

The Central Valley Chronicle

February 2021

From the Desk of Mr. Todd Beck, High School Principal



As we start our spring semester, I feel like I am trying to hold onto the cart that is rolling down hill. With this in mind, I will use this article to try to keep everyone up to date on activities for the high school for this semester.

Remember, keep checking our online calendar. When activities come up, we add it to the calendar as soon as we can. We also have daily announcements that are in powerschool that parents can access. It has been an exciting year full of activities for our students to have the opportunities to participate in.

Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System

NSCAS assessments will be administered this semester so please encourage your children to do their best and help them prepare for it at home by being well rested and fed for the day of the assessment. Ask your children when they will be having these assessments. The testing window is March 22 to April 30.

MAP's assessments

MAP's assessments are given in the fall, winter, and spring. These assessments are reported to the state and give us information on instruction and student performance. These assessments will be given during Semester 2 finals week for grades 7 & 8 and for the 9th and 10th grades it will be the 2nd week in May.

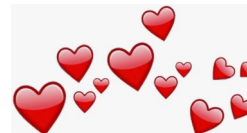
- ◆ Parent/Teacher Conferences will be virtual and held on February 11 from 12:00pm to 7:00pm.
- ◆ ACT for Juniors is March 23.
- ◆ Prom is April 24 at North Loup Community Building.
- ◆ Cougars Honors Night/Athletic Banquet is on April 30 at 7:00pm—CV Auditorium
- ◆ Graduation is May 8 at 2:00pm—CV Auditorium
- ◆ Semester Finals for grades 9 thru 12 will be May 19, 20 and 21.
- ◆ Final day for students is May 21 and May 24 is a teacher workday.

Once again, Central Valley's website is centralvps.org. There are many tools on our website that enables us to keep our patrons informed. Please remember that the calendars are subject to change and should be checked often for additions or corrections. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Inside this issue:

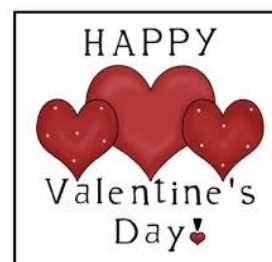
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Inserts included in the hard copy newsletter are the menus, activity calendars, Home & School Connection and Reading Connections. Menus and calendars may be found on the CV Home page. Please be sure to check the calendars online as changes may occur!



Post Prom Meeting

Tuesday, February 2nd at 5:30pm.
Please meet in the Library at the end of the JV Boys game.



Principal's Desk
Central Valley Elementary
Mrs. Connie Shafer

It is hard to believe that the 2020-2021 school year is at the halfway point! In fact, the 100th day of school is February 25th! Students are working hard and are enjoying their learning experience!

Kindergarten Transition Days

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our Kindergarten Roundup and registration will look slightly different this year. All students eligible for 2021-2022 are invited to take part in two transition afternoons held at the Central Valley Kindergarten in Scotia, on March 19th and March 26th from 1:00-3:30 p.m. Students will take part in classroom activities, specials, centers, etc. along with the current Kindergarten students. Your child will become more familiar with our Central Valley staff, building, procedures, and daily routines.

Students currently enrolled at Central Valley Preschool will be transported by one of their current teachers from their preschool to the elementary in Scotia. If your student isn't currently enrolled, you may drop your student off at 1:00 p.m. and pick him/her up at 3:30 p.m. at the Central Valley Elementary main entrance located on the south side of the building.

Kindergarten teachers and Mrs. Shafer will be available for questions and building tours following each transition day for those interested. If your student is from North Loup or Scotia, you may stop for a tour/questions on March 19th at 3:30 p.m. If your student is from Greeley or Wolbach, you may stop for a tour/questions on March 26th at 3:30 p.m. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we ask that only parents and the incoming kindergarten student be present. All students/parents will be required to wear a mask while in the building.



Kindergarten Registration:

We ask that you register your child for kindergarten **prior to transition days** to ensure we have the most up to date contact and health information. All registration forms can be found @ www.centralvps.org If you know anyone with a child that will be eligible for the 2021-2022 kindergarten class, please spread the word about our upcoming registration.

Preschool Roundup

Preschool Roundup will be held Monday, March 17th at the Wolbach site from 8:30-9:30 and at the Greeley site from 10:30-11:30. Preschool Roundup @ the Scotia site will be held on Friday, March 19th from 9:00-10:00.

Preschool Registration:

Please register your child for preschool roundup **prior to the round up day** by going to www.centralvps.org and filling out the form.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Our winter Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held Feb. 25 from 12:00-7:00 PM. They will be virtual. Look for a SignUp Genius link from your student/students' teacher.

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

- ◆ **February 3**
Teacher In-Service School dismissed @ 1:30.
- ◆ **February 5**
Subdistrict Wrestling School dismissed @ 1:30.
- ◆ **February 8**
School board meeting in Scotia @ 7:00PM
- ◆ **February 10**
Early dismissal 2:15
- ◆ **February 11**
Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences 12:00-7:00 PM

Continued from CV Elementary, Mrs. Shafer

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember continued:

- ◆ **February 12**
Students celebrate Valentine's Day with a class party
- ◆ **February 17**
Early dismissal 2:15
- ◆ **February 19**
No school State Wrestling
- ◆ **February 24**
Early dismissal 2:15
- ◆ **February 25**
No School at the Elementary -- Math In-Service for the teachers

December Star Students - Generosity

Star Students



Preschool - Hayes Buettner; Kindergarten - Sophia Killinger and Irie Pena; 1st Grade - Taten McClure, Paige Malmstom, and Charlie Ryan; 2nd Grade - Mason Shoemaker and Kashlyn Samway; 3rd Grade - Mavdan Soto and Jaxon Stephens; 4th Grade - Haleigh Myers and Lydia Studley; 5th Grade - Kerry Luscomb, Tenley Perrott, William Pokorny, and Alandra Luby; 6th grade - Wyatt Rosander and Elsie Dexter

Instilling pride; Inspiring others!

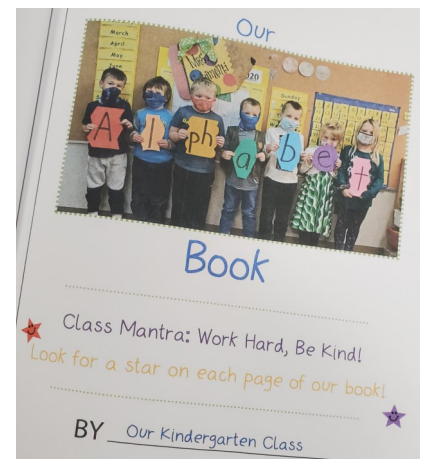


Kindergarten

Hello from Mrs. Schimenti's Kindergarten Class! We are really on a roll with our reading and writing skills! We are doing a wonderful job at sounding out words whether they are real or nonsense! Nonsense words such as {nom, sec, tup, vad} help us practice the letter sounds we are learning and get us ready to read BIG words that you must segment to read such as engineers, which is a word we are learning about in Science! It is such an amazing thing to hear these kiddos begin to read these in any area of their day! I am SO proud of all their hard work so far!

We also did an exciting project in December where we each got to be the illustrator for our very own Alphabet book! It was so fun to see our hard work made into a hardback book! I know our families are excited to read their books that they ordered!

If you see one of these students be sure to ask them what our class motto is this year! It has sure been fun to have this class of hard-working and kind children!



♥ Welcome to Kindergarten

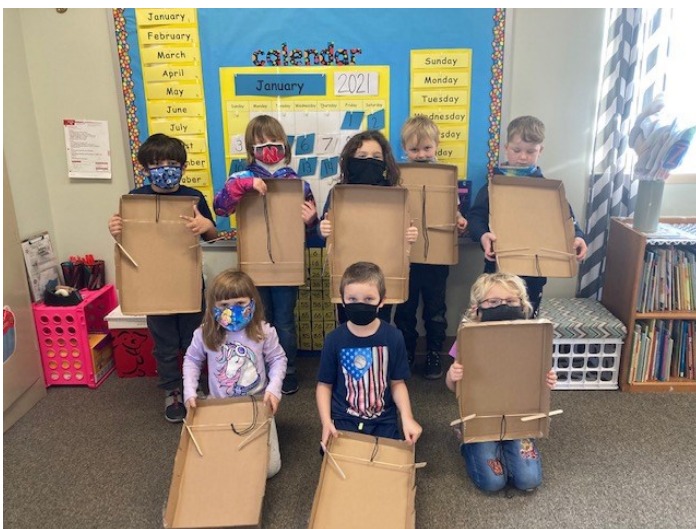
**Mrs. Holly Perrott
Instructor**

Central Valley Kindergarten has been a busy place. Kindergarten students are currently digging into reading, math, writing, social studies, science, and so much more each day!

Students are reading out of their reading books each day and becoming fluent readers. To see the expression on their faces when they realize for the first time that they can read is wonderful! Reading passages are anywhere from 4-8 sentences daily.

In math, students are learning more about 3D shapes, Geoboard designs, patterns, and basic addition/subtraction. We try to come up with an equation for each day that we have been in school. They are already planning out what their equations will be for the 100th day!

In science, students are learning about force. In this unit students take the role as an engineer and create their own pinball machine. Students go step by step, adding more pieces to the machine daily. They must figure out what makes the ball move, change direction, speed, etc.



Students just completed their first writing assignment as well. Kindergarteners wrote an opinion paper about "the best pet". After creating graphic organizers with all of their

great ideas and information, they then put them into 5-6 sentence stories. Papers about dogs, parrots, cats, and unicorns are all displayed in the hallway for all to enjoy!

Of course, we can't forget about all the messy fun. Playdough, paint, water beads, shaving cream and much more have been a hit this year. Students have also enjoyed board games and are quite competitive. The best is when you can beat the teacher in Old Maid!

**Mrs. Erika Klassen
K-2 SpEd**



Do you find yourself asking your child how their school day was and they respond with, "good" or "fine?" Here are some alternative ways to ask your child about their school day.

1. What was the best thing that happened at school today? (What was the worst thing that happened at school today?)
2. Tell me something that made you laugh today.
3. Tell me a weird word that you heard today. (Or something weird that someone said.)
4. How did you help somebody today?
5. How did somebody help you today?
6. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
7. When were you the happiest today?
8. Where do you play the most at recess?
9. Who is the funniest person in your class? Why is he/she so funny?

Importance of Reading at Night:

Let's take a look at three students. Student A reads 20 minutes a day, Student B who reads 5 minutes a day, and Student C reads 1 minute a day. Refer to the chart below for a visual (Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1987).

K-2 Special Education continued:**In one week:**

Student A: 100 minutes of reading

Student B: 25 minutes of reading

Student C: 5 minutes

In one school year (9 months):

Student A: 3,600 minutes of reading

Student B: 900 minutes of reading

Student C: 180 minutes of reading

By the end of 6th grade:

Student A: 21,600 minutes of reading

Student B: 5,400 minutes of reading

Student C: 1,080 minutes of reading



Each school year, **Student A** has exposure to 1,800,000 words. These students tend to score in the 90th percentile on standardized tests (Nagy & Herman, 1987). **Student B** has exposure to 282,000 words and these students tend to score in the 50th percentile on standardized tests (Nagy & Herman, 1987). **Student C** has exposure to 8,000 and scores in the 10th percentile on standardized tests (Nagy & Herman, 1987).



**Kathleen
Kennedy
Receives
Recognition**



"On behalf of the Association for Career and Technical Education of Nebraska (ACTEN), we thank Kathleen Kennedy for her involvement in the association by serving on the board as the representative for the Nebraska Career Education Innovation Foundation for ACTEN. More importantly, we thank you for your support for Mrs. Kennedy in allowing her this opportunity to be a voice for Career and Technical Education in Nebraska.

ACTEN is the professional association for career and technical educators in Nebraska. Established in 1946, ACTEN has some 360 members across Nebraska including teachers, administrators, teacher educators, career counselors, teacher candidates, business partners and other professionals who support or advocate for career and technical education.

ACTEN is a multi-discipline organization made up of career education professionals with a variety of backgrounds and specialties. Ms. Kennedy is one of those individuals representing the interests of our Foundation, which provides scholarships for our students

ACTEN is affiliated with the Association for Career and Technical Education, the national association for career and technical educators."

Letter to Mrs. Amy Malander, Superintendent received from Murleen Bellinger, ACTEN Executive Director

Happy Valentine's Day from Ms. Wood & the Entrepreneurship Class



With Valentine's Day right around the corner, the Entrepreneurship students are operating a small business in which they will be making and selling candy bouquet's. Throughout the year, we have been learning about the pros and cons of operating a business, as well as taking on financial risks in the hopes of a profit. This business will allow the students to have hands-on experience with cost comparison, mark-up pricing, the creation of fliers, customer service, organization skills and much more.

If you are interested in a candy bouquet order, please feel free to contact the Entrepreneurship class at 308-428-3145 from 8:00-8:51am or 1:48-3:45pm.

Happy Valentine's Day

Home & School

CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2021



SHORT NOTES

“How-to” writing

Here’s a fun way for your child to practice writing explanations. Ask him to list step-by-step instructions for creating something out of play dough—without telling you what the object is. Follow his directions exactly as written. Is your object the one he intended?

Apologies in action

When your youngster needs to apologize, explain that taking responsibility for her actions means more than just saying “I’m sorry.” For instance, if she loses pieces to her brother’s board game, she might use her own money to replace the game or offer to make homemade game pieces.

DID YOU KNOW?

People blink less than usual while staring at a computer screen. And that can lead to dry eyes and eyestrain. Encourage your child to take “blink breaks” when he’s online. He might look away from the screen and blink several times while he waits for a program to open, for example.

Worth quoting

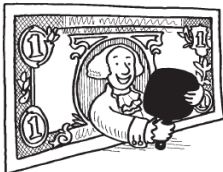
“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.”

Amelia Earhart

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What’s the easiest way to double a dollar?

A: Put it in front of a mirror.



Central Valley Elementary

Connie Shafer, El. Principal

The nitty-gritty on grit

Children who have grit are able to overcome setbacks and stick with challenges. Nurture your youngster’s persistence with these ideas.

Be independent

Let your child do as much as possible for herself. Maybe her smoothie is lumpy or the gift she wraps is messy, but resist the urge to fix them. You’ll show her that you believe in her—and that will help her believe in herself.



Find “lightbulb” moments

A comic-strip artist might draw a lightbulb to show that a character has a “bright” idea. When your youngster struggles to learn something (say, how to juggle), suggest that she draw a lightbulb and fill it with steps to success. *Examples:* “Learn to juggle scarves first.” “Juggle one ball at a time.”

Declare a “do-over”

Remind your child that a setback simply means she needs more practice. For instance, if she’s showing you how she can do a cartwheel but doesn’t land on

her feet, declare a “do-over.” She’ll learn that it’s okay to try again and again.

Use self-motivation

Kids tend to stick with things they’re interested in, and that teaches them the rewards of perseverance. Steer your youngster toward projects that fit her passions. If she wants to design video games someday, you might help her find a coding class or an online tutorial. ♥

Attention, please!

These kid-friendly activities can stretch your child’s attention span:

- Play “Spot the Difference.” Draw two nearly identical pictures. Perhaps you’ll sketch two pizzas with a pepperoni in a different spot or a different number of mushrooms. Tell your youngster how many differences there are. Can he find them all?
- “See you later, alligator.” “After `while, crocodile.” With your child, take turns thinking of ways to say “goodbye”—each should rhyme and mention an animal. *Examples:* “Gotta go, armadillo.” “In a few, kangaroo.” How long can your youngster stay focused as you go back and forth? ♥



Home & School CONNECTION®

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Big project, big success

School projects give your child a chance to be creative as he shows what he has learned. Share these tips for successful projects from start to finish.

Make a connection. Your youngster will learn more—and be more motivated to work hard—if he picks a topic he cares about. Say he’s asked to write a report on pioneer days. He might focus on daily life as a pioneer kid or on popular games from that time.

Break it down. Suggest that your child think of a big project as a series of smaller



assignments. He can set a deadline for each step, including researching, writing, and revising. Remind him to leave some wiggle room in case a task takes longer than he anticipated.

Add flair. How could your youngster make his project stand out? Encourage him to include extras like models, posters, or audio or video clips. Maybe he’ll make a cardboard model of a one-room schoolhouse like those many pioneer children attended. If his project includes a class presentation, he could demonstrate a game from the time period like jackstraws (similar to pick-up sticks).♥

PARENT TO PARENT

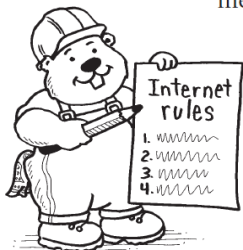
Online safety 101

My daughter Peyton does many things online these days—from going to school to hanging out with her friends. I was worried about her safety, so I found an online cyber safety course at sos.fbi.gov/en/, and we took it together.

We were both surprised by what we learned. For instance, online contests can be used to collect names and email addresses. And who knew that social media quizzes can

trick you into sharing your birth month or pet’s name to help hackers figure out your passwords?

After our class, Peyton made an illustrated list of rules to keep by the computer. Her rules include blocking sites that aren’t kid friendly, not sharing passwords with friends, and asking my permission before downloading anything. Now, both of us are more careful when we work and play online.♥



Q & A

Handling cheating

Q: My son got caught giving his friend answers during a test and received a zero. How should I handle this at home?

A: Start by asking your child why he cheated. If he says he just wanted to help his friend, explain that cheating is always wrong—regardless of the reason. Also, it doesn’t actually help anyone. Your son got a zero on his test, and his friend didn’t learn that studying is the right way to earn a good grade.

Or if your youngster felt pressured to share the answer, help him plan what to do the next time someone asks him to cheat. He might simply say, “Sorry, I can’t,” and keep his eyes on his own paper. Later, he could suggest they study together for the next test.

Finally, let your child know what the consequences will be at home if he cheats again (say, losing electronics for a certain period of time).♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Math squares: A brain workout

Boost your youngster’s spatial reasoning—an important part of success in geometry—with this fun brainteaser.

1. Have your child cut out five squares, all the same size, from construction paper.
2. Now she can position the squares to form different *pentominoes*: arrangements of five squares in which each square shares

at least one side with another square. Can she find all 12 possible pentominoes? (If she gets stuck, help her search online for “pentominoes.”)

3. After your youngster makes each pentomino, she can draw it on graph paper so she remembers which ones she has found.



Challenge: Ask your child to cut out the pentominoes she drew on graph paper. Now she can arrange all 12 into a big square with a square hole in the middle.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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Ms. Wood Business Class
308-428-3145
jodie.wood@centralvps.org



Need a candy bouquet for a loved one?

Small Candy Bouquet - \$10.00

(includes an assortment of 11 fun size candies)



Large Candy Bouquet - \$20.00

(includes an assortment of 8 large & 5 fun size candies)



If you would like to order a candy bouquet for a loved one please detach the bottom for order details. Or contact Jodie Wood @ jodie.wood@centralvps.org, or contact any of the Business Students at 308-428-3145 from 8:00 am - 8:51 am or 1:48pm - 3:45 pm.

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Size of Bouquet: Small or Large
\$10.00 \$20.00

Deliver: Yes or Pickup
We can deliver to Scotia to the elementary

Form of Payment: Check or Cash

Checks can be made out to Central Valley Public School - Memo - Candy Bouquet - Business class

Who will this bouquet be for? _____

We can write your loved ones name on the tag

The Business class of Central Valley thanks you for allowing us to help you provide some sweetness in your loved one's life! Happy Valentine's Day!!





CENTRAL VALLEY WELCOMES TWO STUDENT TEACHERS

Two UNL college students with local ties to the area are completing their student teaching at Central Valley Public School this semester before receiving their education degrees in the spring. Crystal Feik, a Spalding native, is pursuing a teaching degree in Family & Consumer Sciences. Tana Engel, whose mother and stepfather live in Wolbach, is majoring in Agricultural Education and has a minor in International Ag and Natural Resources.

Feik graduated from Riverside High School in 2017. She said her interest in teaching began back in middle school when her FCS teacher, who was also her FCCLA advisor, told her she thought she would make a really good teacher because of her enthusiasm toward all the activities they covered.

Feik is not the only member of her family who is involved in education. She said her mother is the school nurse at Riverside, and her older brother is the 7-12 grade principal at Hampton. She also has two sisters-in-law who are teachers. This spring, she is installed in Kathleen Kennedy's classroom where she has begun her student teaching duties. Feik said she enjoys working with Mrs. Kennedy, who she calls "an awesome teacher with an enormous store of knowledge."

Tana Engel is a 2017 graduate of High Plains Community High School in Polk, Nebraska. She, too, was inspired by a teacher who played a strong role in her decision to pursue a career in education. She said her high school Ag teacher was a great mentor and that, over the years, her passion for Ag teaching has grown. "I like the emphasis it places on life skills and the way it prepares students for their success and safety in the workplace." Engel is completing her student teaching this semester with Ag instructors Leslie Dugan and Julia

Wright who, she said, have been wonderfully flexible in allowing her to co-create lessons.

Both Feik and Engel said they are fortunate to live at home with their parents while they student teach, and they look forward to enjoying a lot of positive experiences in the classrooms with the students throughout the



Tana Engel and Crystal Feik

Keep track of progress



By staying on top of how your youngster does in school, you can support his achievements and nip any problems in the bud. Try these strategies.

- **Go over papers.** Look at each graded assignment your child brings home. This is an easy way to see what he's doing well and what he needs to work on.
- **Use electronic tools.** If the school posts grades online, check them regularly.
- **Communicate with the teacher.** Contact her if your youngster says a subject is difficult or brings home low grades. You could ask about ways to help him.



Speech Team

Mrs. Karen Reynolds and Mrs. MaryAnn McQuillan

Central Valley is excited to watch the following students participate in teams and in individual events as they develop their programs through our speech season. The following students are competing:

Freshman: Terran Shepherd and Natalie Poss (as back up)

Sophomores: Kean Benson, Cohen Grossart, Zandar Wolf, and Tanner Landers

Juniors: Dilynn Wood, Neleigh Poss, and Airalee Evans

Seniors: Gabriel Davis, Audrey Wood, Ashlyn Wright, Cayton Butcher, and Lexi Schaffert

First Speech Meet was held Saturday, January 23 in Boone Central and stretch into March towards State Speech.

- ◆ Saturday, Jan 30, 2021: Ord Invitational
- ◆ Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021: Aurora Invitational
- ◆ Friday, Feb. 12, 2021: Lindsay Holy Family
- ◆ Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021: Burwell Invitational
- ◆ Wednesday, February 24, 2021: **Goldenrod Conference** Speech meet
- ◆ Thursday, March 4, 2021: **Home Show** at Central Valley, 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday, March 9, **DISTRICT** Speech at Rosalie-Bancroft high School (This will require one overnight)
- ◆ Friday, March 19, 2021: **State Speech** at Kearney High School

SpeechStars



Speech Team's first photo of the year!!

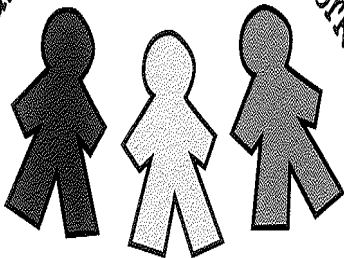
Front row l-r: Dilynn Wood, Audrey Wood, Airalee Evans, Lexi Schaffert, Cayton Butcher

Back row l-r: Gabriel Davis, Cohen Grossart, Neleigh Poss, Ashlyn Wright, Kean Benson, Tanner Sliva, Zandar Wolf

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY

To ask questions
about your baby's
development

Early Development Network



Babies Can't Wait

CALL TOLL FREE
1.888.806.6287

All children develop at different rates.
Listed below are some guides to see
how your child is developing.

0-1 YEARS

- ✓ Holds head up by four months
- ✓ Picks up objects by six months
- ✓ Responds to sounds by six months
- ✓ Makes some of the sounds made by others by nine months
- ✓ Uses furniture to pull self to standing position by 12 months

1-2 YEARS

- ✓ Holds out arms and legs while being dressed by 18 months
- ✓ Points to objects he/she wants by 18 months
- ✓ Walks without help by 18 months
- ✓ Says two words by 18 months
- ✓ Drinks from a cup by two years
- ✓ Shows one body part (eyes, nose) when asked by two years

2-3 YEARS

- ✓ Speaks in 2-3 word sentences by three years
- ✓ Walks up and down stairs without help by three years
- ✓ Plays with an adult by three years
- ✓ Undresses self by three years
- ✓ Asks some questions by three years
- ✓ Speaks so non-family members understand most words by three years

For your questions or concerns contact your
doctor, your local school district or call

NEBRASKA CHILDFIND
1.888.806.6287

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2021

Central Valley Elementary School

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* (Kat Zhang)

All Amy wants is to make a perfect *bao*—a steamed Chinese bun—just like her family makes. But each *bao* is either too big or messy, until a helpful idea pops into her head. Includes a recipe that you and your child can use to make *bao* together.



■ *A Little Calm Spot: A Story About Yoga and Feeling Focused* (Diane Alber)

A cute little character named Calm Spot explains yoga to young readers. Your youngster will learn how yoga helps people relax and concentrate. Includes basic yoga poses, breathing techniques, and positive words. Part of the Spot series.



■ *Press Here* (Hervé Tullet)

Find a surprise on every page of this interactive book, starting with a simple yellow “button” to press. Readers will follow instructions like “Try shaking the book” and “Clap your hands once” to discover what their actions do to the dots on the page.

■ *¡Vámonos! Let's Go!* (René Colato Laínez)

There are many noises to encounter on an adventure through the neighborhood, from the bus's screech to a horn's honk. This adaptation of “The Wheels on the Bus” introduces different vehicles and sounds in English (*choo choo choo*) and Spanish (*chucu chucu chu*).



Build a story character

Who will star in the next story your child writes? Share these ideas for creating fun and interesting characters that will bring her stories to life for her readers.

Draw pictures

Invite your youngster to draw a picture of a character she'd like to write about, perhaps a turtle or kangaroo. Then, ask questions to help her develop the character.

Examples: “Where does the turtle live?” “What does it like to play?”

Maybe she'll draw a pond in the background of her picture and add a soccer ball for the sports-loving turtle to kick around.



Act out scenes

Suggest that your child get to know her character by stepping into its role while you play together. She might pretend to be a turtle and move her game token s-l-o-w-l-y around the board.

Also, carry on a conversation so she gets

a feel for its personality and ideas for dialogue. Perhaps she'll imagine a kind, friendly turtle telling a kangaroo, “Congratulations on winning your game!”

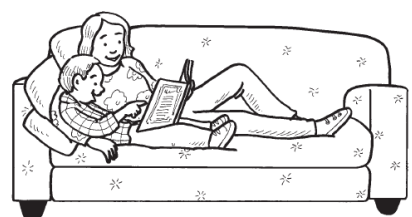
Write a story

Now your child is ready to write. Encourage her to include descriptions to help her readers picture the character. For instance, she might begin, “Taylor the turtle was little and green. She watched the faster animals play soccer. She wished she had a friend.”♥

What doesn't the book say?

Learning to *infer*, or “read between the lines,” is a strategy your youngster can use to understand what he reads. Try this activity to help him make inferences:

- Gather three household items related to a specific task. For example, you might choose a hairbrush, toothbrush, and shirt for getting ready in the morning. Can your child use these “clues” to infer what your task is?
- Read a book aloud, without showing your youngster the pictures, and encourage him to make inferences. If you read “As it got dark, the sky turned shades of red, orange, and purple,” he might infer there's a pretty sunset.♥



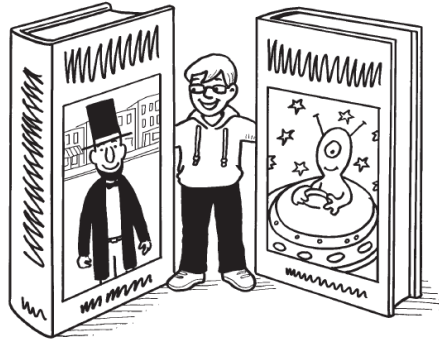
Blending fact and fiction

Some books are nonfiction, and some are fiction. Other types of books combine both! Here are two popular examples for your child to read and learn from.

Historical fiction

What it is: A made-up story based on historical facts.

What to do: Help your youngster separate historical fact from fiction. He could make a chart with two columns, one labeled “Fact” and the other “Fiction.” Read a historical fiction book like *Players in Pig-tails* (Shana Corey). Then, he could list examples from



the book of facts (“Some people said women shouldn’t play baseball”) and fiction (“Katie Casey is a made-up character”).

Science fiction

What it is: A fictional tale that includes futuristic science ideas.

What to do: Read a picture book like *Harry and Horsie* (Katie Van Camp). Then, encourage your child to draw a picture of his own design for a bubble machine like Harry’s Bubble Blooper. You could also help him make a bubble solution by exper-

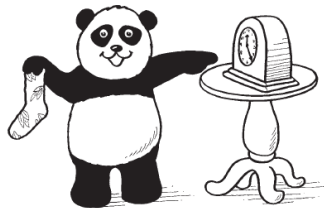
imenting with different amounts of water, dish soap, and corn syrup. Now suggest that he design a totally different machine that people might use in the future.♥



Rhyme time!

Send your youngster on these rhyme hunts to help her hear sounds in words:

- Ask your child to find things in your home that rhyme. Hand her an item that has a one-syllable name, such as a *sock*, *shoe*, or *book*. She can walk around with the object and try to spot rhymes. For a *sock*, she might see a *clock* and a *lock*.
Idea: Try this activity outdoors, too.



- Give your youngster old magazines and catalogs. She could make rhyming collages by cutting out pictures of things that rhyme and gluing them on paper. For one collage she might cut out pictures of a *car*, a *bar* of soap, and a *jar* of peanut butter. Ask her to say the rhyming words to you.♥

Q&A Dinnertime chats

Q How can I liven up our family’s dinner conversations and encourage my daughter to practice speaking?

A Carrying on conversations over family meals can improve your child’s vocabulary and speaking skills—and help everyone stay close. Luckily, there are lots of ways to switch things up each day to keep your talks exciting.

One idea: Think of witty questions to ask each other! You might ask, “Would you rather ... ?” questions. Or try superlative questions (ones with words ending in *-est*), like “What is the silliest thing you’ve ever done?” or “Who is the bravest person you know?”

Each person can also bring something to the table to talk about, like a photo or favorite toy. When someone finishes sharing their object, others can ask questions or make comments about it. Try this once or twice each week to spark new conversations—and introduce new vocabulary.♥



Write a math book

“I have 6 colored pencils and 4 regular pencils. $6 + 4 = 10$ pencils.”

With these three steps, your child can work on writing and math as he creates a book of story problems.

1. Suggest that your youngster look for opportunities throughout the day to make up problems. While playing with his marble run, he

might say, “I had 17 marbles. I dropped 10 into my marble run. How many marbles were left? $17 - 10 = 7$ marbles.”

2. Now help your child write and illustrate each story problem on a separate sheet of paper. He can also write the number sentence that goes with each problem on the facing page.

3. Finally, your youngster could staple the pages together into a math book and read it aloud to you.♥



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Reading Connection

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Book Picks

■ *Maker Lab: 28 Super Cool Projects* (Jack Challoner)

Get your STEM on with this book of science and engineering projects. Using things found around the house, your child can create a DNA model, make monster marshmallows, build a soap-powered boat, and much more. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Coo* (Kaela Noel)

A unique 10-year-old girl named Coo was raised by pigeons, and a rooftop is the only home she's ever known. But now she must enter the human world to get help for her flock. Follow along as Coo learns about friendship and family in this heartwarming tale.

■ *Noah Webster: Weaver of Words* (Pegi Deitz Shea)

Noah Webster is most famous for his dictionary, but in this biography, readers will discover other ways he shaped our language. He wrote books teaching children to read and spell, and he influenced American English—changing British spellings like *colour* and *traveler* to *color* and *traveler*.

■ *Poptropica: Mystery of the Map* (Jack Chabert)

Three friends take a ride in a hot-air balloon that crashes on a mystery island, and their adventure begins! Welcome to Poptropica, filled with Vikings, extinct animals, and other surprising discoveries. The first book in the Poptropica graphic novel series.



What's it about?

Students who think about what they're reading tend to understand and remember the material. Encourage your youngster to put on his thinking cap when he reads with these tips.

Discuss

Talk with your child about books. For example, you could have him tell you why he thinks a book is interesting (the main character lives in Africa) or how it makes him feel (happy, curious). When he's finished reading, ask him if he would recommend the book to a friend. Why or why not? Discussing what he reads will help him understand the plot and characters better.

Visualize

Picturing the plot or a concept in a book can strengthen your youngster's comprehension. He may want to sketch a scene or character from a chapter book. If he's reading a textbook, he might draw a plant or an atom and label its parts.



He'll learn to visualize when he reads, even if he doesn't draw every time.

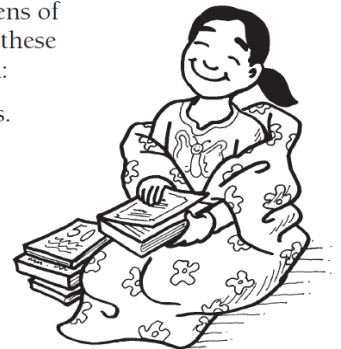
Summarize

Suggest that your child write in response to books. He can practice summarizing a plot by writing a book review to share with the whole family. He could even submit it to a magazine like *Stone Soup* (stonesoup.com) or an online bookstore. Or he can show how he feels about a book by writing a poem about it.

A shortcut to reading fun

What kind of book has many plots and dozens of characters? A short-story collection! Consider these reasons for your child to try this type of fiction:

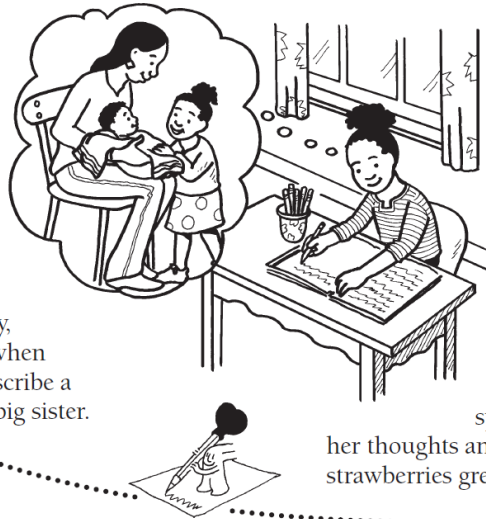
- Action usually moves quickly in short stories. A fast-paced tale can motivate a reluctant or struggling reader.
- Some collections allow children to sample different authors. After your youngster reads one, visit the library for titles by the writers she liked best.
- A book with various topics is bound to have something for everyone. If your child doesn't like one story, she might enjoy another.



Memories of me

Inspire your youngster to enjoy writing nonfiction by focusing on a topic she's an expert on: herself! Here are suggestions to help her turn her memories into a memoir.

Narrow the focus. A memoir often zeroes in on one slice of the writer's life. For example, your child might write about the first thing she remembers clearly, such as making pierogies with Grandma when she was little. Or perhaps she wants to describe a turning point in her life, like becoming a big sister.



Choose a format. Memoirs can take different forms. If your youngster likes poetry, suggest that she write a series of poems. Or she could create a picture book memoir with text and drawings. Another idea is to tell her tale in graphic novel format.

Dig deeper. An interesting memoir goes beyond simply stating what happened. As your child writes about an event ("We went strawberry picking on a beautiful spring day"), remind her to weave in her thoughts and feelings ("I was surprised that the strawberries grew so close to the ground").

Let's debate

With this family debate, you'll actually encourage your child to argue with you. She'll get better at making logical arguments and backing them up with evidence—skills she needs for school assignments.

1. Pick a topic. You might debate about whether people should make their beds every day or about which way to put toilet paper into the holder.

2. Prepare notes. Have each person jot down her opinion ("Making your bed seems pointless") and supporting evidence ("You just unmake it every night"). Family members should also write ways to rebut—or argue



against—the opposite view. How will your youngster respond if someone says an unmade bed looks messy? *Example:* "Yes, but you can close your door so no one sees it."

3. Debate. Take turns making your cases and rebutting opposing arguments. Then, try to decide who made the most convincing case—whether you agree with that person or not.

**Fun
with
Words**

Fill in the part of speech


Dive into a newspaper or magazine, and race to find parts of speech in this game.

Materials: pencils, paper, newspaper or magazines, timer

Have each player draw a 3 x 5 grid on his paper and write a part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) above each column. Then, let your youngster pick five random letters (say, S, T, A, V, and G), and write one to the left of each row. Give each person a section of the newspaper or a magazine, and set a timer for three minutes.

Players race to fill their grids with words from the newspaper or magazine. For example, your child might fill his S row with *sunshine* (noun), *sell* (verb), and *superior* (adjective).

When time is up, check the grids, and cross out any words that are in the wrong column (use a dictionary if you're not sure). The player with the most words remaining wins.



Parent 2 Parent

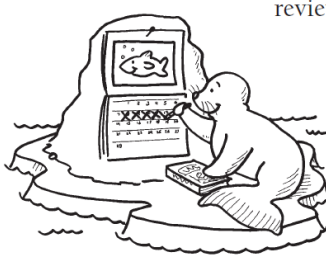
Manage reading assignments

My son Oliver likes to read, but only when he gets to choose the book. He has always struggled to finish assigned reading that he thinks is "boring."

I remembered having the same problem at his age. What helped was reading a few pages each day rather than leaving the whole assignment until the last minute. So I suggested that Oliver divide the number of assigned pages by the

number of days. He writes each day's page numbers on his calendar and crosses them off as he finishes.

Also, I encouraged Oliver to learn as much as possible about a book before he opens it. He enjoys online reviews, and reading goes more smoothly once he has an idea of what a story is about. To his surprise, he has even discovered a few new favorites along the way!



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