

Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

November 2017

East End Intermediate School
Jayme Steinbeck, Principal

Book Picks

■ *My Side of the Mountain* (Jean Craighead George)

It's the 1950s, and Sam doesn't want to live in his cramped New York City apartment with his family anymore. He runs away to the Catskills and learns to live on his own. A coming-of-age story for young nature lovers. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Science in Ancient Egypt* (Geraldine Woods)

Does your youngster know that ancient Egyptians used the sun to tell time, made paper from plants, and designed tools to lift and move heavy objects?



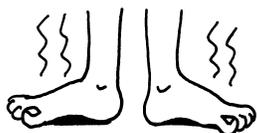
This nonfiction book explains many things we have learned from this long-ago civilization.

■ *Trauma Queen* (Barbara Dee)

Thirteen-year-old Marigold wants to go to school, make friends, and, most of all, avoid embarrassment. That's hard to do with the unusual way her mother teaches the drama class at her new school. A hilarious look at mother-daughter relationships.

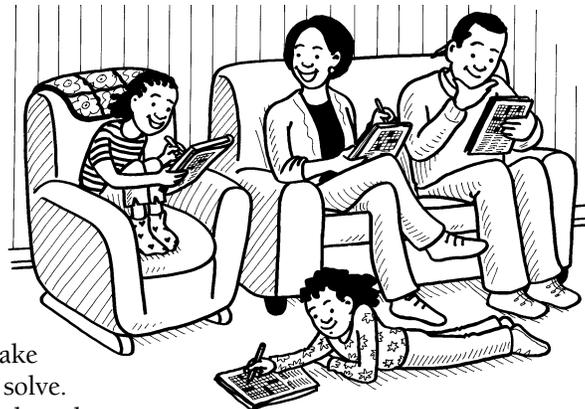
■ *A Bad Case of the Giggles* (Compiled by Bruce Lansky)

This funny collection of poems on everything from stinky feet and hiccups to spaghetti and hand-me-down clothes is practically guaranteed to make readers love poetry. Includes more than 60 poems by numerous poets.



Building word power

Did you know that a strong vocabulary paves the way for your child to become a fluent reader, a better writer, and a more confident speaker? Try these everyday strategies to increase your youngster's word power.



Create crosswords

Encourage your child to make a crossword puzzle for you to solve. She'll boost her vocabulary as she collects unfamiliar words from books and uses dictionary definitions to write clues. *Idea:* Have a crossword puzzle night. Get crossword puzzle books from the dollar store. Take turns reading clues aloud, and fill in the answers. Or make your own puzzles, and swap.

Search during errands

At the bank, supermarket, or car wash, ask your youngster to be on the lookout for new words. Can she figure out the meaning of words like *principal* or *biodegradable* by using context clues? For instance, if a sign at the bank says, "Interest is paid on your *principal* monthly," she

might realize that *principal* is the amount of money you have. Or a recycling symbol near the car wash chemicals may be a hint that *biodegradable* relates to environmental conservation.

Make a word wall

Set aside a bulletin board or a space on a kitchen wall where family members can post interesting words they read or hear. During dinner, talk about where you found the words and why they're interesting to you. Then, try to sprinkle the words into your conversation. Each week, have every person choose her favorite new word. ■

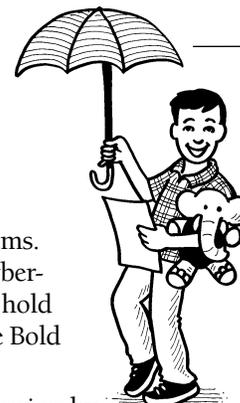
Host a poetry slam

This family "poetry slam" lets your child enjoy poetry and practice speaking in front of others.

Find. Have your youngster pick out poetry books from the library or print poems from websites. Then, each family member can choose one to memorize or read.

Perform. On the big night, take turns performing your poems. For extra fun, use props. Your youngster could juggle strawberries while reciting "Wild Strawberries" (Shel Silverstein) or hold an umbrella and a stuffed elephant as he recites "Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant" (Jack Prelutsky).

Discuss. Boost your child's reading and listening comprehension by talking about the poems. Ask questions like "What do you think the poem's message is?" or "Why do you think the poet chose that topic?" ■



What's the scoop?

Encourage your youngster to practice informational writing by pretending he's a "roving reporter" when you visit with relatives this month. These steps will ensure he gets the scoop on all the family news that's fit to print.

1. Ask questions. Have your child list the six questions reporters ask: *who, what, when, where, why* (the "5 Ws") and *how*. He can use them to think of questions when he interviews family members. *Examples:* "What school did you go to?" "When did you graduate?"



2. Add details. Suggest that your youngster dig for details that support and clarify facts. Prompts like "Tell me more about..." and "Could you explain..." may lead him to discover which foods his cousin tried on his trip to Korea or what inspired his grandmother to run a marathon.

3. Check facts. Your child should consult books or websites to confirm information. For example, he could check the ingredients for Korean specialties or find out how many miles are in a marathon (26.2).

4. Write and publish. Once your youngster has all the facts, it's time to write! Suggest that he write an article about each relative he interviewed or one long article combining his information. Then, he could distribute copies to family members. 📖

Fun with Words

Menu games

Restaurant and take-out menus are chock-full of opportunities for your children to practice reading skills. Here are two ideas.

Search for words



Go on a word hunt with your youngster. Who can find the longest word? The word with the most syllables? You might ask her to find a synonym (a word with the same meaning) for *delicious* (*mouth-watering*). Or see if

she can find an antonym (an opposite) for *chilled* (*steaming*).

Find the food

Choose an ingredient (zucchini, alfredo sauce, garlic), and have your child find a menu item that contains it. If the menu has photographs, point to a picture of a dish she doesn't know, such as chicken Parmesan, and cover up the name. Let her study the picture and then read through the menu descriptions to find one that matches. 📖



Parent 2 Parent

Be a guest reader

At my daughter's parent-teacher conference, I met her reading teacher, Ms. Connor. She let me know that she was looking for parent volunteers, so I signed up to come in twice this month.

For my first time volunteering, I read with small groups of students. The teacher explained that hearing someone read aloud encourages kids to view books as a source of pleasure. Then, I had some students read to me, which she said helps them improve their reading fluency and listening skills.

My daughter was excited to see me in her class, and I really enjoyed reading with her and her classmates. Next, I've signed up to take part in the book donation program coming up. We are going to ask other parents and the community to contribute used books for a classroom library. 📖



Q&A

Branching out as a reader

Q My son only likes to read stories about sports. Any ideas for getting him to try something new?

A It's great that your son enjoys reading and has go-to favorites.

To help him discover a variety of books, try taking him to a library or bookstore and pointing out displays showcasing mysteries, new releases, classics, or how-to books. Sometimes children get into the habit of going straight to the same section every time. If you

explore together, a different type of book may catch his eye.

Also, since he's a sports fan, biographies of athletes may be a natural fit. Reading these real-life stories may lead to an interest in biographies about inventors, musicians, or world leaders.

Another idea is to steer him toward books about sports history. Reading about the origin of the Olympic Games or the impact of the civil rights movement, for instance, may encourage interest in other history books. 📖



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Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2017



East End Intermediate School
Jayme Steinbeck, Principal

BEST BITES

Count the ingredients

A long list of ingredients on a cereal box or a jar of pasta sauce often means the food is highly processed. At the grocery store, let your youngster compare several brands of an item on your list (say, cereal bars). She can count the ingredients in each—and put the one with the fewest ingredients in your cart.



Explore the great outdoors

Cooler temperatures offer the perfect opportunity to discover outdoor community “gems” with your child. Help him find local plants and animals while you walk along a trail or through a park or botanical garden. For extra fun and exercise, bring along helmets and explore on bikes, skateboards, or scooters (where permitted).

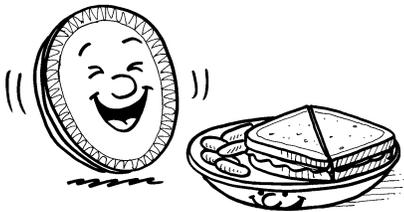
DID YOU KNOW?

November 6 is National Nachos Day. Make this popular appetizer healthier by using whole-grain tortilla chips and swapping plain Greek yogurt for sour cream. Melt real cheese on top (rather than store-bought queso). Then, add vegetables like chopped tomatoes, corn, shredded lettuce, and diced red onion.

Just for fun

Q: What did one plate say to another?

A: Lunch is on me.



Just add water (or milk)!

Does your child ask for juice boxes, soda, or sports drinks when he's thirsty? Loaded with sugar and calories, these choices offer little nutrition. The best way to quench his thirst is to drink water or milk. Try the following tips to encourage healthier beverage choices.

Make it motivating

Let your youngster choose a special cup at the dollar store to use only when he drinks milk or water. Or have him decorate a reusable water bottle. Using permanent markers, he can jazz up a plain bottle with his name, colorful pictures, and creative designs.

Add flavor

Enhance the flavor of water and milk with these healthy twists. Fill an ice cube tray with water, invite your child to add a flavor mix-in (a mint leaf, a pineapple chunk, a raspberry) to each compartment, and freeze. Then, he could choose a cube to flavor his water. When



he drinks milk, he might try stirring in a sprinkle of cinnamon or a few drops of vanilla extract.

Go for fizz

Your youngster may enjoy the fizzy effect of plain seltzer or sparkling water. With zero calories, sugar, or artificial colors or flavors, this bubbly water is fun to drink—without all the unhealthy stuff that's in soda. And seltzer is now sold in a variety of interesting natural flavors like mandarin orange, cucumber, and pomegranate. ●

Get your groove on

Keeping fit can be as simple as dancing! Put on music, and enjoy these ideas with your youngster.

● **Shadow dancing.** In a darkened room, have your child face a blank wall while someone else shines a flashlight on her from behind. She could create cool moves to make her shadow “dance.”

● **Chain reaction.** Build a dance sequence together. The first person does a simple movement like swinging her arms overhead. The next dancer copies that move, then adds one of her own. Take turns, each time repeating the sequence from the beginning and adding a new move at the end. ●



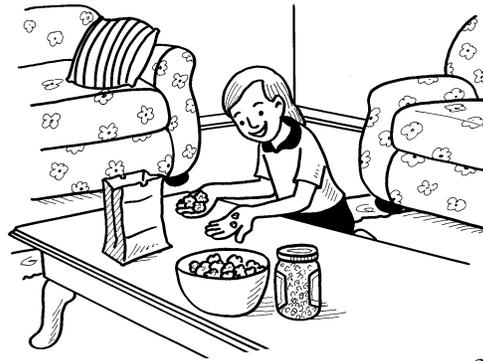
Science in the kitchen

Boost your youngster's enthusiasm for healthy eating with these hands-on experiments that weave in science fun.

"Egg-cellent" snack

Experiment: Let your child fill two glasses with water and add 1 tbsp. salt to one. Place a fresh egg in each. What happens? The egg in salt water will float. Why? (The egg is denser than plain water, but less dense than salt water.) *Note:* If the egg doesn't float, have her add 1 tsp. salt at a time until it does.

Eat: Hard-boiled eggs are a protein-rich snack. Place eggs in a saucepan, and cover with water. Put on a lid, boil 1 minute,



and remove from heat. Let sit covered for 12 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and peel.

Popping perfection

Experiment: Have your youngster observe unpopped popcorn kernels. (They're small, brown, and hard.) Then, she should place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup kernels in a paper lunch bag and fold the top over a few times.

Microwave 2–3 minutes, pour into a bowl, and let her observe again: The kernels are big, white, and fluffy! What happened? (Kernels contain water that turns into steam when heated. Steam expands, making the kernels explode.)

Eat: Popcorn is a healthy whole grain. Instead of salt, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, or paprika. ♥

Q&A

DIY convenience foods

Q: Our grocery store stocks precut vegetables and other time-saving items, but they're too expensive for my budget! Any suggestions?

A: With a little planning, you can make your own convenience foods at home.

On week-ends, ask your child to help you prep vegetables for the week. For



example, wash and dry lettuce, and place in a covered container with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. You can also wash, chop, and store firm veggies like carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower.

Cook chicken pieces or portions of meat, and seal in zipper bags to use within 2–3 days. You can even make pasta or rice in advance. Toss with olive oil so it doesn't get sticky, and put in an airtight container.

Your refrigerator will resemble the prepared-foods case at the grocery store—but you won't spend any extra money. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Fitness: It's in the cards!

Put a clever twist on physical activity by helping your youngsters make their own deck of family fitness cards. Here's how.

Together, come up with at least a dozen active ideas that can be done in less than five minutes. Be as creative or silly as you like! Write each one on the front of a separate index card. For example:

- Hop on one foot for one minute while holding the other foot with one hand and pinching your nose. Switch feet and hop for one more minute.
- Lie on your stomach, and pretend to swim like a frog for three minutes.
- Hold hands with a partner. Skip back and forth across the room five times.



On the back of each card, your children can illustrate the activity. Put the cards into a box, and pull one out whenever it's time for a burst of activity! ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Healthier holiday classics

No need to forgo favorite Thanksgiving dishes. Consider these better-for-you versions.

● **Green bean casserole.** For the topping, toss 1 chopped onion and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced fresh mushrooms with 2 tbsp. whole-wheat breadcrumbs. Spread mixture on a greased baking sheet, and bake 10–15 minutes at 400° or until browned. Microwave 12 oz. fresh or frozen green beans, transfer to a dish, and add topping.

● **Cranberry-orange sauce.** In a medium saucepan, combine 10 oz. fresh cranberries, 1 cup water, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup honey, 2 tbsp. grated

orange rind, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. allspice. Boil, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes until mixture thickens.

● **Sage-couscous stuffing.** Cook 1 cup whole-wheat pearl couscous according to package directions. Then, heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each diced onion, celery, and carrots. Saute until soft. Stir in couscous, 1 tbsp. fresh sage, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each salt and pepper. ♥



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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

Which language?

Is your child taking a foreign language now or thinking about taking one? Suggest that she weave a new language into her leisure time. She could watch a televised soccer game in Italian, set an online account or her phone to Spanish, or listen to music in French. She'll pick up new words—and be motivated to continue learning.

“What I do well...”

Focusing on your tween's strengths will help him see himself as capable. Point out what he's good at (“The characters you invent in your stories really come to life”). Then, encourage him to develop talents by stretching his skills. For instance, he might try his hand at writing a science fiction story or enter a writing contest.

Hygiene habits

Middle school is a good time for you and your children to evaluate their hygiene routines. At this age, they'll start to sweat more, so they'll need to work harder to keep their skin clean. Introduce habits like washing their faces morning and night and using deodorant daily.

Worth quoting

“A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.”
Nelson Mandela

Just for fun

Q: How do you know when the moon has had enough to eat?

A: When it's full.



Respect all around

Being respectful will make your middle schooler's relationships better at school and at home. Here are ways he can show respect for himself, other people, and the world around him.

Respecting himself

Tweens with self-respect are more likely to stick to their values and say no to risky behaviors. Teach your child to check in with himself *before* he makes decisions. Say a friend invites him to a party where parents won't be home. He could think about what might go on there and say, “Thanks, but that's not for me.”

Respecting others

Explain that showing respect will make it easier for your tween to get along with adults and peers—and help him earn their respect, too. He can do that by treating people as he wishes to be treated. For instance, he should eat snacks in the kitchen at a friend's house if that's the family's policy (even if he eats in the living room at your house). Also, he'll respect classmates by doing what he



says he will, such as completing his part of a project he's doing with a partner.

Respecting the environment

Encourage your middle grader to adopt the motto, “Leave a place better than you found it.” To put that into practice, he might throw away trash that he sees in your neighborhood or at a park. Conserving resources is another way to respect nature. He can turn lights off when he leaves a room and shut water off while brushing his teeth. 👍

Help wanted

When your child is stumped about a concept or a homework problem, teachers want to help. Plus, asking for assistance shows that your tween cares about her work. Encourage her to seek help confidently with these tips.

■ **When to get help:** Her question may have an easy-to-find answer. Suggest that she check her textbook and notes or call a classmate. If that doesn't work, she should approach her teacher.

■ **How to ask:** Your child might wait until the teacher is free and say, “I'm having trouble with my essay thesis. Can you help me?” Or if the question pops up after school, she could email, “I don't understand why I got this algebra problem wrong. When is a good time to stop by?” 👍



STEM at home

You don't have to be a scientist to foster a love of STEM in your middle grader. Share these quick-hit ideas for exploring STEM at home.

Science. Play with sound by turning a straw into a musical instrument. Let your child experiment with ways to create vibrations—and thus produce noise. For instance, she can make a “flute” by poking holes in a straw, or an “oboe” by flattening one end of a straw and cutting it into a point.

Technology. Make a stop-motion movie. Suggest that your tween snap a series of photos of an object, moving the item



slightly each time. Then, she could upload and string the photos together to create the illusion that the object is moving.

Engineering. Piece together a “marble trampoline” with household items. Have your child come up with different materials to use for a ramp and a

“bouncy” target. The goal? For her to send a marble down the chute so it bounces off the “trampoline.”

Math. How would an object look if it were suddenly much larger or smaller? Ask your middle grader to measure an eraser or a sneaker. Then, using graph paper and what she's learning about ratio and proportion, she can draw the same item scaled up or down by 1, 5, or 10 times. 🍌

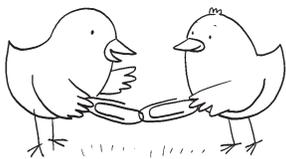
Conversation games



Being able to carry on a conversation will help your tween in everything from participating in class to hanging out with friends. Have fun practicing together with these games.

Link by link

Show your middle grader how conversation connects people. Choose a topic (movies, holidays), and set out one paper clip. Go in a circle, and let each player speak. For each related comment, follow-up question, or answer, add a paper clip to the chain. When the chain reaches 20 links, switch topics and play again.



Freeze chat

Teach your child to speak on his feet. Have two people stand, set a timer for two minutes, and call out a random question (“What's better, snow or sun?”). The players go back and forth discussing the answer. When the timer rings, whoever is talking freezes, and another player takes his place. Ask a new question, and the game continues. 🍌

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Parent to Parent

A self-conscious tween

During the first few weeks of school, my son Sam forgot his gym uniform several times. When I casually mentioned it, Sam got a little touchy, but ended up saying he looks “stupid” in it since he's skinnier than the other boys.

I told Sam that I felt self-conscious at his age, too. I was shorter than my friends and not very coordinated. Exercising made me feel better about myself. I thought it could help him, too. Since I run on the weekends, I invited him to join me. During our cool-down, I pointed out that everyone develops at different rates. I eventually grew taller, and I told him his body would grow and change, too. Regardless, I let him know that what matters most is the awesome person on the inside.

Sam hasn't forgotten his gym clothes lately. I'm taking that as a sign he's feeling a little more secure. 🍌



Q & A

Conferences: A good choice

Q Now that my oldest child is in middle school, do I really need to go to her parent-teacher conference?

A It's a good idea to attend parent-teacher conferences regardless of your student's age. Going to them sends her a clear signal that you're interested in her education.

Knowing that you're paying attention can inspire her to give her best effort. Plus, teachers will share helpful

insights about your child, from her work habits to her social life.

Before you go, see if your tween wants you to bring up specific topics. Also, look over her graded papers. That way, you'll pinpoint anything you want to discuss, such as the math she's working on or her progress in English.

Finally, consider any changes at home that her teachers should know about (a military deployment or a change in marital status, for example). 🍌



Math+Science Connection

Intermediate Edition

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

November 2017

East End Intermediate School
Jayme Steinbeck, Principal



INFO BITS

Here's my method

As your youngster does math homework, periodically ask him, "Can you explain how you solved that?" For 13×7 , he might say that $10 \times 7 = 70$ and $3 \times 7 = 21$, then $70 + 21 = 91$. Explaining his reasoning helps him understand his own ideas—and discover any errors in his thinking.

"What kind of matter am I?"

Use this family activity to help your child visualize molecules in solids, liquids, and gases. First, everyone pretends to be a solid—stand close together. Now be a liquid: Molecules are packed more loosely, so step a little farther apart and make "flowy" movements. Finally, mimic a gas, where molecules float more freely around the room.



Book picks

▣ *The Secret Coders* (Gene Luen Yang) is a graphic novel mystery that also shows your youngster how to write computer code.

▣ What makes us sneeze? Your child will find out in *Sneeze!* (Alexandra Siy). Includes photos and interesting facts about sneezing.

Just for fun

Q: How does a porcupine play leapfrog?

A: Very carefully.



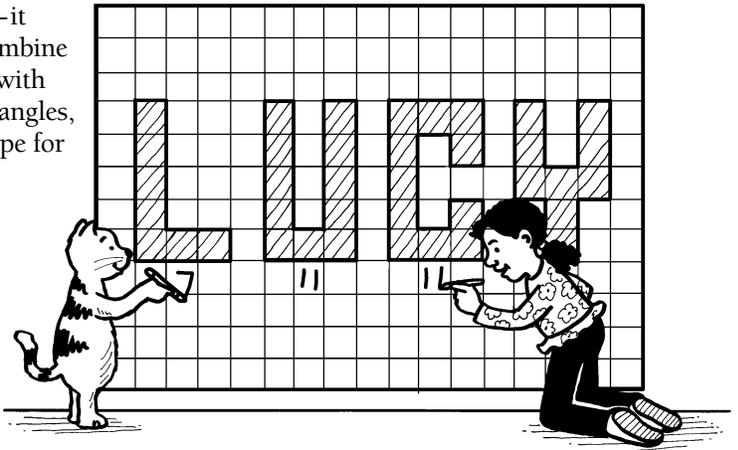
The geometry of my name

Children love the sound of their own name—it belongs to them. Combine this natural interest with area, perimeter, and angles, and you've got a recipe for geometry fun!

Measure area and perimeter

Encourage your youngster to write her name in block letters on graph paper and shade in the squares. An L might have 5 squares going up and 2 more at the bottom going across. How many squares did she use? (7) When she has finished her whole name, she can calculate its area by counting the square units in each letter and adding them together. (The area of L is 7 square units.)

Next, she could find the perimeter by "walking around" each letter in her name, counting how many sides of the squares it takes. The perimeter of the L, for instance, is 16.



Find the angles

The letters of your child's name offer a fun way to practice spotting different kinds of angles. Suggest that she write her name on regular paper in all capital letters. Does she see any 90° angles? (They appear where *perpendicular* lines meet in letters like L, T, and E.) How about acute angles (less than 90°) and obtuse angles (greater than 90°)?

She could draw a circle around each right angle, a square around each acute angle, and a triangle around each obtuse angle. How many of each are in her name? ▣

Design a life vest

Every passenger on a boat needs a life vest. Ask your youngster to imagine his favorite action figure on a canoe ride. What kind of life vest could your child engineer to keep it afloat?

Let your youngster gather materials he thinks would float and build a toy-sized life vest. He might connect foam or packing peanuts with string and tape, for example.

To test his design, he should fit the life vest onto his action figure and drop it into a sink or bathtub full of water. Does it stay afloat? If not, he can remove or add elements, one at a time. He will be redesigning and testing—just like a real engineer does. ▣



Break down fractions

Q: What's in $\frac{3}{4}$?

A: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, and a bunch of other fractions!

These ideas will let your youngster practice breaking down—or *decomposing*—bigger fractions into their smaller parts.

A fraction forest. With this forest, your youngster will see at a glance all of the smaller fractions inside larger ones. Ask him to draw several tree trunks and write a “1” on each. For every tree, he could add branches labeled with fractions that add up to 1. For instance, he might draw 2 branches from one trunk and label each $\frac{1}{2}$. Or on another trunk, he might draw 3 branches, each labeled $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{1}{4}$.



A fraction of trail mix.

Have each family member put a handful of trail mix on a separate paper plate. Count your pieces, sort them by ingredient, and count each type. What fractions does your trail mix break down into? Label each ingredient with a fraction showing its part of the total. *Example:* For

6 raisins, 3 peanuts, 2 chocolate chips, and 5 pretzels, write $\frac{6}{16} + \frac{3}{16} + \frac{2}{16} + \frac{5}{16} = \frac{16}{16}$ (or 1). Compare your plates—your child will see that everyone's answer equals 1. *Tip:* Encourage your child to simplify the fractions and write the equation again: $\frac{3}{8} + \frac{3}{16} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{5}{16} = 1$. 



MATH CORNER Paint by equation

This art activity will give your youngster extra practice with math facts.

Each of you draws an object on a sheet of paper, perhaps a house, car, or shirt. In each section of the picture (roof, door, sleeve), write any equation ($8 \times 7 = \underline{\quad}$, $17 + 19 = \underline{\quad}$). Then, swap papers, and fill in the answers. (*Note:* Let him check the answers with a calculator.)

Next, use watercolors to paint your pictures based on a key that he comes up with for the answers.

Example:

- 0–20 = blue
- 21–40 = red
- 41–60 = yellow
- 61–80 = green
- 81–100 = purple
- More than 100 = orange



When the pictures dry, he could hang them up as study tools. 

PARENT TO PARENT

A graphing party

My daughter Anika had a homework assignment to take a survey and graph the results. She and her friends decided to work on the assignment together, and they turned it into a “graphing party.”

They wrote survey questions about favorite things like ice cream treats and types of movies. Then, they surveyed friends and family. To decide what kind of graph to make, Anika wrote “bar graph” and “picture graph” on separate scraps of paper and turned them facedown. Each child chose one and created that type of graph.

Anika made the bars on her graph look like ice cream sandwiches, and another child created a picture graph with movie tickets in each row. They analyzed their graphs to find the top choices (banana splits and comedies)—and then enjoyed ice cream while watching a movie! 



SCIENCE LAB

See like a jellyfish

Different animals have different ways of seeing. A jellyfish has simple eyes called eyespots that detect only light and darkness. Your child can try this experiment to see like a jellyfish does.

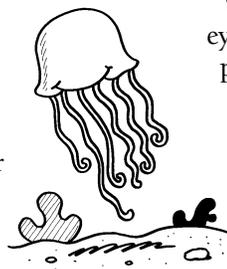
You'll need: flashlight

Here's how: In a windowless room, shut the door, and have your youngster close her eyes. Shine the flashlight on the floor in front of her, and move it slowly in a path around the room. Without opening her

eyes, she should try to walk around, following the path of the light.

What happens? Your child won't be able to see the details of the room, but she can use the light to get around.

Why? The light penetrates her eyelids because they are not completely opaque. Although your youngster's eyes are very different from a jellyfish's eyes, this activity gives her an idea of how jellyfish see—they're able to navigate by recognizing variations in light. 



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SHORT NOTES

Practice patience

Patience is a lifelong skill that will help your youngster in school—and in life. The key is knowing how to pass time pleasantly while waiting so he doesn't feel anxious or frustrated. Together, come up with special "waiting activities" like saying the alphabet backward or counting down with the crosswalk sign.

A future job

Help your child make the connection between school and the career she could have someday. Point out workers using school subjects like a nurse writing on a chart or a TV weather forecaster describing a cold front. Also, friends and relatives might tell your child what they studied in school and how it's related to their jobs.

See that illustration?

Understanding the meaning of images in books, magazines, and newspapers will boost your youngster's reading comprehension. To build *visual literacy*, ask your youngster to explain what's happening in illustrations and graphics. He might even enjoy making up his own captions.

Worth quoting

"Adventure is worthwhile in itself."
Amelia Earhart

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What does even the most careful person overlook?

A: Her nose!



Doing my own homework

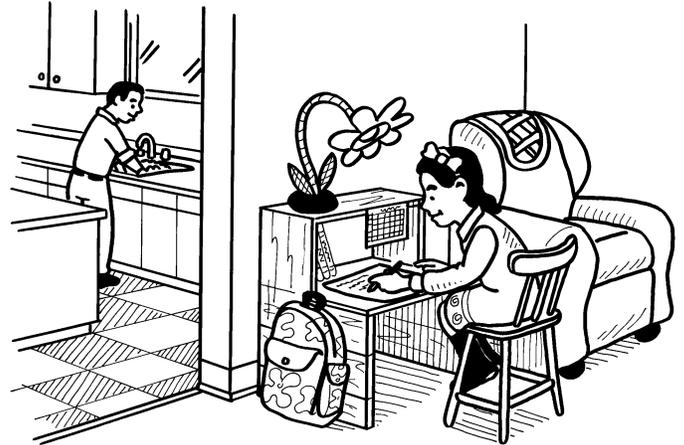
When your child is the one responsible for her homework, she will form good habits that will benefit her throughout her school career. Use these tips to help your youngster be independent at homework time.

Your child's job: Let her choose a usual place and time for homework. That will make her more likely to stick with her routine.

She may want to work at the kitchen table after school or at her desk after dinner.

How to help: Make sure your family's evening activities don't interfere with homework time. From time to time, ask your youngster whether she needs more supplies, such as pencils, erasers, markers, or glue.

Your child's job: She should tackle homework on her own. Not only will this help her learn, it will also show the teacher how well she understands the material.



How to help: If your youngster gets stuck, suggest that she reread the directions or look for similar examples in her book. Offer to play study games with her. Also, check to see that her homework is finished.

Your child's job: It's up to her to hand in completed work. She can find a way to remind herself, maybe by posting a note on her backpack.

How to help: Together, choose a visible spot to keep her backpack and anything else she needs for school. ♥

An attitude of gratitude

Around Thanksgiving, people often talk about what they're thankful for. These activities can inspire your youngster to express gratitude now—and all year long.

On the calendar. Brainstorm categories of things to be grateful for, such as people and nature. On a calendar, list one category per day for a week. Then each day, have family members name something they're grateful for in that category (a healthy grandparent, a beautiful fall day).

Behind the gift. When your child receives a gift, ask him to think about what the giver put into it. For instance, if his aunt sends him a sweater that he doesn't like, he might say it was nice that she took the time to find out what style is popular with kids his age. ♥



Be a good school citizen

Your child can make his school a better place to learn and play by following school rules and being considerate of his fellow students. Encourage him to be a good school citizen with these ideas.



Follow rules

Have your youngster name school rules, and discuss what would happen if they didn't exist. What if no one had assigned seats? (People might waste time deciding where to sit.) What if students could run in the hallways? (They might get hurt.) He'll see why it's important to follow the rules—just like people must obey laws.

group and listened to others without interrupting.

Do your part

Every school citizen has an important role to play, and helping teachers and classmates is a part of that role. Suggest that your youngster draw himself doing classroom jobs like feeding the class guinea pig or delivering papers to the office.♥

Be considerate

Part of good citizenship is treating others the way you want to be treated. Ask your child to share examples of considerate things he did today. Maybe he got off a playground swing so another student could have a turn. Or perhaps he waited quietly before speaking up in a



PARENT TO PARENT

Sparking curiosity

My daughter Hailey used to be curious about everything from whether butterflies dream to why she has curly hair. As she grew older, she didn't ask as many questions. I wanted to keep her curiosity alive—so I decided to start asking *her* questions.

For example, when we saw ants carrying big leaves, I wondered aloud how they can hold stuff that's bigger than they are. Hailey looked it up, and she was proud to teach me that ants' muscles are thicker than ours compared to their body size. And these muscles don't have to support much body weight, freeing them up to hold other things.

Hailey enjoys telling me facts I don't know. We are both learning new things, and she's discovering that you're never too old to be curious and ask questions!♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Design a city

If your youngster could create her own city, what would it look like? Suggest that she pretend to be an urban planner. She'll use thinking, planning, math, and engineering skills as she follows these steps.



- 1. Pick a location.** Have your child decide where her city will be located. It could be near an ocean, in a desert, or even in outer space.
- 2. Add services.** Encourage her to consider where people will live, work, grow food, and spend free time. Also, how would they get around? They might travel by car, subway, bike, hovercraft, spaceship—or use an entirely new form of transportation.
- 3. Make a plan.** Let her draw a map of her city, revising it until she's satisfied.
- 4. Build and play.** Suggest that your youngster make a model using household materials (construction paper, empty boxes, paper towel tubes, plastic cups, string). She can see how her city functions by adding toy people, animals, and vehicles.♥

Q & A

A successful parent-teacher conference

Q: *I'm attending the parent-teacher conference for my son this month. How can I get the most out of it?*

A: First, write down what you want to say before you go. List any questions you have. Also, include information to help the teacher learn more about your child, such as the kinds of books he reads or activities he's involved in.

Then, be sure to arrive on time, and set a friendly tone by mentioning something

your son likes about school. *Example:* "Dylan loves science. He especially enjoyed learning about polar bears."

Listen closely to find out where your youngster is doing well or where he needs to improve. Ask how to support his learning at home—perhaps by helping him review math facts.

Finally, agree on how to follow up throughout the school year so you can stay connected and help your child do his best.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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