shaped like the letters in your child's name. Have her help decorate them (which also builds motor skills).



## Pictures build interest in books

Your child can learn from pictures even before he can read or write.

Together, look at the pictures in magazines, catalogs and books.

Then:

- **Make up stories** about what you see in each picture. Ask your child, "Why do you think the family is smiling?"
- **Challenge your child** to find something in the room that is also in the picture.



## Encourage creativity with storytelling

When you tell your child a story (rather than sharing a book with illustrations), he has to visualize the images in his head. That's a valuable skill—especially today, when television, the internet and digital books tend to do all the "creative work" for kids.

If you're not sure how to start telling stories to your child, consider sharing tales about:

- **His infancy.**
- **Your childhood.**
- **Your family's history.**

Still stuck? Retell the plot of a favorite book. That counts, too!



## Books to delight your early reader

- **TouchThinkLearn: ABC** by Xavier Deneux (Chronical Books). Add the sense of touch to letter learning! Your child will want to run her fingers over the raised die-cut letters in this fun, interactive ABC book.
- **Goodnight Everyone** by Chris Haughton (Candlewick). In this lulling bedtime story, all the woodland animals are sleepy—except Little Bear. How will Great Big Bear get her cub to fall asleep?
- **The Cookie Fiasco** by Mo Willems and Dan Santat (Disney-Hyperion). This first book in the Elephant & Piggie Like Reading! Series explores what happens when there are four friends and only three cookies.



**Q:** I correct my child's grammar whenever she says something incorrectly, but it seems to frustrate her. What should I do?

**A:** Stop correcting her! No one likes having mistakes pointed out constantly, and your child is no different. Instead, subtly show her the proper way to speak. If she says, "I goed to the library with Grandma today," reply, "You went to the library today? Wow, that sounds like fun!"

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

## Building Readers<sup>®</sup>

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

## Book Picks

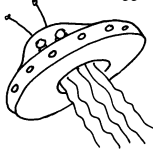


### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *Alien in My Pocket #1: Blast Off!*

(Nate Ball)

Zack McGee thinks he dreamed that a 4-inch-tall alien crashed into his bedroom. But Amp is real. Now, Zack must protect his pocket-sized visitor, rebuild a rocket, and send Amp home before more aliens invade. The first book in the *Alien in My Pocket* series.



#### ■ *This Is How We Do It*

(Matt Lamothe)

Curious readers get a sneak peek at the lives of seven kids from seven countries—what they eat for breakfast, how they travel to school, what they do for fun, and more. This fact-based book shows your child the ways in which cultures around the world are similar and different.

#### ■ *I Don't Want Curly Hair* (Laura Ellen Anderson)

Books, tape, balloons—the curly-haired girl in this rhyming story will try just about anything to tame her unruly locks. When she makes a friend who is unhappy with her super-straight hair, both children gain a new appreciation for what they have. (Also available in Spanish.)



#### ■ *The Marvelous Thing That Came from a Spring* (Gilbert Ford)

Richard James was an engineer for the U.S. Navy when he accidentally invented the Slinky. This nonfiction book tells how the spring that could “slink” down stairs became a toy that generations of children have played with since 1945.



## Get together and write

Turn family time into fun reasons for your youngster to write with these clever projects.

### “Handy” gift guide

Let your child trace around your hand on paper and label it with your name. Next, tell him five things you like (basketball, spaghetti), and help him print one on each finger. He can make a “hand” for each family member—including himself. Staple the pages together into a book, and use this “handy” guide to make or buy holiday and birthday gifts.



### Record book

Which family member will blow the largest soap bubble? Who can hold a single note the longest while singing? Brainstorm a list of challenges, and help your youngster write one per page in a notebook. Hold contests, and have him record the results. (“Mom held the longest note—for 35 seconds!”)

### Quote board

Give each person a different-color marker, and write your favorite sayings on a poster board. Be sure to include who said them, too. You could write funny or inspiring quotes from books, movies, or even relatives. For example, your child might write, “Just keep swimming”—Dory from *Finding Nemo*. Hang the poster where everyone can read it. ♥

## Meet someone famous

Biographies tell fascinating tales about real people. Together, read a few picture-book biographies, then try these ideas.

● **Word cloud.** Encourage your youngster to draw a cloud on paper and fill it with important words from a biography. For Albert Einstein, she might write *genius* and *invention*. Let her use her “word cloud” to tell you all about the person—she’ll practice reading closely for key information.

● **Just like me!** As you read, suggest that your child look for things she has in common with the subject of the biography. Perhaps she’s brave like Amelia Earhart or loves to dance like Martha Graham. Making personal connections will boost her reading comprehension. ♥



# I can read that book!

Your youngster will be excited to pick books at the library that she can read all by herself. Suggest these strategies to help her find books she will feel confident reading.

**Use the “five-finger” rule.** Have your child read the first few pages of a book. For each page, she should hold up one finger every time she comes to a word she can’t read. If she holds up two to four fingers per page,



the book is probably a good one to try. One finger may mean it’s too easy, while five likely mean it’s too hard for her to read on her own right now.

**Find a “yardstick.”** Ask your youngster to show you a book she already reads easily. Then, help her use that book to “measure” a new one. Do both books have about the same number of words per page? Do they both include words that are about the same length? If so, the book may be a good match.

*Note:* Be sure to let your child check out a few books that are a challenge for her — listening to you read them aloud is a great way to stretch her reading ability.♥



## A (word) family of snowmen

Is it a family of snowmen or a family of words? It’s both! With this cute snowman activity, your youngster can explore word families, or rhyming words that end with the same letter combination.



Ask your child to choose a word family. Perhaps he’ll pick the *–at* family (*cat*, *bat*) or the *–un*

family (*sun*, *fun*). He can write the “family name” at the top of a piece of paper.

Then, take turns saying words that belong in that family. Your youngster can draw and label a snowman for each “member.” The *–ake* family might have a “snowdad” named *Cake*, a “snowmom” named *Lake*, a “snowboy” named *Make*, and a “snowgirl” named *Shake*.

Keep adding words—and “family members”—until you can’t think of any more. Then, he can choose a new word family and start again.♥



## Q&A

### Encouraging “self-talk”

**Q** I’ve noticed that my son talks to himself while he plays. Is this typical?

**A** Yes. In fact, “self-talk” during play is something you could encourage your youngster to do. As he chats with an imaginary friend or narrates what he’s doing, he’s building speech and language skills.

Try putting interesting items with his toys. You’ll give him new words—and activities—to incorporate into his play. You might say, “Here’s a *whisk* to put in your kitchen” or “I thought you might like this *bandanna* for your dress-up box.” Don’t be surprised to hear him talking about the object as he plays chef or cowboy. (“Howdy, partner. I’ve got a bandanna, too!”)♥



## Parent to Parent

### Homemade audiobooks

At our parent-teacher conference last month, the teacher said my daughter is working on *fluency*—reading smoothly and at a good pace. The teacher had a fun idea to help her practice at home. She suggested that we make our own audiobooks starring Nicole as the reader!

My daughter picked a book and read it aloud a few times, and then I recorded

her. When she listened to the recording, she immediately wanted to try again—“to make it sound better,” she said. It took a few attempts, but she was pleased with the final result.

Now, making audiobooks has become a hobby, and Nicole is beginning to read more smoothly. Right now, she is recording a story for her little brother to listen to in the car when we travel over winter break.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District  
Title 1

## Fill the shortest day of the year with winter fun and learning

December 21 is the winter solstice—the day with the fewest daylight hours of the year. Learning about this astronomical phenomenon can strengthen your child's:

- **Reading skills.** Head to the library or go online and have your child research why there is so little daylight on this day.
- **Vocabulary.** List words like *orbit*, *equator*, *hemisphere*, *celestial*, etc. Have your child put them in alphabetical order, then find and write their definitions.
- **Observation skills.** Have your child look online to research the sunrise and sunset times in different parts of the country. Ask him if he notices any patterns.
- **Oral language skills.** Since it gets dark so early, share stories around a flashlight “campfire” after dinner.



*“The best advice I ever got was that knowledge is power and to keep reading.”*

—David Bailey

## A strong vocabulary helps in every subject

Vocabulary words are assigned in almost every subject because they help students understand what they read, learn more and succeed on tests. To study vocabulary words, suggest that your child:

- **Make crossword puzzles** with the words to practice their spellings and definitions.
- **Make flash cards** and use them to quiz herself throughout the week.
- **Draw a sketch** that connects the word to something that is personally meaningful to her.
- **Play charades** with words. One player acts out the definition while others guess the word.
- **Challenge herself** to use as many vocabulary words as she can in conversations throughout the day.

## Have your child try graphic novels

Graphic novels—books that use pictures and words to convey their stories—offer more than just entertainment. Many address relevant and complex social issues. They cover and stimulate reading in many types of literature, like mystery, fantasy and historical fiction.

Help your child find a graphic novel she'd like to read. For suggestions, talk to the librarian or check out the link in the source below.

**Source:** “Graphic Novels Reading Lists,” American Library Association, [nswc.com/br-es-graphic](http://nswc.com/br-es-graphic).



## Track reading with a journal

A reading journal can help your child keep track of what he reads. In his journal, have your child:

- **List the title** and author of each book he reads.
- **Write a summary** of the book.
- **Rate the book** and list the reasons he liked it or didn't like it.



## Boost your child's reading skills with news articles

Here's a fun way to help your child stay informed and practice the skill of summarizing:

Cut the headline off a news article before giving it to your child to read. After she reads the article, ask her to create a headline for it. Is the headline she wrote similar to the actual one? Compare and find out!



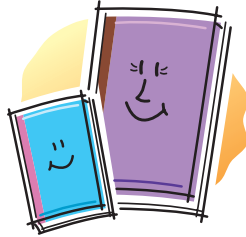


## Reluctant readers need a little support

Do you have a child who knows how to read, but avoids books? If so, don't worry. Remember that interest in reading blossoms when adults are encouraging.

To foster your child's love of reading:

- **Accept your child's reading choices.** It's great to suggest books that match his skills and interests. But let your child pick what to read, even if you think it is too easy. And if he's bored with a book after reading two chapters, don't make him finish it.
- **Help your child get hooked.** If you read the first chapter of a book aloud, he may keep reading it himself. Also, try to link books to other interesting materials, including magazines and newspapers. "Here's an article about poodles, just like the dog in your book!"



## Cultivate thinking skills

Strong readers tend to be curious. They often stop to ask questions about what they're reading.



Talk with your child about why characters do what they do. If you're reading *Charlotte's Web*, you might ask, "Why do you think Charlotte decided to help Wilbur by writing words in her web?" Ask your child if she would have ended the book differently.

## For lower elementary readers:

- ***Ollie the Purple Elephant*** by Jarrett J. Krosoczka (Alfred A. Knopf).

When Ollie the Purple Elephant comes home, everyone loves him—except for the cat.



- ***Rosie Revere, Engineer*** by Andrea Beaty (Harry N. Abrams). This rhyming story is about a young inventor named Rosie. Inspired by her aunt, who built planes in WWII, Rosie sets her sights on the skies.

## For upper elementary readers:

- ***Love, Amalia*** by Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel M. Zubizarreta (Atheneum). Amalia has a special relationship with her Abuelita. Abuelita always knows the right thing to say and do.
- ***The Terrible Two*** by Mac Barnett and Jory John (Abrams/Amulet Books). Miles is not happy to be moving. But then he meets a fellow prankster and they join forces.

## Time lines can help when reading history

Your child is reading about the American Revolution, but she's having trouble remembering all those names and dates. Help her put things in order by having her make a time line.

Time lines make it easier to see how one event led to another, how much time passed between events and how to put ideas into context. They help give a sense of sequence to history.

Encourage your child to create a time line for each significant event she reads about in her history book. Offer these tips:

- **Set boundaries.** When did the event begin? When did it end?
- **Identify important events.** Help her summarize key points.
- **Add color.** She might mark battles in green, or birth and death dates in blue.



**Q:** Is comprehension something that happens during or after reading a story?

**A:** Both. The more easily your child can read, the better he understands a story—not just its individual words—while he's reading it. So, help your child work on his fluency. Then, help him build comprehension after reading by asking questions: Where did the story take place? How did it end? Does it remind you of anything in your life?

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

December 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



## Book Picks

### ■ *Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina (Young Readers Edition)*

(Misty Copeland)

In 2015, Misty Copeland became the first African-American principal ballerina in the American Ballet Theatre's history. This children's version of her autobiography describes how she pursued a ballet career despite the odds.



### ■ *The Neverending Story (Michael Ende)*

In an antique bookshop, a boy named Bastian finds a mysterious book filled with enchanted creatures. When the world inside the book turns out to be real and he discovers it's in danger, he must go on a quest to save it. (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *A Child's Introduction to the Night Sky (Michael Driscoll)*

Your youngster can explore astronomy with this colorful non-fiction book. She'll learn about stars and planets, important scientific achievements, space exploration, and more. Includes a star chart pullout.



### ■ *I Survived the Bombing of Pearl Harbor, 1941 (Lauren Tarshis)*

This installment of the popular historical fiction series *I Survived* takes readers back in time to the day of the Pearl Harbor attack. The story is told from the point of view of an 11-year-old boy who had recently moved to Hawaii.

## Motivated to read

Hide a special book for your youngster to find. Hold an indoor reading campout. Encourage family members to "like" each other's book reviews. With these creative ideas, you can inspire your child to use more of his spare time for reading!

### Leave hidden gems

At the library, secretly look for a book you think your youngster would like, such as one you read at his age or a story about the sport he plays. At home, leave the book where he can find it, along with a note about why you chose it for him. *Idea:* Suggest that your child hide a book for you or a younger sibling to discover.

### Hold special events

Ask your youngster to organize a family reading event once a month or so. Perhaps he'll plan an indoor campout or a New Year's Eve read-a-thon. He could find books with a related theme—maybe an outdoor adventure tale for the campout or



a book about New Year traditions around the world for the read-a-thon.

### Post reviews

Have your child find a spot on a wall where he and other family members can display reviews of books they've read. You could "like" each other's reviews by adding star stickers and comments. Let your youngster ask relatives to mail or email reviews that he could post, too. He may be inspired to read a book that his cousin or a favorite uncle enjoyed. ■

## Storytelling time

Encourage your child to make a "story pole" and use it to tell a tale. She'll practice story planning, a skill that can help with creative writing assignments in school.

First, have her think of something funny or interesting that happened to your family, perhaps getting caught in a downpour during a hike. Then, she can cut a sheet of construction paper into four horizontal strips and, on each, draw a picture of a story event (seeing the first big drops, laughing and holding backpacks over your heads, hurrying to the car, getting cozy at home in pajamas).

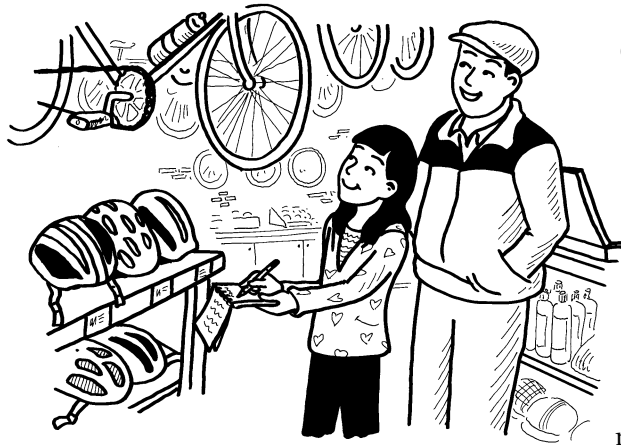
Let your youngster tape the pictures around a paper towel tube in the order the events happened. Now it's time to tell her story! She could point to the pictures on her pole and add details as she talks. ■



## Research and write

Your youngster may think of research as something she does for a report. But writers do research for stories, too! Share these tips to help your child bring real-life elements into her fiction.

**Go on location.** Authors often visit the places they write about. If the characters in your youngster's story work at a bike shop, she could go to one herself. Encourage her to notice details she might mention in her story, like bikes hanging from the ceiling or an employee fixing a tire.



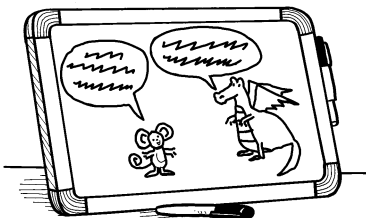
**Consult an expert.** Writers get help from people with firsthand knowledge of their story topics. Say your child is writing about cheerleading. She could talk to a neighbor or a classmate who cheers. The interviewee may describe what it feels like to be tossed in the air or to lead a stadium full of fans rooting for their team.

**Read nonfiction.** Your youngster may not be able to observe crocodiles or kangaroos in real life—but she can read about them in nonfiction library books or online. Encourage her to dig for facts that will bring animal characters to life, such as the way they communicate with each other or the habitat they live in. ■

### Fun with Words

## Dialogue you can believe

Writing dialogue that reflects how people actually talk is a skill that takes practice. Your child can learn to write believable dialogue with this activity.



On a whiteboard or chalkboard, let your youngster draw two very different characters, such as a dragon and a mouse. Have him add a big speech bubble above each character's head.

He can decide which character each of you will be and write a line of dialogue in his speech bubble. ("I'll try not to breathe fire in your direction, little mouse.") Now you write a reply in your character's bubble. ("Thanks. You're a good friend!")

Read your dialogue aloud. Does it sound realistic? If not, you could revise it and try again. Then continue the "conversation" by erasing your lines and writing new ones. ■

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## What is close reading?

**Q&A** **Q** My daughter is doing "close reading" in school this year. What does that mean, and how can I help her at home?

**A** You can think of *close reading* as peeling back layers of meaning in a story. For example, your daughter probably doesn't need to read closely to know that a story is about a lost dog. But a closer reading might lead her to understand that the story is about the bond between humans and pets.

Close reading also includes thinking about *how* a story is written, so your child might consider why the author decided to tell it from the point of view of the dog rather than its owner.

At home, suggest that your youngster keep tools like a highlighter, sticky notes, and a pencil nearby when she reads. She could jot down passages from the book that really make her think, words and phrases she likes, or questions she has. Then, she can go back through the book to consider why the author picked a particular word, for instance, or why a character made a certain decision. ■



### Parent 2 Parent

## Books that comfort

When my husband and I divorced last year, our son Jeremy took it hard. I tried talking with him, but he clammed up. So I turned to the school counselor for help. She told me that reading books about young people facing similar problems would help Jeremy talk about his own situation.



I'm happy to say the counselor was right. The books she suggested made my son realize that he was not alone. They also gave him a way to ask me questions ("Do you think the divorce was the boy's fault?") and me a way to answer him ("Absolutely not. What happened was only between the parents"). Some days are still rough, but I'm glad we have found a way to talk through our problems. ■

# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

DECEMBER 2017

## READING

### Family reading fair

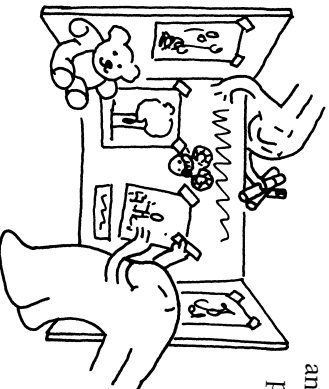
Explore settings, characters, and plots by making displays about favorite stories. It's like a science fair—but for books!

**Ingredients:** books, poster board, markers, craft materials

Have each family member choose a book and create a display for it. Your youngster could decorate poster board with illustrations of people, places, and events in the book. He might even add props to his display.

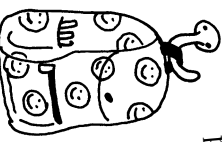
For example, if your child's book is *Winnie-the-Pooh* (A. A. Milne), he might include a stuffed bear, "bees" made out of pipe cleaners, and a drawing of a honey pot.

Tour your reading fair, and let each person use his display to tell everyone about his book.



## ORGANIZATION

With the new year around the corner, help your child create a command center for school-related items. Have her choose a place, such as a corner of her room. Add a hook for her backpack, a box for school supplies, and a small bulletin board where she can hang a calendar, the school lunch menu, and reminder notes to herself.



## HEALTH

Suggest that your youngster make a snack menu with nutritious options like string cheese, grapes, and carrot sticks. He could list the description of each ("Red seedless grapes: sweet and juicy"). Hang the list in the kitchen for ideas when he's hungry.



## ENGINEERING

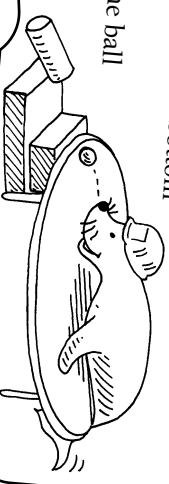
### Cross the finish line

Get your child thinking like an engineer as she sets up an obstacle course for a ball to go through.

**Ingredients:** empty cardboard boxes, blocks, cardboard tubes, small ball

Let your youngster arrange materials to create a course where a ball can roll from start to finish without stopping. For example, she may stack boxes to make a staircase from the coffee table to the floor. On the bottom step, she might add a block for the ball to hit and bounce off of, changing its direction. Or she could prop a cardboard tube against the bottom stair that the ball will fall into.

Now she can test her design. Does the ball make it to the end? If not, she can redesign the course and test it again.



## MATH

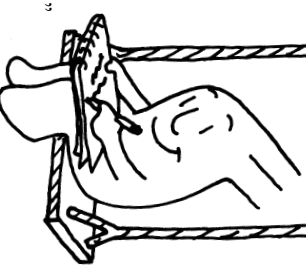
### My book of story problems

Encourage your youngster to solve word problems he finds in everyday life. With this activity, he will practice writing, too!

**Ingredients:** small notebook, pencil

Together, be on the lookout for questions that could be math stories. Maybe he asks you the age difference between him and his cousin, or perhaps he wonders how much change you'll get from your \$5 bill.

Each time he finds a problem, he can write and illustrate it on a page in a notebook. *Example:* "I am 9. My cousin Lisa is 6. How much older am I than Lisa?" (*Answer:* 3 years, since  $9 - 6 = 3$ ) As he fills up his book, he'll become a pro at solving word problems.



## Refrigerator Poster

Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."



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## Character Corner

### APPRECIATION

What is your youngster grateful for?

Suggest that he choose something (home, parents) and write a thank-you note. ("Dear house, Thank you for being so warm and cozy.") He'll practice writing thank-you notes as he develops appreciation for what he has.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

Being a good sport means being gracious whether you win or lose. Help your child brainstorm things she can say to her opponent when she wins ("Great game. You were tough to beat!") and when she loses ("Thanks for playing with me—I had fun").

### SYMPATHY

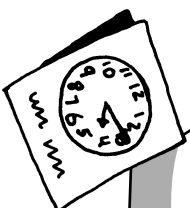
Make a memory jar to help your youngster cope with a loss like the death of a pet. Have him cut hearts from construction paper. He can write a memory on each heart to store in a plastic jar. When he's feeling sad, read the memories together.

### NATURE

Ask your child to point out things she notices more or less of in the winter than in the summer. For instance, she might see more bare branches but fewer bugs. Encourage her to draw what she sees and compare her winter scene to a summer scene in a book.

### TIME

Help your youngster practice telling time by making a daily schedule using clock faces. For each task, draw a clock (without hands) on a sticky note. Your child will add the hands to show the time for the activity and then label the clock ("7:00 p.m., bedtime"). She can post her sticky notes in order on a sheet of paper.



### VOCABULARY

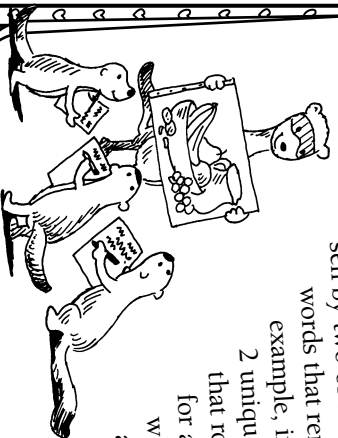
## A picture worth 1,000 words

This game will stretch your child's vocabulary as you compete to list the most words you "see" in a picture.

**Ingredients:** timer, photograph or painting, pencils, paper

Set a timer for 2 minutes. Everyone looks at the picture and races to list the nouns they see, such as a *school* or a *person* named Martin. (Note: Nouns are people, places, or things.) When time's up, read your lists aloud, and cross off any chosen by two or more players. Count the words that remain for your scores. For example, if your youngster names

2 unique words, her score is 2 for that round. Play a second round for adjectives (descriptive words) like *blue* or *gigantic*, and a third for verbs (action words) like *walk* or *frown*. High score after 3 rounds wins.



### READING

Have your child fold a few sheets of paper in half to make a reading "passport." Whenever he reads a new type of book, he can draw a "stamp" for it and write the title in his passport.

He might draw a magnifying glass for a mystery or a rocket for science fiction. How many different stamps can he collect?



## Congratulations!

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

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)