



Dennis-Yarmouth Title I

From the Title I Coordinator

Volume 1, Issue iv

December, 2018

As the holiday season approaches, many of us will be buying toys for our children. Unfortunately, not all toy manufacturers take children's safety into consideration as they market toys. As the recent headlines about lead paint point out, even the most famous toys and toy manufacturers can produce toys that are dangerous. Here are some pointers from the Consumer Product Safety Commission:

1. Keep the child's age, interests, and skill level in mind when buying toys.
2. Read the labels—check the recommended age level, check for small parts, look for all warning labels.
3. Look for sharp edges and pointed parts.
4. Check to make certain that the toy is sturdy and will not break and expose a sharp edge.
5. Toys that make loud noises can pose a danger to hearing.
6. Look out for toys that have long strings or cords. They can wrap around a child's neck and cause strangulation.
7. Look out for parts that can be propelled through the air or thrown through the air. Eye injuries are very common.
8. Electric toys should only be used with adult supervision. Shocks and burns are a danger with these toys.
9. Remove all wrapping and dispose of it immediately. The toy may be safe but the plastic bag it came in could be dangerous.
10. Check the consumer Product Safety Commission's web site for recalls and warnings. www.cpsc.gov
11. Remember you are the adult. Do not give in to a child begging for an unsafe toy.



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.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Cookie Stewart, at 508-778-7599 or stewartv@dy-regional.k12.ma.us

Books make wonderful Christmas presents. Be sure to check out the book list at the end of this newsletter!



Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

December 2018

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

SHORT NOTES

Put memory to work

Many card games build *working*, or short-term, memory. This kind of memory lets your youngster remember and use information he learned recently. Play Go Fish or Crazy Eights together. By keeping track of which cards have been played, your child will make better moves!

Taking the lead

You may have heard the phrase “a born leader.” But leadership skills, such as speaking up and taking initiative, can be learned. Encourage your youngster to practice during group projects. For example, she might suggest a way to divide up tasks or offer to give the introduction during the group’s class presentation.

Busy parents can volunteer

Whether you have a little time or a lot, you can pitch in at your child’s school. Ask teachers and PTO or PTA officers for ways to volunteer that fit your schedule. Maybe you’ll listen to students read for 20 minutes during your lunch break or compile families’ book catalog orders on the weekend.

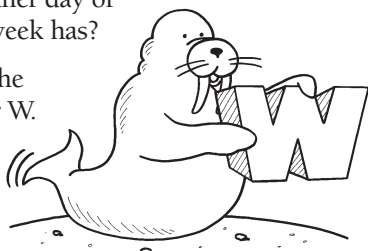
Worth quoting

“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” *Milton Berle*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What does Wednesday have that no other day of the week has?

A: The letter W.



Smart discipline

Disciplining your child is all about guidance. You’re training her to follow rules and behave in an acceptable way—without your nagging or yelling. Consider these strategies to make discipline easier and more effective.

Stay positive

Rather than telling your youngster what she *can’t* do, try explaining what she *can* do. Instead of “Don’t shove your brother,” you might say, “Keep your hands to yourself, and politely ask Billy to move out of the way.” Giving your child clear instructions will inspire her to cooperate.

Watch body language

When you correct your youngster, speak face-to-face rather than calling to her from across the room or another part of the house. You could get down on her level, gently touch her shoulder, and speak softly. Sensing that you’re in control of yourself will keep her calm so she focuses on what you’re saying.



Be consistent

If your child breaks a rule, announce a consequence right away. This helps her see cause and effect. For example, if she eats in the living room and that’s not allowed, ask her to vacuum up the crumbs right away. *Tip:* Being consistent with consequences shows that you’re serious. If she knows you won’t change your mind, she’ll be better about sticking to the rules.♥

Engineering at play

Every time your youngster has fun on the playground swings, he has engineers to thank! Let him explore engineering for himself by constructing a play swing set.

He might use craft sticks for the frame, yarn for the chains, and cardboard for the seat.

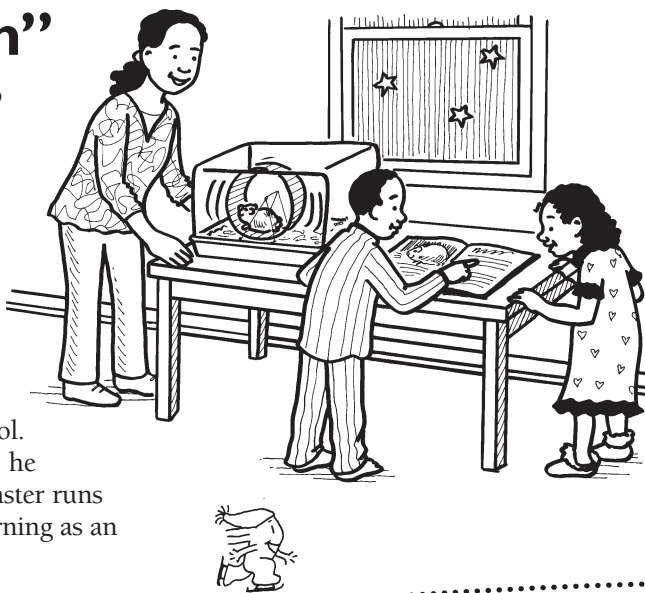
How could he make a swing that gives a longer “ride”? Suggest that he adjust the length of the “chains,” and then test it each time. He can set a timer for one minute, pull back the seat, and count the swings per minute. What does he notice? (The shorter the chains, the more swings per minute.)♥



"I love to learn"

Children devote more energy to learning when they're motivated. These ideas will boost your youngster's thirst for knowledge.

Show enthusiasm. Tell your child what you learn. ("I found out that about 90 percent of the world's population lives in the Northern Hemisphere!") Also, ask him to teach you information he learns in school. If he's studying nocturnal animals, he might explain to you why his hamster runs on its wheel at night. He'll see learning as an



everyday activity for kids and grown-ups, and your attitude will be contagious.

Inspire curiosity. Express interest when your youngster poses questions. If he asks why we get the hiccups or whether owls really are wise, you could say, "That's a good question! Let's find out together." Then, help him look up the topic in a library book or online. When you discover the answer, encourage him to share it with friends or relatives so they can learn more, too.♥

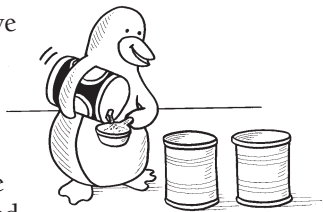


ACTIVITY CORNER

Frosty science

With this experiment, your child can see frost and learn why people sprinkle salt on icy sidewalks and roads.

How? Have your youngster rinse out two empty soup cans, remove the labels, and fill each halfway with ice. She should stir $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt into just one can and set both cans aside.



What happens? After 10 minutes, she'll notice frost on the "salty can" and water on the other one.

Why? Salt lowers the melting point of the ice, so the can with salt got colder than the other can. When water in the air condensed onto the cans, it froze into frost on the one with salt. That's why salt is useful in winter—it melts snow and ice, making it safer to walk or drive.♥

Q & A

Grit: A family challenge

Q: My son wanted to learn to ice skate, but he changed his mind after he fell one time. How can I teach him not to give up when something is tough?

A: Children (and adults) may believe they should be able to easily do whatever they try right away. Understanding that setbacks are normal will help your son develop grit, or perseverance toward long-term goals.

Talk about times when you were successful even though you struggled at first. Maybe you were afraid to put your face in the water but you learned to swim by taking lessons and working hard to overcome your fear.

Then, consider having a "family grit challenge." Each person can choose one thing to tackle that is hard for him and requires persistence, such as following a fitness routine or cutting back on screen time. Compare notes after a month, and then set your next goals!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Making a difference

I wanted my daughter, Charlotte, to learn about the importance of helping our community.

While grocery shopping one day, we saw a sign announcing that each customer could pick a favorite charity for the store to support. I let Charlotte choose, and she decided on a non-profit that benefits kids with cancer. Now every time we buy groceries, she reminds me that we're helping sick children.

That led us to think of other ways kids can make a difference. Recently, we decided to bake brownies and take them to the fire station. I explained that this would show appreciation for the hard work that firefighters do.

Charlotte felt proud when the firefighters thanked her. I realized that the more ways we can find to serve our community, the more likely it will become a habit as she gets older.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

December 2018

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program



TOOLS & TIDBITS

Odd or even?

Here's an easy way for your child to distinguish between odd and even. Say an even number (perhaps 6). Have her count checkers into stacks of 2. Every checker has a "partner," so the number is even. Now give her an odd number, such as 7. She'll make 3 stacks of 2, with 1 checker left over. The extra, "lonely" checker means the number is odd.



Our "wonder wall"

Encourage your youngster to think like a scientist on a regular basis by creating a "wonder wall." He could hang up a poster board where family members may post science questions ("Do oceans freeze in winter?") or photos (a close-up of a spider web). Others try to find answers to the questions or write observations about the pictures.

Web picks

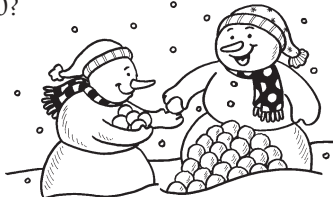
🖱 Your child can blast slime on a Minus Mission, count money in a Dolphin Dash race, and more at mathplayground.com.

🖱 At journeynorth.org/Kids/JNAbout.html, your youngster will learn about and track migrating animals like monarch butterflies and bald eagles. There's even a link for reporting her own sightings.

Just for fun

Q: How many times can you subtract 6 from 30?

A: Once. After that, it's no longer 30.



Numbers, take your places!

If your youngster arranges 1, 2, and 3 in different orders, what does he get? Different numbers, of course: 123, 132, 213, 231, 312, and 321! Try these activities that show him how a digit's place determines its value.

Crafty caterpillars

These cute "caterpillars" let your child see tens and ones. Get six craft sticks, and have him glue 10 small pom-poms or dry beans on each. Take turns rolling two dice and using the caterpillars (tens) and loose pom-poms or beans (ones) to make the number rolled. For 6 and 5, he could show 65 (6 caterpillars, 5 pom-poms) or 56 (5 caterpillars, 6 pom-poms).

Digit scramble

Stack a deck of cards facedown (aces, 10s, and face cards removed). Each player draws two cards and turns over one at a time. Decide whether to put each card in the tens or ones place. Then, say your number ("7 tens and 2 ones—72"). Whoever forms the biggest number takes



all the cards. When you've used the whole deck, the player with the most cards wins.

Secret number

Help your youngster divide his paper into columns labeled "Hundreds," "Tens," and "Ones." Secretly think of a three-digit number. He should guess each digit *and* its place value ("Is the digit in the hundreds place worth 500?"), and write each correct guess in its column. When he gets your number, he thinks of one for you. 🦋

A texture hunt

With this treasure hunt, your child will rely on her sense of touch to describe properties of objects.

1. Together, make a list of texture words. *Examples: rough, smooth, squishy, prickly, hard, soft.*

2. Walk around indoors and outdoors.

How many objects can your youngster collect that match each description? She might find a *rough* key, a *smooth* bouncy ball, *squishy* play dough, a *prickly* hairbrush, and a *hard* wooden block.

3. Now let your child display her finds. She could label each item on a separate index card ("A *soft* cotton ball"). 🦋



Estimation makes sense

Quick! How many geese are flying overhead? Your youngster can make a reasonable estimate by combining what she sees with what she knows about numbers. Here's how.


Supermarket estimates. While you shop, encourage your child to estimate everything from fruits and vegetables to brands of cereal. *Example:*



"There are about 30 bunches of bananas." Ask how she got her estimate. She might say there are 3 rows on the display and about 10 bunches in each row, and she counted by 10s to get 30. Now have her look at the bananas and count to check her estimate.

Polka-dotted plates.

Help your youngster learn from previous estimates with this idea. Draw

groups of 10–50 colored dots on separate paper plates, and turn the plates dot-side down. Let your child flip over one plate at a time and quickly say how many dots she thinks there are. Then, she could count to see how accurate her estimate was. As she turns over more plates, her estimates will get closer to the mark. 

SCIENCE LAB

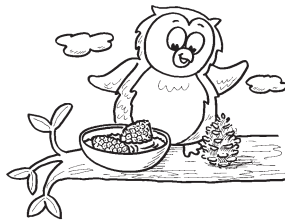
Pinecones: Super seed protectors

This experiment reveals the amazing way pinecones protect the seeds that grow inside them.

You'll need: two dry pinecones, bowl, measuring cup, water, timer

Here's how:


Have your child place one pinecone in the bowl and one on the counter. Now he should



add 2 cups of water to the bowl and set a timer for 30 minutes. When the timer goes off, he can remove the wet pinecone from the bowl and compare it with the dry pinecone on the counter.

What happens? The dry pinecone is unchanged, but the wet pinecone closes up.

Why? Pinecones protect the seeds inside them. One way they do this is by closing up in wet weather. When it's dry, they open and release their seeds so new pine trees can grow.

Tip: Take a walk after it rains or snows, and let your youngster observe the closed-up pinecones on the ground. 

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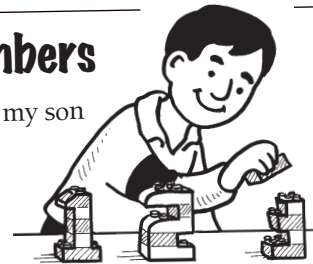
PARENT TO PARENT

I can write my numbers

At dinner one night, I noticed my son Liam curling his spaghetti into numbers. I asked where in the world he got the idea to do that. He said his class is learning to write numbers. They form them with different materials, and the noodles reminded him of the yarn they used that day.

Now Liam and I look for more ways to practice writing numbers at home. He loves building numbers with Legos. He also "wrote" numbers with a glue stick and sprinkled on glitter. And after his bath the other night, I walked into the bathroom to find the numbers 0–9 written in fog on the bathroom mirror.

This weekend, there's a chance of snow, and Liam has his fingers crossed that he'll get to write in the snow with a stick. 



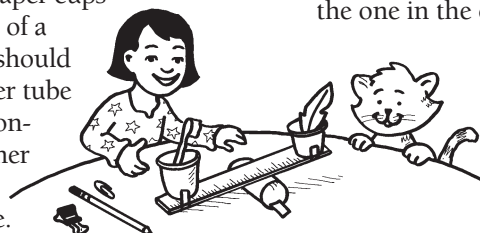
MATH CORNER

Comparing weights

"My paperweight is heavier than my gymnastics medal!" This homemade balance scale lets your child explore measurement by comparing weights.


Make a scale

Have your youngster tape two small paper cups to opposite ends of a ruler. Next, she should tape a toilet paper tube to a table (horizontally). Now ask her to balance the ruler on the tube.



Weigh objects

What does your child want to weigh? Suggest that she gather small items like a toothbrush, a leaf, and a pencil. She can choose two at a time, predict which is heavier, and put one in each cup to find out. The object in the cup that drops down toward the table is heavier than the one in the cup that goes up. If the scale balances, their weights are equal.

Idea: As she tests the items, she could line them up from lightest to heaviest. 

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Fill your preschooler's winter break with language-learning opportunities

The end of the calendar year is a busy time for many families. With all that you may have to do, you might be tempted to just plop your preschooler in front of a screen.

Don't toss his school-day habits aside just because school's out for a week or two! Continue to limit daily screen time and keep your child on the road to language learning.

Make time to:

- **Visit** the library.
- **Listen** to audiobooks.
- **Read** together every day.
- **Invent** stories together.
- **Visit** a children's museum and talk about what you see.
- **Have** conversations while playing games and doing puzzles.



"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

—Joseph Addison

Talk to your child's preschool teacher about reading readiness and progress

Parent-teacher conferences give you a chance to check in with the preschool teacher about your child's progress in the classroom. A mid-year conference will help you and the teacher work together to make the rest of the year the best it can be.

Conferences are also a great time to learn more about your child's reading development. You might ask:

- **What reading-related activities** does my child enjoy during the school day?
- **How is my child progressing** with reading-readiness skills?
- **Are there any skills** my child needs to improve?
- **What goals do you have** for my child for the rest of this year?
- **What can I do** at home to keep my child excited about reading and learning in general?

Involve the whole family in reading routines

Reading bedtime stories is often a favorite routine for preschoolers. Why not make it a special one for the entire family?

Once in a while, ask an older sibling, grandparent or another family member to take a turn reading to your child at bedtime.



Books make wonderful gifts

New books may not be at the top of your preschooler's holiday wish list. But that shouldn't stop you from giving her a few!

Opening a new book may get your child excited about reading. And that excitement (and the lifelong love of books it can ignite) is a gift that will last way beyond the holiday season.



Discover seasonal reading activities

There are plenty of winter-themed reading activities you can do with your child. You just need to know where to look. Be sure you're asking the right person for details—your local librarian!

Along with giving you information on upcoming story times, the librarian can fill you in on seasonal:

- **Reading programs.**
- **Book releases.**
- **Craft projects.**
- **Websites or apps for preschoolers.**
- **Events for the whole family.**



Practice letters with pasta alphabet cards

Making letters out of pasta can be a fun way to review the alphabet with your child. All you need is uncooked elbow macaroni, uncooked spaghetti, index cards and glue.

To make pasta alphabet cards:

1. **Write one uppercase letter** on each index card.
2. **Have your child copy** each letter with pasta on top of the written letters. He can use elbow macaroni for the curved parts of letters and spaghetti pieces for the straight parts.
3. **Help him glue** the pasta onto the index card letters to make a pasta alphabet.
4. **Show your child** how to trace each of the letters with his finger. Say each letter aloud as you trace it together.



Reading and writing holiday fun

There are many ways to help your child build reading and writing skills this season. You can:

- **Ask her** to help you make shopping lists. Talk about the letters and words you write.
- **Help her** make her own holiday or thank-you cards.
- **Take her** with you as you shop for different gifts. Point out the words on the packaging that tell about each item you buy.



Take a literacy walk with your child

It's easy to enjoy reading-readiness time outside with your child—even in the winter. Just bundle up and get moving! Walking around your neighborhood can promote conversation and boost language skills. When you're on your walk:

- **Read signs**, street names and numbers together. See what words, letters and numbers your child can point out.
- **Collect leaves**, twigs, rocks or pinecones. Talk about their texture, shape and color. Use new words such as *brittle*, *rigid* and *jagged* to boost her vocabulary.
- **Encourage your child** to ask questions. If you don't know an answer, look it up online together when you get home.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Little White Rabbit*** by Kevin Henkes. A little white rabbit sets out on an adventure and wonders what it would be like to look like something else. What if he were green like the grass? Or still like a rock?
- ***Put It on the List!*** by Kristen Darbyshire. A family discovers just how important the grocery list is when they have macaroni but no cheese, peanut butter without jelly, and even cookies but no milk!
- ***A Splendid Friend, Indeed*** by Suzanne Bloom. Bear wants to read, write and think quietly. But Goose wants to talk all the time! Will this unlikely pair become friends?



Q: My four-year-old uses the same basic words over and over. Besides reading to him, how can I improve his vocabulary and language skills?

A: In addition to reading, expose your child to new places. Take him to the zoo, a park or a construction site and ask him to describe what he sees. Use different words at home, too. For example, you might describe the bath water as *tepid* instead of simply as *warm*. And be sure to avoid using baby talk when you talk with your child.

Building Readers[®]

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

December 2018

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Mary Had a Little Glam*

(Tammi Sauer)

A famous nursery rhyme gets a makeover in this story. Mary can't help offering fashion advice to her classmates (who include familiar characters) at Mother Goose Elementary School. Soon she has added a bit of glamour to everyone, including the class pet.



■ *Rabbit & Robot: The Sleepover*

Rabbit has planned every detail of his sleepover with Robot, right down to which veggies they'll have on their pizza. But when things don't go smoothly (Robot prefers hardware on his pizza), the friends must rely on Robot's stellar logical thinking skills. The first book in the Rabbit & Robot series.

■ *The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder*

Does your child know that a snowflake is a crystal? In this nonfiction book, she'll discover how a snowflake forms and then changes as it passes down through the clouds. Plus, she'll find instructions for catching snowflakes to observe.



■ *More Spaghetti, I Say!*

(Rita Golden Gelman)

Minnie will eat spaghetti with just about anything—ice cream, marshmallows, and even pickles. Her friend Freddy tries to distract her from her pasta obsession so she'll play with him, but he makes a big mess in the process. (Also available in Spanish.)



Support for beginning writers

Your little author probably has plenty to say, but she may need help getting started or putting all of her ideas on paper. Lend a hand with these strategies.

Create a word bank

Before your youngster writes a story, help her list words she might use. If she's writing about the winter carnival at school, the list may contain *hot chocolate*, *photo booth*, and *gingerbread*. She can refer to her list as she writes so she remembers everything she wants to mention.

Hold a writing "conference"

Offer to read a story your child is working on, and point out places where you want to know more. You could ask, "What did the little girl feed her horses for breakfast?" or "What color are the horses?" Encourage her to add the answers, then read it again. She'll see that details make a story more interesting.



Read a picture book

A favorite book can provide a "blueprint" for your youngster's story. Suggest that she use a character, the setting, or the format for inspiration. For example, reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Laura Numeroff) could lead her to write "If I Give My Dog a Tennis Ball." Maybe the tennis ball will make her dog want to play with a baseball, then a soccer ball, and then a basketball!♥

Keep the conversation rolling

Build your child's speaking and listening skills with the roll of a die! Pick a topic (perhaps the day he was born), then take turns rolling a die and following these directions.

Roll a 1: Add a statement. ("We couldn't wait to meet you.")

Roll a 2: Ask any family member a question. ("How big was I?")

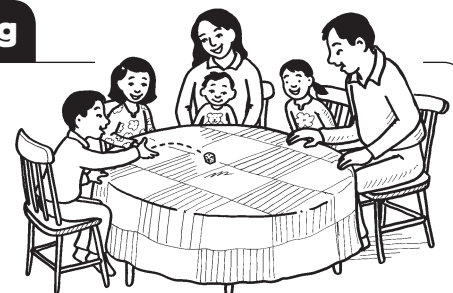
Roll a 3: Add a statement *and* a question. ("Wow, I was tiny. Who came to visit?")

Roll a 4: Share your opinion. ("You were adorable.")

Roll a 5: Move on to a related subject. ("Mom, what were you like as a baby?")

Roll a 6: Wild card—do any of the above.

Idea: Carry a die with you in the car for fun on-the-go conversations.♥



"I predict that..."

"What do you think will happen next?" Asking your child to predict the path a story might take can boost his comprehension. When you read aloud, try these ideas.

Picture mysteries. Cover up the words every few pages, and have your youngster predict what's going to happen based on the illustrations. Encourage him to point out clues. Maybe a picture of ducks waddling toward a family picnic makes him think the ducks will try to eat the food. Now read on so he can see if his prediction is right.



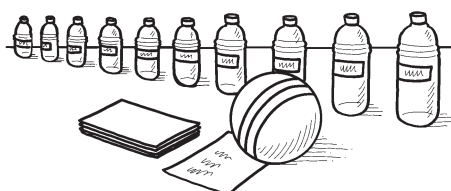
Secret predictions. Keep paper and pencil handy for each of you while you read. At any time, either of you can say, "I have a prediction!" Then, stop reading, and secretly write or draw what you believe will happen next. As the story continues, place a check mark next to each prediction that comes true. At the end of the story, explain why you made each prediction, and tell which ones were correct. ♥

Fun with Words

Bowling for sight words

This version of bowling lets your youngster practice reading *sight words*—common words that early readers learn to recognize at first glance.

Materials: sight word list (from the teacher or sightwords.com/sight-words/dolch/), marker, 10 index cards, masking tape, 10 half-filled water bottles, ball



Help your child write one word on each index card and the same words on separate strips of tape. She should stack the cards facedown and label each bottle with a piece of tape.

Next, line up the bottles in a row (with a few inches between each one), and have players stand 6 feet away. Take turns drawing a card, reading the word, and rolling the ball toward the matching bottle. If you knock it down, keep the card and remove the bottle. Now it's the next player's turn. Collect the most cards to win. ♥

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Parent to Parent

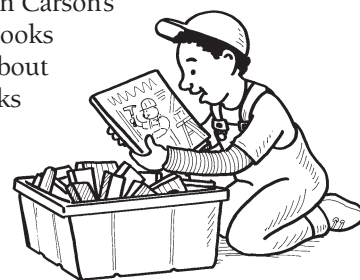
Surprise, there's a book!

During a recent visit to my son Carson's classroom, I noticed baskets of books everywhere. There were books about money and shapes in the math center, alphabet books beside a basket of magnetic letters, and biographies of artists near an easel.

When we got home, I looked around and thought, "Where can we add books?" It turns out there were lots of places! Carson wanted to put library books about construction into his block bin.

When I found a book about fossils at a flea market, I added it to his box of dinosaurs. And Carson decided that his toy kitchen was the perfect place for a kids' cookbook.

Now I regularly leave "surprise" books for my son to find—and sometimes he does the same for me. I've noticed him building a construction site with blocks and matching toy dinosaurs with the photos in the fossil book. I love that he's making connections as he plays. ♥



Lists are practical—and fun

A list is a great example of real-life writing. Show your child how useful writing is with these suggestions:

- Let your youngster help you make a grocery list. She can refer to the advertising circular to spell what you need (milk, rice).
- Before you travel, have her list items to pack. For a winter break trip to her grandparents' house, she might write *toothbrush* and *teddy bear*.
- Suggest that your child make a to-do

list for her day: "Go to school. Feed the dog. Read a book."

- Work together to create a guest list for a holiday meal or a list of gifts she could make for relatives.

- Weave list writing into playtime. Have your youngster design a sign listing the flavors in her pretend ice cream shop or the services offered at her imaginary pet-sitting business.

Idea: Encourage your child to illustrate her lists. ♥



BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District
Title 1

Five strategies can help you support a struggling reader

If your child is having trouble with reading, it can affect all of his classes. His confidence is a key element of his reading success. To help your child keep a positive outlook:

- 1. Avoid comparing him** with others. Children develop reading skills at different rates—and that's OK. Help your child focus on his strengths.
- 2. Ask his teacher** for suggestions of how to help him with reading at home.
- 3. Plan small steps** to help him overcome struggles. Match goals to his age and ability so he can experience success. Nothing breeds success like success.
- 4. Create a reading routine** that your child finds enjoyable.
- 5. Keep up-to-date** with his progress in school. Don't let problems escalate.



A snowman makes winter reading fun

There's just something about a snowman that seems to inspire writers. And December is the perfect time of year to check out one of these wintry titles:

- ***Sneezy the Snowman*** by Maureen Wright.
 - ***The Greatest Snowman in the World!*** by Peter Hannan.
 - ***Beware, The Snowman*** by R.L. Stine.
 - ***Case of the Sneaky Snowman*** by Carolyn Keene.
- After sharing one (or all!) of these snowy stories with your child, build a snowman together—either outside out of actual snow, or inside out of paper, cotton balls or even marshmallows.

What kinds of adventures could your child's snowman have? Ask her to write down a tale. Then, make it a tradition to read her story on the first day of winter every year.

Strong attendance has a direct impact on your child's reading skills

Research shows that missing school has negative effects on reading and learning. This winter, recommit to ensuring your child is in school on time every day. Then, begin 2019 with routines that support good attendance. Stick to a regular sleep schedule and gather items for school the night before. This makes mornings easier and prevents tardiness.



Source: "Attendance in the Early Grades: Why it Matters for Reading," Attendance Works, niswc.com/br-attendance.

Don't let cold weather increase time spent in front of screens!

Experts recommend parents set limits on kids' recreational screen time. But it's easy to lose track of screen time when it's too cold to play outside.

Brainstorm and make a list of fun reading-related alternative activities.

On cold days, have your child choose an activity from the list.



Pay attention to textbook pictures

Pictures in textbooks can give students a clearer idea of what a chapter is about. Before your child reads a chapter in her textbook, have her look at the pictures and ask herself:

- **What does the picture** show?
- **What details** are there?
- **Why did** the authors and editors include this picture?



Boost your child's reading comprehension

The older your child gets, the more complex his school reading becomes. He needs strong reading comprehension skills to do his best in school. To help your child understand what he reads, encourage him to:

1. **Read aloud.** This slows down reading and helps your child "process" words.
2. **Read to relax.** Encourage your child to read enjoyable books for fun.
3. **Reread.** Reading things more than once can help your child understand new concepts and learn new vocabulary.
4. **Supplement his reading.** Look for interesting, non-intimidating materials related to what your child is learning in school.
5. **Discuss his reading.** Ask questions that encourage thinking. "Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?"



Story starters bring life to writing

To help your child practice writing, share irresistible story starters:

- **It's the year 2118.** What are your future relatives doing?
- **You're a space explorer.** What does your ship look like, and where are you going?
- **It is raining** cats and dogs—real ones! What do you do?



For lower elementary readers:

- **President Taft Is Stuck in the Bath** by Mac Barnett. Legend has it that the 27th president, William Howard Taft, was once stuck in a White House bathtub! Did that happen?

- **Mirror, Mirror: A Book of Reversible Verse** by Marilyn Singer. These poems based on fairy tales have a special feature. They can be read down the page or up the page for different meanings!



For upper elementary readers:

- **Confetti Girl** by Diana López. Join Lina as she goes through her school year—playing volleyball with her best friend, running a booth at the school carnival and adding to her unique collection of socks.
- **Word After Word After Word** by Patricia MacLachlan. A writer tells fourth graders that everyone has a story to tell—and together they discover how right she is.

Play dictionary games to learn new words

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

Then, take turns leading these games:

- **Definition First.** Read only the definition of a word. Have the other players try to guess the word.
- **Which Is It?** Find an unusual word in the dictionary. Say the word. Then, read two definitions: the correct one and a definition of another word. Ask players to guess the correct definition.



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

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

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

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Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

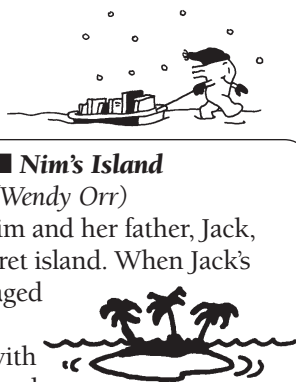
December 2018

Dennis Yarmouth Title I Program

Book Picks

■ *Nim's Island* (Wendy Orr)

Nim and her father, Jack, live on a secret island. When Jack's boat is damaged in a storm, Nim is left with only her animal friends for company. Can she rescue her father? Readers will find out in this fantasy adventure. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Writing Radar: Using Your Journal to Snoop Out and Craft Great Stories* (Jack Gantos)

Young writers get first-hand tips from an award-winning children's author in this guide. Gantos explains the importance of keeping a journal, shares stories about his life and career, and offers fun writing exercises for readers to try.

■ *Restart* (Gordon Korman)

A fall from a roof changes everything for Chase. When he hits his head, he still knows his name, but he forgets what kind of person he is. Why do some people love him while others hate him? He's going to figure it out—and decide if the person he was before his accident is who he wants to be now.



■ *What Is the Constitution?* (Patricia Brennan Demuth)

This nonfiction book gives your child a behind-the-scenes look at the writing of the U.S. Constitution. She will discover surprising facts about the heated debates and the many compromises that led to the document we still use today.

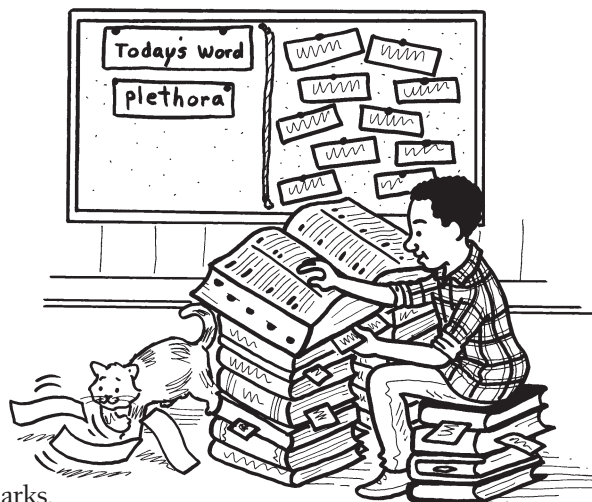


Bigger vocabulary = better comprehension

The more words your child knows, the easier it will be for him to understand what he reads. Share these ways to grow his vocabulary while he enjoys a good book.

Bookmark it

Have your youngster cut out strips of paper to make bookmarks. As he reads, he can write a new word on each strip. Then, he could read on to determine the words' meanings, or look them up in a dictionary, and add the definitions to the bookmarks. Suggest that he use the bookmarks to save his place while reading.



Share it

Saying words frequently will make them a permanent part of your youngster's vocabulary. Each day, encourage him to pick one new word that he read and look for ways to slip it into conversations. During dinner, he might say, "We had a *plethora* of lunch choices in the cafeteria today" or "I'm *astounded* that it snowed this early."

Apply it

Your child can use a word he learns from one book to figure out a similar word in another. Say he discovered that a *prophecy* is a prediction. Then if he reads "She *prophesied* that the animals would escape," he might realize that *prophesied* means "predicted."

Write to a hero

For a rewarding way to practice writing, let your child send a letter to a hero like a soldier, nurse, firefighter, or teacher. Use these steps.

1. Pick a recipient. Your youngster might mail a letter to your local fire station or hospital, or she can find ideas at operationgratitude.com/express-your-thanks/write-letters.

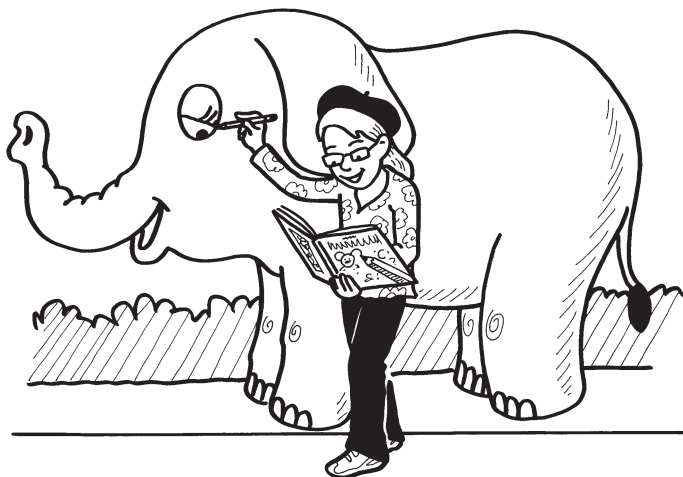
2. Write thoughtfully. Have your child research the person's job and use what she learns to make her letter more personal. If she's writing to a new army recruit, she could say, "Congratulations on finishing boot camp! Thank you for your service." Then, she might add details about herself (hobbies, favorite school subject).

Note: The person may or may not be able to write back—regardless, sending a letter will be a valuable experience for your youngster.



All kinds of nonfiction

When it comes to nonfiction, there are many exciting options for children these days. Becoming familiar with different types of nonfiction will help your youngster read textbooks and other informational books in school. Suggest that she explore these types.



animals, suggest that she read a book on the topic instead. She'll practice reading instructions and referring to diagrams and other graphics. *Idea:* She could watch a video after reading a how-to book. What did she learn from the book that wasn't in the video, and vice versa?

Narrative nonfiction. This kind of nonfiction is told like a story—often with dialogue and rich descriptions—but it's true. For instance, encourage your

How-to books. The next time your child wants to watch a how-to video on making slime, playing chess, or drawing

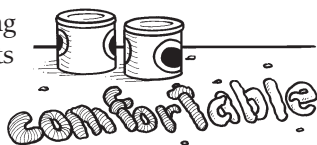
youngster to read a first-person account of a historical event she studied in school. What clues does she see that it's a real-life story? *Examples:* footnotes, excerpts of interviews with sources, quotes from real people. ■



Q&A Making word study fun

Q My son has weekly spelling tests this year. Can you suggest fun ways for him to study his words?

A Focusing on word parts can help your son learn to



spell them correctly. He could make it more interesting by using different color play dough or yarn to "write" different parts of his words.

For example, if this week's words end in the suffixes *able* and *ible*, he might form each instance of *able* in blue and each *ible* in red. Then, maybe he'll make each word root (*comfort*, *cred*) in yellow. The suffixes will stand out, making it easier for him to learn which words contain each ending.

He may also like to post copies of his spelling list around the house and highlight word parts in different colors. The more he sees his words, the more likely he is to spell them correctly on his test—and when he writes them in the future. ■

Fun with Words

Follow my rule

Your child can practice writing sentences with this quick game. The object is to construct sentences while following a particular "rule."

Let your youngster pick the first rule ("Every word must have the same number of letters"). Quickly write a sentence that fits ("Will they join your team?"), and put down your pencil. Then, read your sentences aloud. The person who finished first—and followed the rule correctly—gets to pick the next rule.

Here are more rules to try:

- Each word has to start with the same letter. ("Tim takes two tests tomorrow.")
- All the words need to share the same vowel. ("Bob got on top of Bo's roof.")
- The sentence must contain two words that are anagrams—words with the same letters in a different order. ("It's easier to *listen* if you are *silent*.")
- You must include two adjectives and one four-syllable word. ("The big gray rhinoceros drank from the pond.")

Challenge your family to come up with your own creative rules! ■



Parent 2 Parent

Success with auditory processing

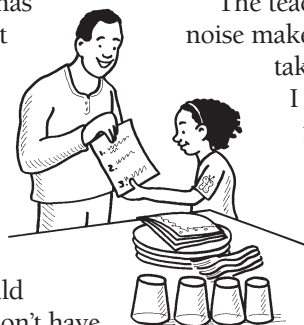
This fall, my daughter Rachel was diagnosed with auditory processing disorder, or APD. The doctor explained that her hearing is normal, but she has trouble understanding what she hears. And now, we have a great toolbox of strategies to help her.

For example, Rachel's teacher suggested that when I need my daughter to do something that requires several steps, I could write down each step. If I don't have

paper and pencil handy—say, when we're in the car—I should speak slowly and ask Rachel to repeat the directions back to me.

The teacher also said background noise makes it harder for my child to take in what's being said. So now I turn off the TV or take Rachel into a quiet room when I need to explain something to her.

Working together, her teacher and I have been able to help my daughter feel more successful in school and at home. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

DECEMBER 2018

READING

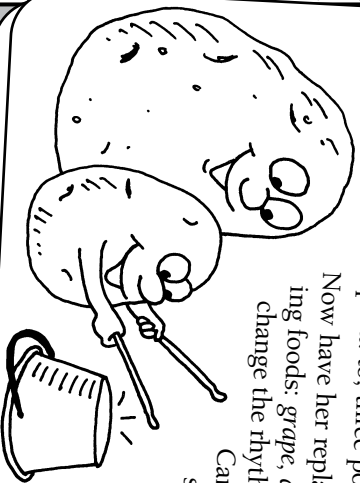
Poetic rhythm

Playing with the rhythm of poetry lets your child hear individual syllables and sounds—a skill that helps her sound out words when she reads.

Ingredients: poem or song, “drumsticks” (pencils or chopsticks), pot or bucket upside-down pot or bucket, striking the drum once for each syllable. Example: “One po-ta-to, two po-ta-to, three po-ta-to four.”

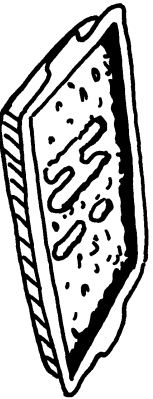
Now have her replace *potato* with each of the following foods: *grape*, *apple*, and *cucumber*. Which words change the rhythm? (Answers: *grape* and *apple*.)

Can she tell you why? (*Grape* has one syllable, and *apple* has two. But *potato* and *cucumber* contain the same number of syllables—three—so the rhythm stays the same.)



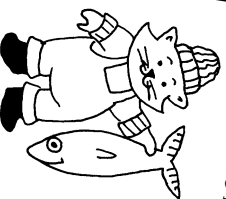
WRITING

Make handwriting practice fun for your child by letting him “write” in rice. Have him spread a thin layer of rice on a baking sheet. He can use his finger to write the alphabet, his name, or short messages to you (“I love you!”).



THINKING

Your youngster needs her “thinking cap” for this idea that will inspire her to think outside the box. Take turns asking each other creative questions like “What would our home look like if there were no colors?” or “Where would cats work if they had jobs?” Come up with serious or outrageous answers!



HISTORY

Headlines in history

What makes a good headline? This idea encourages your youngster to summarize historical events.

Ingredients: newspaper, pencil, paper

Suggest that your child read several headlines in the newspaper or on news websites. What do they have in common? He might say they’re short, they tell who and what the articles are about, and they get readers’ attention. Then, your youngster could pick an event he learned about in history, such as the Wright brothers’ flight. He can pretend he’s a newspaper reporter breaking the news. What headline would he write for his article? (“Wright brothers take to the sky.”)



MATH

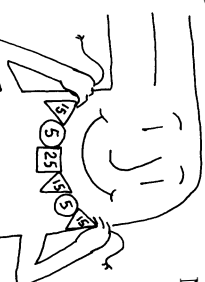
Money addition

Your child will work on adding money with this “gem” of an activity.

Ingredients: construction paper, scissors, pencil, hole-punch, yarn. Pretend that you and your youngster own a jewelry store. You’ve just received a shipment of precious stones shaped like circles, squares, and triangles. Have her cut out several copies of each shape from different-colored construction paper and write a value on each “gem.” Examples: circles are worth \$5, triangles \$15, and squares \$25.

Now ask your child to design a necklace by hole-punching the gems and stringing them on yarn. Next, she should add up the gems’ values to figure out what the necklace would cost.

Idea: Challenge her to create a bracelet that’s worth a certain amount (\$95, \$150). Can she make two bracelets worth the same amount but using different gems?



Refrigerator Poster

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

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

DECEMBER 2018

Character Corner

SCIENCE

Hands-on experiment

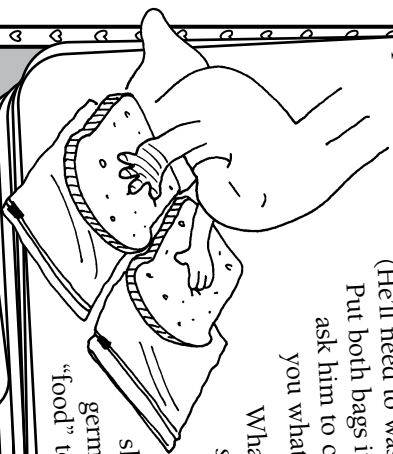
This experiment shows your youngster why he should wash his hands before he eats.

Ingredients: two zipper bags, marker, two slices of bread

Label one bag "Clean hands" and the other "Dirty hands." Your child should wash and dry his hands and press one hand onto a slice of bread. Seal the bread in the "Clean hands" bag. Next, let him rub a hand on the floor, press it against another piece of bread, and seal this slice in the "Dirty hands" bag. (He'll need to wash his hands after this.)

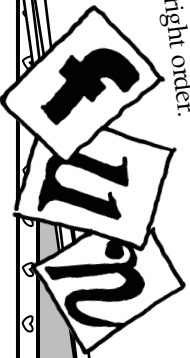
Put both bags in a warm, dark place, and ask him to check them daily and tell you what he observes.

What happens? While he won't see the germs on the "dirty" bread, he'll notice that mold appears on that slice first. That's because the germs on his hands served as "food" to help the mold grow.



SPELLING

Encourage your child to practice spelling with this activity. Give her old magazines or catalogs, and call out words she's learning to spell. She can look through the publications to find the letters in each word, cut them out, and glue them onto a piece of paper in the right order.



STUDY SKILLS

Have your child play a game of "Study Jeopardy" with a classmate to prepare for a test or quiz. They can take turns giving an answer ("stratus, cirrus, and cumulus"). The other player should ask the question that goes with it ("What are three types of clouds?").



SAFETY

Help your youngster memorize her address and family members' phone numbers. She could practice writing the address on old envelopes and sing each phone number to a tune and sing each phone number to a tune she makes up. Also, let her type the phone numbers into a toy phone or a cell phone you no longer use.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

TEAMWORK

Suggest that your child team up with you, a sibling, or a friend to complete a jigsaw puzzle. The catch? They should take turns placing one piece at a time. They'll soon discover that working together makes finishing the puzzle easier.



CARING

Looking after a pet teaches your youngster about caring and compassion. Give him jobs like putting out fresh food and water for a guinea pig. *Tip:* No pet? He might take care of a stuffed animal by giving it a blanket and lots of hugs.



ACCOUNTABILITY

With your child, think of things you're each accountable for. Maybe she'll point out that she has to do homework and her laundry, and you go to work and pay the bills. Name more people (teacher, doctor), and say what others depend on them to do.




TIME

What can your youngster accomplish in 5 seconds? How about in 5 hours? Encourage him to think about units of time by brainstorming tasks that take seconds, minutes, hours, days, or years. For example, perhaps he takes a shower in 5 minutes and reads a chapter book in 5 days.



ACTS OF HOLIDAY KINDNESS 2016

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 Make a card for a soldier	2 Pick up litter	3 Be respectful to your friends and teachers	4 Donate your old toys to your favorite charity
5 Make someone laugh by telling a silly joke	6 Make a hug coupon for someone	7 Show your teacher how responsible you are by having all your things	8 Make a new friend today 	9 Tell someone that you care for them	10 Donate food to your local food pantry	11 Tape change to a vending machine
12 Write a letter to a faraway friend or relative to say hello	13 Take some supplies to an animal shelter	14 Do a chore for someone in your family	15 Give a compliment to a friend	16 Write a thank you note to your police and firemen	17 Leave a popcorn surprise on a DVD rental machine	18 Feed the birds
19 Thank your family for being there for you	20 Leave a happy note for someone to find	21 Eat lunch with someone new	22 Let someone go ahead of you in line	23 Smile at everyone you see today	24 Do a secret act of kindness for someone	25 Sleep late
26 READ	27 READ	28 READ	29 READ	30 READ	31 READ	

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