



Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

We all know the importance of reading to our children, but how many of us realize that it's equally essential to help our children understand mathematics-both math concepts and how it's a part of our everyday lives? Here are some fun, easy ways to incorporate mathematics learning into your family life-without a lot of time, effort, or expense.

IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking and baking using a recipe not only is a terrific way to help children better understand fractions, it's a great bonding time. With younger children show them all the different sizes of measuring cups and spoons and show them how measuring two half-cups of flour or sugar gives them exactly the same amount as one full cup. Ask older children to help you cut a recipe in half or double a recipe. Have them write down the new measurements and double check them together- making sure they understand that, when you cook, it's important to get your math just right.

MONEY IS A POWERFUL TEACHER

If your children are trying to save up to buy something special for themselves or others, keep a chart of how much money they will need and what they have saved to date.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO RELAX

Look for games and activities that reinforce math skills, whether they're computer games (like Math

Blaster), online programs (there's a great list at www.kidsites.com/sites-edu/math.htm), or old favorites like dominoes, card games, or puzzles.

Above all, make sure not to pass any math phobias that you might have on to your children.

Mathematics is fun. It's a thought process which will help children in all academic areas as they progress through their school years.

There are also many wonderful mathematics books for children. Visit your local library and ask the children's librarian for some suggestions. Greg Tang is one author I particularly like, but there are many, many more.

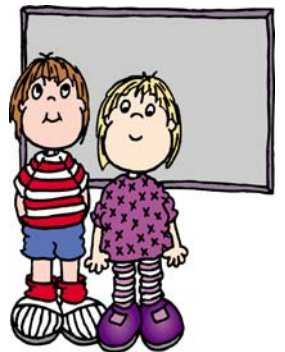
Try having a family mathematics night. Start by playing a mathematics game or two (great for reinforcing math facts) and finish with a good math story. You might just find that you really can enjoy mathematics!!!

Remember February is Black History Month. Here is a great resource to share with your children:

<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

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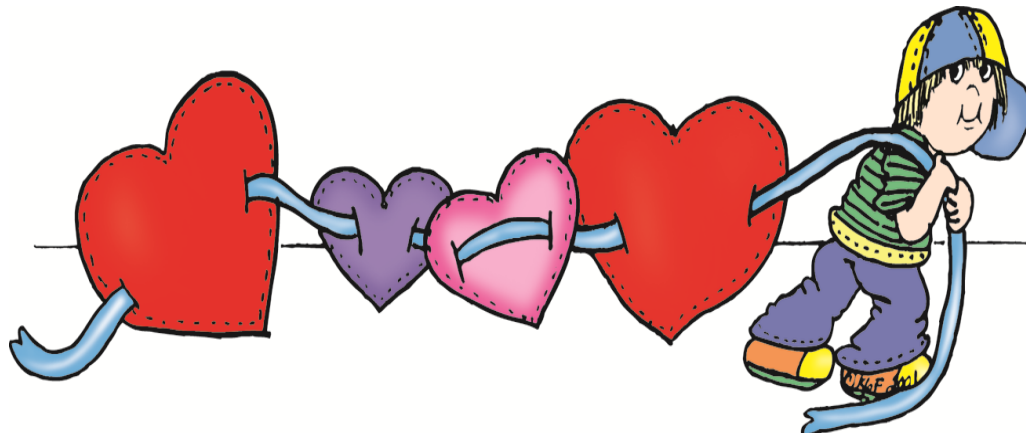
February 2017



Reminder: Schools will be closed February 20th to the 24th for Winter Break.

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
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Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

February 2017



Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

SHORT NOTES

On time every day

Arriving at school on time allows your child to settle in and take full advantage of every learning activity. Let him take the lead on this important responsibility by teaching him to set an alarm. *Tip:* Suggest that he place the clock across the room so he has to get out of bed to switch it off.

A “mind rehearsal”

Have your youngster “practice” challenging situations in her mind to boost her confidence. Before a cheer-leading competition, for example, she could picture herself nailing her routines. Or if a big test is coming up, she might imagine staying calm and answering questions to the best of her ability.

Field trip learning

When you sign a field trip permission slip, show interest—you’ll inspire your child to learn more from his outing. Ask him to predict what he will see and learn. Together, look up the destination online or in books, and say something like, “I can’t wait to hear which instrument is your favorite at the symphony.” Then, follow up with him afterward.

Worth quoting

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why can’t you tell a joke while standing on ice?

A: Because it might crack up.



Great graphic organizers

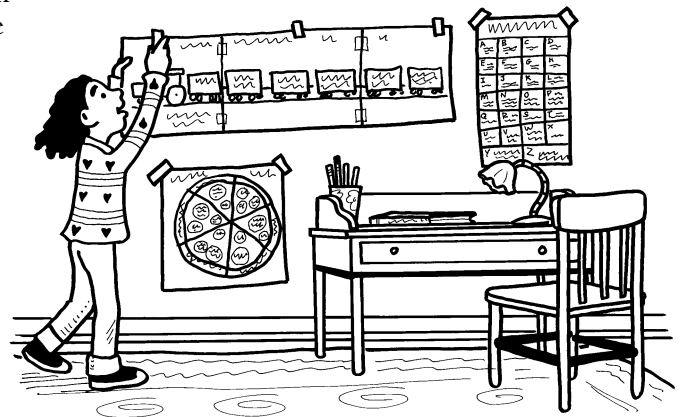
Organizing information in creative ways can make studying more interesting and productive for your youngster. Encourage her to try these graphic organizers—and to invent some of her own!

Cars in a train

Drawing a train is one way to understand and study steps in a process or events in a sequence, such as the parts of the scientific method or the plot of a novel. Suggest that your child label each train car with a step (“Ask a question,” “Make a hypothesis”) and add a picture to illustrate it.

Toppings on a pizza

Have your youngster draw a pizza to visualize facts. On each slice, she should write a category of information (*example:* “Lewis and Clark,” “Cartier,” and so on for a quiz on explorers). She can draw toppings (pepperoni, mushrooms) and put a fact on each one. On the Lewis and



Clark “pepperoni,” she might write, “Started in St. Louis” and “Ended at the Pacific Ocean.”

Letters of the alphabet

Let your child divide a sheet of paper into 26 squares and label them A–Z. Then, she could write a fact that begins with each letter. If her topic is habitats, she can define *desert* in the D square and *rain forest* for R. Being creative with less-common letters will get her thinking more deeply about the material (“Quick temperature drops happen at night in the desert” for Q).♥

Respect all around

Every day, there are plenty of opportunities for your child to show respect for others. Here are examples.

● **At home...** The dinner table is a great place to start. Teach your youngster to thank the cook. He’ll show respect for the person’s time and care in preparing the food.

● **In school...** Encourage him to be respectful of other children’s backgrounds by learning greetings in the languages they speak at home.

● **In your community...** Explain that shoppers respect store employees by not creating extra work for them. If you decide you don’t need an item in your cart, help your child return it to where it belongs. After you load groceries into your car, have him walk with you to return the cart.♥



Keep screen time in check

Do you worry that your child spends too much time in front of a screen? Do you wonder how he could best use technology? Consider this advice for helping him to balance screen time with other activities and to make the most of the time he does spend on electronics.

Aim for a mix. Together, look for ways to balance screen time with schoolwork, active play, and



family time. Make rules about where and when your youngster uses a computer, tablet, smartphone, or video game (say, in the living room after homework is finished). Have him set a timer while he uses a device—when it goes off, it's time to go out and play or help you prepare dinner, for example.

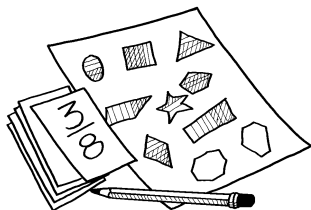
Use technology as a tool. Encourage your child to regard a device as a tool to use for specific purposes. He might download an astronomy app to help spot constellations in the night sky or a birding app to identify bird calls during a hike. He'll learn to rely on technology for real-life purposes.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Fraction art

Your youngster can practice identifying and representing fractions by creating this colorful mosaic with you—fraction by fraction.

Materials:
pencil, paper,
index cards,
crayons



1. Let your child draw 10 geometric shapes on a sheet of paper, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, trapezoids, and pentagons.
2. On separate index cards, have her write any 12 fractions (examples: $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{6}$, $\frac{3}{8}$). Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.
3. Take turns flipping over a card (say, $\frac{3}{8}$). Pick a shape, and color in that fraction on the shape (draw lines to divide it into 8 equal parts, and color 3 parts).
4. When you've used all the cards, shuffle and keep going. Continue until you've filled as many shapes as possible.

Note: If you get a fraction that isn't available to color, turn over cards until you select one you can use.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

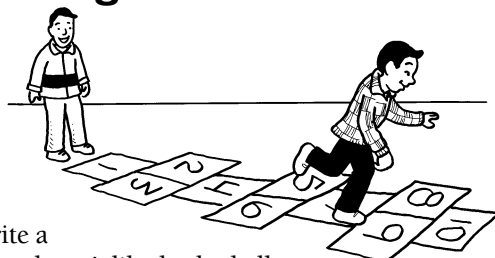
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A plan for problem solving

When your child faces a problem, having a solid plan can help him figure out how to solve it. So whether he's had a disagreement with a friend or has fallen behind on his schoolwork, suggest this approach.

- **Identify the problem.** Let him write a quick summary of what's wrong. ("Elliott doesn't like basketball, but that's what I usually play at recess.")
- **Imagine the ideal solution.** For instance, he probably wants to remain friends and still play basketball.
- **Figure out alternatives.** Encourage him to brainstorm solutions. *Examples:* "Offer to play with Elliott at recess every other day." "See if he wants to find something to play that we both like."
- **Choose a solution.** He could pick the solution he likes best or that he thinks is most likely to work.
- **Evaluate.** Have him try out that solution and ask how it went. If it didn't work, then he can consider another alternative from his list.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Overcoming shyness

My daughter Gabrielle has always been shy and quiet around people she doesn't know well. This year, her teacher told me she was worried because Gabrielle rarely speaks in class.

We met with the school counselor, who had some good advice. For example, I'm trying to let Gabrielle speak for herself rather than jumping in to "rescue" her. When someone asks her

name, I smile at her and wait instead of saying it for her. I'm also encouraging her to order her food in restaurants and to speak up at places like the hair salon and the dentist's office.

The counselor helped Gabrielle set a goal of raising her hand to answer a question at least once a day. We're having fun practicing by playing school at home—and her teacher just sent home a note saying she's seeing a little progress!♥

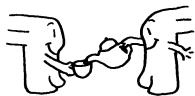


Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

February 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

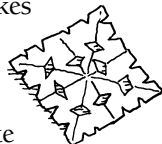


TOOLS & TIDBITS

Symmetry with snowflakes

Snowflakes

are *symmetrical*—each half is a mirror image of the other. Show your child how to create symmetry. Help her fold a square sheet of white paper in half, then in half again, and finally diagonally. She can cut designs along the folds. When she opens it up, she'll have her own symmetrical snowflake.



Magnetic money

Here's a fun way for your youngster to see why dollar bills work in vending machines. Hold a dollar by the top edge, and let him slowly move a magnet down it. He'll find a spot where the bill moves toward the magnet. That's because magnetic ink is used in printing money—so vending machines use magnets to attract bills!

Web picks

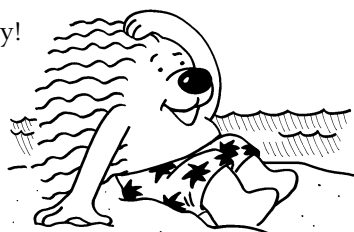
At coolmath4kids.com, your child can match addition problems with their sums in Alien Addition and play many other math games.

Outrageous Ooze, Salt Volcano, and Flipsticks are just a few of the hands-on science experiments your youngster could enjoy at exploratorium.edu/science_explorer.

Just for fun

Q: What kind of hair would an ocean have if it had hair?

A: Wavy!



Subtraction actions

Subtract, take away, or find the difference—whatever you call it, subtraction is a basic building block of math. Use these clever ideas to practice subtraction at home.


Take away

Pose a subtraction problem, say $8 - 5$. Let your child collect the larger number (8) in buttons, beans, or whatever is handy. Have him place them on a sheet of paper. To solve the problem, he would remove the number of buttons being subtracted (5). By counting the objects still on the paper (3), he'll find the answer ($8 - 5 = 3$).



The number of socks left in the larger group (6) is the difference!

Jump back

Help your child make a number line on a piece of paper. Draw a long straight line, and write the numbers 0–10 at evenly spaced intervals. Give him a subtraction problem, say $7 - 4$. He could place a rock or bottle cap on the 7 and “jump back” to solve the problem. How many jumps back does he need to make to get to 4? That's his answer ($7 - 4 = 3$). 


Match 2

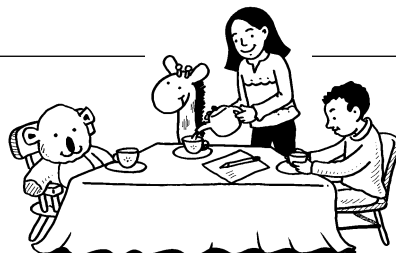
Your youngster might grab a bunch of socks to practice solving this problem: $15 - 9$. He can create 2 groups of socks, one with 15 socks and the other with 9. Now have him form pairs of socks, one sock coming from each group, and put them in a laundry basket. He keeps making pairs until the smaller group is gone.

Watery measures

Introduce your little one to estimating and measuring with this whimsical water play.

Measure spoonfuls. Let your child use a tablespoon to measure water from a bowl into the lid of a jar. Ask her to predict how many spoons of water she will need to fill the lid before the water spills over. She can count as she measures to find out.

Throw a tea party. Have your youngster fill a toy teapot or another small container with water and gather a few toy teacups or small plastic cups. How many guests could she serve if each person got one full teacup of “tea”? Let her estimate, fill each cup, and then count to check. 



Tell me a story (problem)

How much will lunch cost? What time does school start? With these strategies, turn everyday scenarios into word problems like the ones your child will do in class.

Describe the scene. Have your youngster give 2 game tokens to one stuffed animal and 4 to another, then create a story problem. She might say, “Teddy bear has 2 tokens, and Sam the seal has 4. How many do they have together?” To solve the problem, she would add the numbers together ($2 + 4 = 6$). Then, she can give each animal one more token and create another problem.



Go shopping. Take turns making up story problems at the drugstore or hardware store. Ask questions like “This package of diapers has 20 in it. How many will be left after your baby brother uses 11?” ($20 - 11 = 9$) Or she might say, “There’s a box of 40 screws and a box of 60 nails. What’s the total number of screws and nails?” ($40 + 60 = 100$)

MATH CORNER

Orderly numbers

Putting numbers in order—forward and backward—helps your youngster understand sequencing and how numbers relate to each other.

To begin, hang up fishing line, string, or a shoelace. Your child should number 10 or 20 slips of paper (1–10 or 1–20) and get tape or paper clips for attaching the numbers. Then, enjoy these activities:



- Arrange the numbers in random order. Have him rearrange them in the correct order starting with 1.
- Hang up one number only. Challenge him to hang up the next 5 numbers and count them aloud. If you clipped on 7, he would need 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Next, have him find the 5 numbers that come before and count backward.
- Fasten any 10 numbers in order on the line (say 2–11). Then, turn 2 numbers around so they can’t be seen. Can your child name those 2 numbers?

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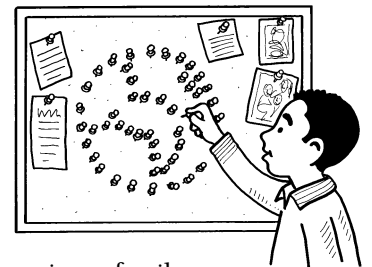
PARENT TO PARENT

Conserving resources at home

My son Ethan came home from school one day and told me he was learning about ways to take care of the planet. He wondered how our family could help.

We talked about ways we already reduce waste by recycling bottles, cans, magazines, and newspapers. Then, we brainstormed ways to conserve resources like electricity and water. Ethan decided we could launch our own “turn it off” program. Every time a family member turns off the water while brushing his teeth or switches off a light as he leaves a room, he gets to add a pushpin to the kitchen corkboard.

When we have 50 pushpins, we’re going to celebrate the earth and our milestone with a nighttime family hike to stargaze. My son is proud to be putting what he’s learned at school into action. And we all feel like we’re doing the right thing.



SCIENCE LAB

See the beans sprout!

It might seem like magic to see a sprout appear from a small seed—but science can explain it! This experiment will delight your youngster as she watches the result when dry beans meet water and warmth.

You’ll need: paper towel, water, resealable plastic bag, dry beans (pinto, lima)

Here’s how: Have your child fold the paper towel (to fit in the bag) and wet it so it’s damp but not dripping. She can then

slide the paper towel into the bag and place several beans on top of the paper towel. Let her seal the bag and place it flat by a sunny window.

What happens? After a few days, the beans start to break open, and tiny roots appear.

Why? Seeds like dry beans are *dormant* (not actively growing) until they have what they need to grow. The wet paper towel provides the water, and the sunny window provides the warmth that makes them *germinate* (start growing).



BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Work with your child to develop cognitive skills

Boosting your child's *cognitive* (thinking) skills can be easy and fun. Remember, these skills will do more than help him become a passionate learner. They will also help him become a stronger reader! With strong cognitive skills, your child will also be analyzing and processing information, which adds to his overall learning.

Here are just a few activities to do with your child to bolster his cognitive skills. Together:

- **Group** objects by size or color.
- **Play** matching games.
- **Read** books together.
- **Talk** about opposites (like *hot* and *cold* or *light* and *dark*).
- **Toss** a ball back and forth.
- **Build** with blocks.
- **Complete** puzzles.



Source: M.K. Truong, Ph.D., "Encouraging Preschoolers' Cognitive Development with Books and Shared Reading," *Early Childhood Teacher*, niswc.com/cognitive_development.

"If you would tell me the heart of a man, tell me not what he reads, but what he rereads."

—François Mauriac

Add synonyms to your child's vocabulary

Increase your child's vocabulary by teaching her *synonyms* (different words with the same meaning). Just let her hear you using them. One of the best ways to teach your child new things is to be so low-key that she doesn't realize you're "teaching" her at all.

When you use synonyms for common words, your child's vocabulary will flourish—and she won't suspect a thing. Try swapping out these words:

- **Instead of *big***, say: *huge, giant or massive*.
- **Instead of *small***, say: *mini, teeny or compact*.
- **Instead of *happy***, say: *cheerful, merry or glad*.

Source: A. Rock, "Fun Ways to Build a Child's Vocabulary," *VeryWell*, niswc.com/vocab_synonyms.

Put poetry into motion

To help your child enjoy poetry, combine it with action. First, find a book of children's poetry that you and your child can enjoy together.



Next, choose a story poem to read out loud. Be as dramatic as you can. Then, as you read the poem again, have your child act it out. She'll learn to connect movement and emotion with the words on the page.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, "25 Activities for Reading and Writing Fun," *Reading Rockets*, niswc.com/poetry_motion.

Use comparisons to build thinking skills



While reading with your child, encourage him to make comparisons. "Look at the car in the book. Is it bigger or smaller than ours?" This gets him to think critically about what you're reading together.

Practice writing the alphabet everywhere!

Now that your child has been learning the letters of the alphabet, you can have some fun together writing the letters around your home. Help your child write letters in the:

- **Bathtub.** Let your child write letters with shaving cream.
- **Kitchen.** Sprinkle flour or sugar on wax paper. Then have him write letters in it with his finger.
- **Driveway.** Have him write big letters with sidewalk chalk.



Boost your child's listening skills every day

Your child's listening skills are still in development. At this point, they're sharper than they were during his toddler years, but they still have a way to go. To help your child strengthen his listening skills even more (and his language learning in the process):

- **Turn down the background noise.** When you're talking to your child, limit distractions in the room (for example, the TV or radio). This will make it easier for him to pay attention to you.
- **Touch him on the shoulder** when you speak. This may help him stay focused on what you're saying.
- **Drop down to his level.** Make eye contact. When you focus on him, it shows him you're interested in what he's saying.
- **Ask him to repeat** back what you've said.



Source: J.M. Healy, Ph.D., *Your Child's Growing Mind*, Broadway Books.

Find time for your child to practice rhyming skills

Help your child look for words that rhyme! You can:

1. **Point out common items** in your home. Choose things with simple names like *sink*, *rug* and *hat*. Ask your child to name a few rhymes for each object.
2. **Read familiar nursery rhymes** to your child. While reading, pause before a rhyming word comes up. See if she can guess the word.



The things you do at home matter at school

Your child may get a lot of instruction at preschool, but she does most of her learning at home. And that means the things you do with her every day at home can have a major impact on her future school success!

To nurture your child's love of learning and get her ready to thrive in kindergarten and beyond:

- **Be enthusiastic.** Remind her how exciting and terrific school really is!
- **Read to her daily.** It will build crucial pre-literacy skills.
- **Offer her new experiences.** Whether you take a trip to the zoo or a walk in the park, never miss a chance to widen your child's horizons.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Sophie's Squash*** by Pat Zietlow Miller (Schwartz & Wade). Sophie brings a squash home from the farmer's market, which she names Bernice. From then on, Sophie and her squash become inseparable.
- ***Eat Your Peas, Ivy Louise!*** by Leo Landry (Houghton Mifflin Company). Ivy Louise is told repeatedly to eat her peas—but she's distracted by the circus that these peas are putting on!
- ***I'm Sure I Saw a Dinosaur*** by Jeanne Willis (Andersen Press). One little boy is certain that he saw a dinosaur down by the sea, so everyone comes running! But when they get there, they find something other than a dinosaur.



Q: My preschooler doesn't "get" reading yet, and I'm worried. He was an early talker; shouldn't he be an early reader, too?

A: Unlike speaking (which comes naturally), reading is strictly a *learned* skill. It's not something the brain is born knowing how to do. Children develop at their own pace. Your child might first show an interest in books, songs and stories before he begins to read.

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

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Kitten's First Full Moon*

(Kevin Henkes)

Is that a bowl of milk in the sky? An adorable kitten sees the full moon for the first time and tries her hardest to drink from the "bowl." But no matter what, it never seems to get closer. After a night of mishaps, she returns home to a surprise on her porch. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya*

(Mary and Rich Chamberlin)

In this story about sharing, Adika and his mother go to the market where Mama Panya makes pancakes. Even though she doesn't have much money, she cooks enough to feed everyone in the village. Includes facts about Kenya, greetings in Kiswahili, and, of course, a pancake recipe!



■ *Her Idea* (Rilla Alexander)

A little girl named Sozi has a big imagination and is always dreaming up ideas. Like many kids, she figures she'll do something with them later. Then an unlikely helper gives Sozi the perfect place to save her ideas—and the motivation to follow through.

■ *I See a Pattern Here*

(Bruce Goldstone)

Patterns are everywhere—in nature, on buildings, and on your youngster's clothing. This nonfiction book will encourage your child to look for patterns, figure out what comes next in the patterns pictured, and even create his own.



Build empathy with stories

Some of the same strategies that boost your child's reading comprehension can also help her develop empathy. These activities let her practice recognizing and thinking about feelings as she explores books.

"I know how she feels..."

When you read to your youngster, have her look for clues that hint at emotions. If a story says, "A tear rolled down her cheek," your child might say that the character is sad. Identifying characters' feelings will help her understand people's emotions in real life, too.

"If I were that character..."

Encourage your youngster to put herself in a character's shoes. What would she do differently, and how would that change her feelings—and the story? For example, in *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Crockett Johnson), the little boy felt scared after he drew a dragon to guard his apple tree. Your child may say she'd draw a friendly dragon and feel



happy—but her dragon wouldn't make a very good guard!

"This reminds me of..."

Help your youngster make connections between storybook characters and real people. This can deepen her understanding of the story and build empathy. Perhaps a character who moved to a different town makes her think of the new kid in her class. How did the character feel, and how does she think her classmate feels? (She might answer, "Scared," "Nervous," or "Excited.")♥

Make your own books

Your youngster will feel like a real writer when he creates a homemade book. Try this plan.

Draft. Help your child write a rough draft. A fun title for a little author is "All About Me." He could write about his family, friends, school, and favorite things.

Publish. Cut sheets of white construction paper in half. On each page, your youngster can copy one sentence from his draft and illustrate it. When he's finished, staple the pages together.

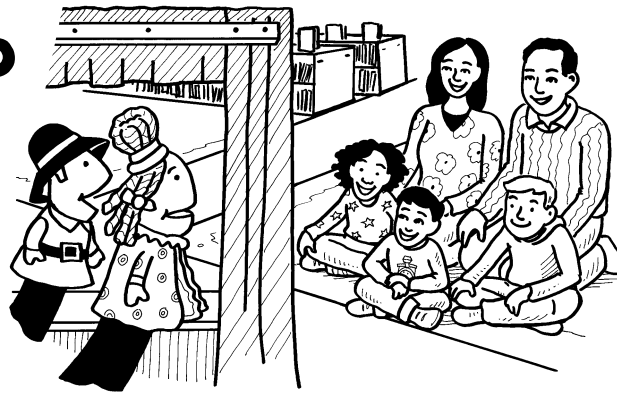
Share. Hold a "Meet the Author" night. Your child gets to read his book aloud to your family and answer questions about it.♥



Great reasons to visit the library

Making the public library a regular family hangout spot has a lot of benefits. Consider these points.

It's a nice place to read. Your child will never run out of books. Plus, there may be plenty of cozy reading spots like beanbag chairs and quiet corners. Let him pick a few stories, and choose a place where you can read—and enjoy time together.



There are fun activities. Ask about special reading-related events, and plan to attend some as a family. You might make a craft after listening to a story, watch a puppet show based on a favorite book, explore ABC books and do alphabet activities, or even read with dogs.

Reading opportunities are endless. Your youngster may decide to read every book by a particular author or all the books in a series. He could check one out each time you visit the library. Or perhaps he'll pick a topic he'd like to learn about. Let him check out nonfiction books to become an "expert" on his choice, whether it's polar animals or hockey.♥



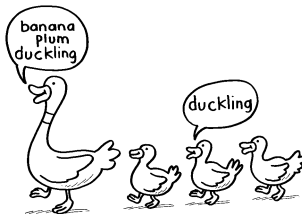
Odd word out

Build your child's vocabulary and thinking skills with this simple game that you can play at home or on the go.

1. Ask your youngster to listen carefully while you say three words—two that go together and one that doesn't "belong."

2. Have her tell you which is the odd word out. For instance, if you chose

banana, plum, and duckling, she would probably say *duckling*, because the other two are fruits.



3. If she picks a word you didn't expect, that's okay! Let her make a case for it, and she'll stretch her thinking. Maybe she'll say *plum*, because bananas and ducklings are both yellow.

4. Now it's her turn to say three words, and you decide which doesn't belong.♥

Parent to Parent

A household joke station

My son Leo has been on a joke kick lately. It seems like every day he tells us a new joke he heard or made up. Because he's learning to read, we decided to create a household "joke station" where he could read jokes whenever he wants.

We got a few joke books and put them in a basket in the family room. Soon afterward, when I read Leo a funny joke I found online, he asked if I would print it out and put it in the basket. And now when he tells me a joke, I help him write it down, and he adds it to the station.

Our family joke station has become a favorite household spot. If we're feeling silly or someone needs to be cheered up, we visit the station and take turns reading jokes aloud. Leo's reading skills are improving—and there's more laughter in our home!♥



Q&A Writing backward?

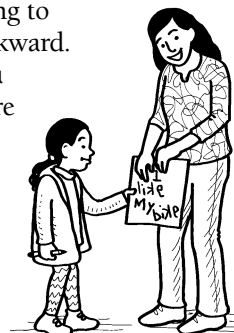
Q My first-grader sometimes writes letters or words backward. They look just like mirror images! Could she have a learning disability?

A When children are first learning to write, they occasionally write backward. Most kids outgrow this. But if you notice your daughter doing it more often, talk to her teacher.

Find out whether the teacher has any concerns. Is your child performing below grade level? Does she have a hard time spelling new words? Are her skills uneven (she reads well but struggles with

writing, for instance)? If you suspect a problem, or the teacher does, ask about the possibility of testing your daughter to see if she needs extra help.

In the meantime, you could work with her on writing correctly at home. Remind her that we write the way we read—from left to right. Whenever you see her writing backward, ask, "Do you notice anything unusual about those letters?" Then, help her correct them.♥



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

Games can teach new vocabulary while they entertain

Improve your child's reading skills by building his vocabulary! With an increased knowledge of words and their meanings, your child will understand more as he reads.

To make learning new words fun, play:

- **Word of the Week.** Take turns choosing a challenging word from your child's vocabulary list. Use it often. Keep track of how many times you and your child use it in a sentence during the week.
- **Word Origins.** Find a book about the origins of common words. For instance, *salary* comes from *salarium*, the Latin word for *salt*. That's because Roman soldiers were paid in salt. Name some words and possible origins. Who can guess the correct origin?



Source: "Helping Your Child at Home with Vocabulary Building," Child Development Institute, niswc.com/play_vocabulary.

"Books are mirrors: you only see in them what you already have inside you."

—Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Suggest comics for reluctant readers

If your child hesitates to pick up traditional chapter books, encourage him to give comic books or graphic novels a try.

Experts say that comic books are just another type of reading material. They provide the same benefits as traditional books. In fact, picture books have adopted elements of comics, including motion lines and speech bubbles.

By reading comic books that you approve of, your child will understand how words and pictures come together to tell a story. He will also be able to see the progression of a story from beginning to middle to end.

So when your child says that he just doesn't want to read, suggest a comic book featuring some of his favorite characters—he may just change his mind about reading!

Source: P. Ciciora, "For improving early literacy, reading comics is no child's play," University of Illinois, niswc.com/reading_comics.

Help your child find time to read

Every minute that your child spends reading counts! Do all you can to encourage your child to read. You can:

- **Make sure your child** has a comfortable, quiet place to read.
- **Help your child schedule** reading time.
- **Avoid interrupting your child** when she is reading.
- **Tell your child** to pick up a book when she says she's bored.



What's a synonym for antonym?

A *synonym* is a word that means the same thing as another word. An *antonym* is a word with the opposite meaning. So a synonym for antonym might be *opposite*! If your child understands that, she knows some important stepping stones to literacy.



Following instructions requires reading

Even homework that doesn't include a reading assignment may involve reading directions in other assignments.

After your child looks at each assignment—but before she begins it—ask her to tell you what she's supposed to do in her own words.

She may have to reread, but she won't have to redo her work.



Source: N. Paulu, "Helping Your Child With Homework," KidSource OnLine, niswc.com/reading_directions.

Put some extra thought into reading time

Your family's reading time each day should include some "thinking time." Thinking about what she reads builds your child's understanding of it. Here are some ideas:

- **Talk about a book before reading.** Why does it look interesting? What is it about? What hints does the cover provide?
- **Think aloud while reading.** Encourage your child to ask questions and make comments while you read. Ask your child, "Why did that happen?" "Does the story make sense?" "What could happen next?" "Do you agree with that character's decision?"
- **Have a discussion after reading.** Did your child like the book? Why or why not? Do either of you relate to the characters' experiences or feelings? Discuss the book again days later, when your child has had more time to think about the story.



Source: "Helping your child learn to read: A Parent's Guide," Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, niswc.com/thought_reading.

Encourage your child to read 'actively'

If your child is tasked with reading a chapter of a novel or textbook, she might read it straight through. Instead, encourage her to read "actively." This involves doing things while she reads. Suggest that your child:

- **Stop once in a while and think.** What are the main points? What has she learned? Is anything confusing? How does the material relate to real life?
- **Restate what the book says.** Putting things into her own words will help your child understand what she has read.
- **Summarize the main points.** Making a list is a great way to prepare for comprehension questions, analysis and the next reading assignment.



Source: "Lesson #11—Textbook Reading, Part 2," PinkMonkey.com, niswc.com/active_reading.



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. Suggest that your child organize his notes in a similar way. Look at a chapter or section together. Have him point out the main idea and write it down. Then, ask him to 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.

Let your child's reading inspire family activities

Use what your child is reading for school to inspire family fun! Plan an adventure related to the book. For example, if your child is reading about Benjamin Franklin, he might learn that Franklin started the very first fire department. As a family, you could visit a fire department in honor of Franklin's work.



Source: "Summer Reading Activity Center," All Star Activities, niswc.com/activity_inspiration.

For lower elementary readers:

- ***Kate and the Beanstalk*** by Mary Pope Osborne (Aladdin). In this twist on the classic fairy tale, a brave girl named Kate takes on a mean giant.
- ***The Pros and Cons of Being a Frog*** by Sue deGennaro (Simon & Schuster). A pair of friends are deciding what costumes to dress up in. After trying out life as a cat, one boy decides to dress up as a frog.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***The Only Girl in School*** by Natalie Standiford (Scholastic Press). After a friend moves away, Claire finds herself as the only girl in her entire school. But her excitement wears off as the school year goes on.
- ***Love to Langston*** by Tony Medina (Lee & Low Books). In a tribute to Langston Hughes, the famed Harlem Renaissance poet, Medina has written new poems based on Hughes' life.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

February 2017

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

■ *Leaping Beauty and Other Animal Fairy Tales* (Gregory Maguire)

Your youngster will enjoy reading fairy tale favorites with a twist! Sleeping Beauty is anything but a princess—she's a frog. Humans are replaced with animals in eight tales, including "Cinder-Elephant," "Rumplesnakeskin," and "Goldiefox and the Three Chickens."



■ *Esperanza Rising* (Pam Muñoz Ryan)

During the Great Depression, Esperanza and her mother must leave El



Rancho de las Rosas, their Mexican homestead. Once settled at a California camp, they realize how different

their lives will become. Can they overcome their challenges? (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Anyway*: A Story About Me with 138 Footnotes, 27 Exaggerations, and 1 Plate of Spaghetti* (Arthur Salm)

Twelve-year-old Max wants to be cool, so he turns himself into the daring Mad Max. Funny misadventures help Max understand that his risk-taking behavior isn't all it's cracked up to be. Now he must decide who he really is.

■ *How to Make a Movie in 10 Easy Lessons* (Robert Blofield)

Lights, camera, action! This book leads hopeful filmmakers through plotting, writing, editing, and recording their masterpieces. Each section focuses on a different part of the movie-making process. Your child may be delighted to know that a big Hollywood budget isn't required!



Write with 100 letters

To celebrate the 100th day of school, try these fun family writing challenges using just 100 letters. Your youngster will have to choose her words carefully as she practices persuasive, descriptive, and explanatory writing.

Persuade buyers

Ask your child to name any household item (slippers, TV, mop). On sheets of paper, each person writes a 100-letter classified ad to persuade others to buy the item. "For sale: My mom's used slippers that still feel cuddly and warm in the winter! Pink with yellow trim. They just got washed, too." Vote for the best ad. Then, the winner chooses the next item to "sell."

Describe the scene

Let your youngster clip photos from the newspaper, leaving off the captions. Place one picture where everyone can see it. Then, write 100-letter captions describing the image. If a picture shows a group of people walking, your child might write, "The Carver family from Idaho trekked hundreds of miles this week to make their way here for the



VFW post bingo tournament." Share your captions with each other.

Give instructions

Have your youngster start by writing a "how to" title on a sheet of paper. *Example:* "How to wash a car." Pass the paper clockwise. Everyone writes a step for the total 100-letter set of directions, counting as they go before passing it on.

1. Fill a bucket with soapy water. Take it outside. (38)
2. Spray car with hose. (16)
3. Soak sponge in soapy water. (22)
4. Scrub. Rinse. (10)
5. Repeat if needed. (14)

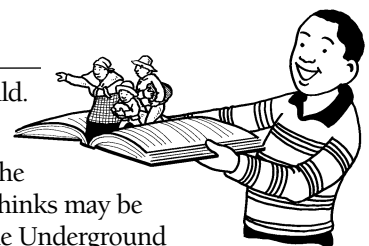
Decide together if the instructions work. Were any steps forgotten? ■

Hooray for history!

Historical fiction brings history to life for your child. Here are suggestions to take his reading further.

Find facts. As your youngster reads a story set in the past, have him jot down interesting details that he thinks may be true. For instance, if he's reading a tale set during the Underground Railroad, he might list "Ended in Canada" and "It was not really a railroad."

Investigate. When your child finishes the book, he could put on his detective cap and read encyclopedia entries, nonfiction books, or articles to uncover the truth behind those details. He'll learn that the Underground Railroad had many routes that led north to free states and Canada, and it even had some routes to Mexico. ■



Keep on reading aloud

Did you know that hearing you read aloud can increase your child's vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension? Use these tips.

Aim high. Most kids understand books written two or more levels above what they can read on their own. So try choosing read-aloud books that are harder than what your youngster normally picks. He'll be able to follow the plot or the nonfiction information more easily if you read than if he reads it himself. *Idea:* Ask your child's teacher or a librarian for recommendations that will suit your youngster.

Think out loud. If an author's word choices are interesting to you, say so. If you have an "aha!" moment while reading a



mystery, share it with your youngster. You'll show him that it's fun to talk about what you're reading—and it builds understanding.

Read more than fiction. Look for everyday opportunities to read aloud. You might read a quote on a tea bag, a funny blog post, or the recipe you're making together. Or

read your child a short story or magazine article. He will pick up new words and phrases from a variety of materials.

Note: Remember that you don't have to be an expert reader to read to your youngster. He will enjoy the together time and learn from your reading no matter what! ■

Fun
with
Words

Verbs at play

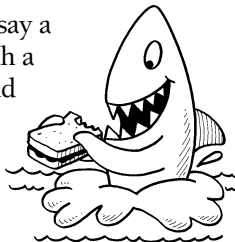
Devoured, slurped, chomped—each of these

verbs is a potential replacement for the more common verb *ate*. Do this activity together, and your youngster will gobble up a fun lesson on choosing vivid verbs when she writes.

1. Have your child say a simple sentence with a plain verb. She could say, "The shark *ate* the sandwich."

2. You repeat the sentence and replace the verb with a more descriptive one. "The shark *devoured* the sandwich."

3. Then, it's your youngster's turn again. "The shark *chomped* the sandwich."



Keep taking turns until you run out of verbs. Let your child look up the original word in a thesaurus and see if there are any synonyms (words with similar meanings) she missed.

The player who made the last successful change thinks of a new sentence to start the next round. ■

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Parent 2 Parent

Read, draw, and learn

My daughter Simone loves to draw—and that gave me an idea that would help her with studying. I suggested that she pretend to be an illustrator for the sections she was reading in her Chinese textbook. To do that, she would have to carefully consider what the text said and then represent it with a picture.

Simone liked the idea, so as she studied vocabulary, she copied the Chinese characters from her textbook, drew a picture to match the word, and labeled it in English as well.

Knowing she was going to be drawing the material helped Simone think about—and remember—the new words she was learning. Now she plans to use this "artistic" technique when she studies other subjects, too. ■



Q&A

"My child mumbles"

Q People are always saying they can't understand my son because he mumbles. How can I help him work on this?

A First, does he understand what mumbling is? Play a game where you take turns speaking clearly (the other person can understand you) or mumble (the sounds are jumbled together). Call out "Clear!" or "Mumble!"

Then, try keeping an audio journal with your child to let him practice speaking clearly. Use a smartphone, a computer, or another recording device, and have

him start by recording himself talking about his day. Perhaps he'll tell a funny story about something that happened in the cafeteria.

Next, you record your response. If your son mumbled, you could say, "I'm so interested in your story, but I couldn't understand the part about the lunch line. Can you record it again so I can laugh, too?" Continue your audio

conversations on a daily basis—and listen for improvement in his speaking! *Note:* If you're still concerned about your child's speech, talk to his teacher. ■



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2017

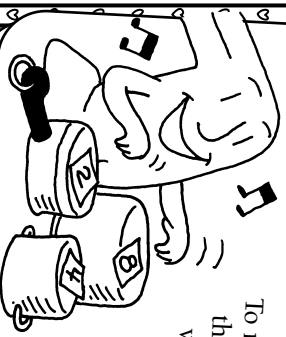
ADDITION

Musical math

Your child can practice addition by playing musical “notes” on pots and pans.

Ingredients: pencil, sticky notes, pots and pans, paper

Let your youngster assign each pot and pan a number value. She could write the number on a sticky note and stick it on the pot or pan. Maybe a small pot is worth 2, a medium pan 4, and a big pot 8. Then, set a numerical target for her, say 10 or 16.



To reach the target, she creates a song using “notes” that add up to it. For example, hitting a 2 and an 8 will give her a tune worth 10 points ($2 + 8 = 10$). Or she could tap the 8 once and the 4 twice to get 16 ($8 + 4 + 4 = 16$). She can add in her head or on paper to keep track. When she’s ready, have your child play the song—and tell you the equation she created.

READING

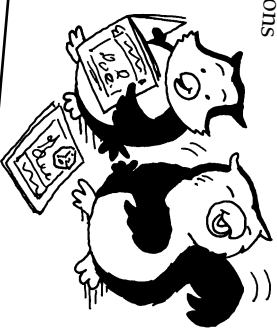
Roll and read

With a roll of the die, your youngster will boost his reading skills.

Ingredients: book, paper, pencil, die

Together, write four questions that can be answered after reading a story. *Examples:* “What’s the main idea?” “What is the problem that needs to be solved?” Then, jot down two silly activities (“Wiggle your nose,” “Dance the Twist”). Have your child number the questions and activities, 1–6.

Now, read a book aloud. Take turns rolling the die. Answer the question or do the activity that matches the number, and cross it out. Roll again if you duplicate a number. After doing all six, play again with another book.



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.”

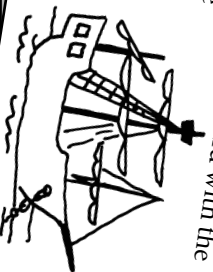
SEQUENCING

Tell your child about your day, but mix up the events so they’re out of order. You might say, “I had lunch. I drove to work at 8 a.m. in terrible traffic. Then I clocked in at work.” Can he figure out the real sequence? He’ll see that putting things in the right order matters.



HISTORY

Ask your youngster to write a pretend postcard about an important event from the past. Maybe she’ll write, “I’m in Boston. Protesters against Britain’s Tea Act have dumped tea off the ships into the harbor!” Let her “stamp” her postcard with the actual date the event happened (December 16, 1773).



WRITING

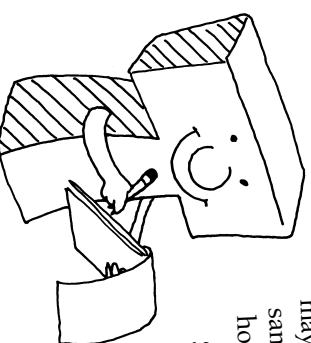
Missing letters

Encourage your child to write a lipogram—a piece of writing that leaves out one letter of the alphabet. She’ll learn to think carefully about word choice.

Ingredients: paper, pencil, thesaurus

Perhaps she’ll create a lipogram without the letter *t*. So if she wants to use words with similar meanings, like *icy* or *glacial*. Or maybe she’ll reword a sentence so that it says the same thing in a different way (“We made a snow house” instead of “We built a snow hut”).

Suggest that your youngster start by writing a sentence or a paragraph. Once she has the hang of it, let her try writing a poem, letter, or short story that’s a lipogram! *Note:* Encourage her to use a thesaurus to look up synonyms if she’s stuck.



Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2017

Character Corner

HELPFULNESS

Create a helpfulness award to pass around. Your youngster can label a paper heart "Heart-y Helper." When someone lends a hand, your child gives that person the award. Then, the award-holder presents the heart to someone else for helping.



GOAL SETTING

A "goal guide" will remind your youngster of what she wants to achieve. Have her cut out magazine pictures and tape them on paper. If her goal is to read a chapter book, she could find a photo of a book. If she hopes to be more active, she might look for a picture of a bike.



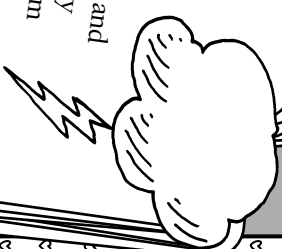
EMPATHY

Recognizing people's feelings can help your child show empathy. Play a game by making faces and having the other person name the emotion. *Example:* Raise your eyebrows and gasp to act surprised. Try other emotions like happiness, anger, or fear.



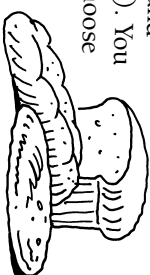
SCIENCE

When it thunders, help your youngster figure out how far away the storm is. Have him count the seconds between seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder. For every five seconds counted, the storm is one mile away. *Tip:* Recite "one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi" to count seconds.



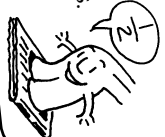
CULTURES

People all over the world eat many kinds of bread. When you grocery shop together, ask your youngster to look for different varieties. How many can he find? *Examples:* roti (India), focaccia (Italy), and lavash (Armenia). You might let him choose one to try at home.



FRACTIONS

Have your child stand on an unfolded newspaper. Let her fold it in half, say the fraction ($\frac{1}{2}$), and stand on it again. She should continue folding it, trying to place her feet on the smaller and smaller paper. Each time, ask what fraction remains. She'll quickly realize that $\frac{1}{8}$ is smaller than $\frac{1}{4}$!



TIME

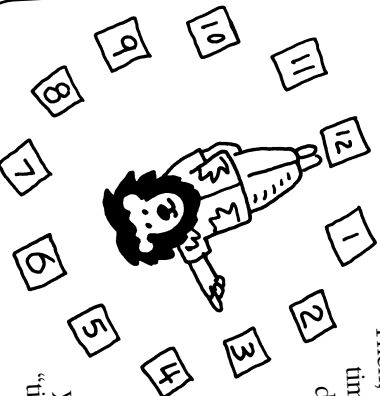
Life-size clock

Making a giant human timepiece is a fun way to work on telling time.

Ingredients: paper, pencil or crayon, floor space

Have your child number separate sheets of paper 1–12. Either outside or in a large space on the floor, he could place them in a large circle as they would appear on a clock.

Then, take turns calling out a time. The other person lies down and shows the time using both legs together as the minute hand and one arm as the hour hand. If you say "3:00," he would point his toes to the 12 and his right arm to the 3. Snap a photo so your youngster can see what the "time" looks like!



GRAMMAR

Try this idea to play with adjectives. Place a mystery item in a paper bag. Let your child close her eyes, reach in, and touch it.

Ask her to describe the object using three adjectives ("rubbery, squishy, small"). Can she guess the object? (A rubber duck.)



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)