

## From the Desk of Mr. Todd Beck



### Conversations about school

Reprinted from Home & School Connection

When you think of parent involvement, do you picture moms and dads volunteering in classrooms? That's one way to help—but research shows that supporting your child's education at home is even more important. Here are four conversations that will help you stay involved.

#### **"Let's see what you brought home."**

Look at completed work to find out what your youngster is learning and how well she's doing it. You could comment on her social studies report or pottery project, for instance. ("You know a lot about our state's history!") Also, respond to notes from her teacher, and sign her weekly folder or daily planner if required.

#### **"Show me what you have for homework."**

It's your child's job to do her homework, but you play a role, too. Make sure she knows what she's supposed to do by having her explain the assignments to you. After she finishes her homework, glance over the work to see that it's complete.

#### **"Describe a book you enjoyed today."**

This gives you an idea of what your youngster prefers to read. Then, build a daily reading habit by asking what she'd like to read tonight. Encourage her reading and listening skills by reading aloud to her and letting her read to you.

#### **"Tell me what you learned that you'd like to know more about."**

Use her interests as jumping-off points for activities to share. If she likes geometry, you might do tangrams together. If she's fascinated by how animals adapt to winter, take her to the library to research the subject or to the zoo to see live animals.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior. Eating dinner together is great, but other meals count, too. If you work at night, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. Or on a weekend, try a picnic lunch!

#### **Worth quoting**

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else!"

*Mark Twain*

## 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!



## JUST A LITTLE Reminder

- ◆ Friday, April 2 - No School, Spring Break
- ◆ Monday, April 5 - No School, Spring Break



*Principal's Desk*  
*Central Valley Elementary*  
*Mrs. Connie Shafer*

Spring is emerging outside, and we are all happy to say goodbye to winter! We are also thrilled to have had face to face school this year. Our teachers and staff continue to introduce and review rigorous academic skills and content across all grade levels.

**Statewide Assessment Testing is just around the corner!**

On April 13-16 and April 20-23, students in the 3rd-6th grade will take the statewide assessment, NSCAS Test, (The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System ). Please make sure your child/children are on time to school, gets plenty of rest at night, and eats a healthy breakfast. All of our students and teachers have worked diligently to prepare for these tests. We want our students to "show what they know" on those days. Please encourage your child to do their very best.

**MAP and FAST testing**

April 26 - Mary 7th we will have our Spring MAP testing followed by FAST tests May 10 - May 20 to end out the year.

**The month of April is known as Poetry Month.**

Poetry can help students recognize and produce rhyme, as well as develop phonemic awareness. Repeated reading of poems can help develop memorization skills, expression, and self-confidence when reciting aloud in front of an audience. You may enjoy checking out the following links as a way to explore this fun genre.

Visit these interactive sites to create a variety of poems, such as acrostic, riddle, and shape poems.

[http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource\\_type=16&type=28](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource_type=16&type=28)

<https://www.poetry4kids.com/>

Read and rate poems on the Giggle Meter when you visit Giggle Poetry.  
<http://www.gigglepoetry.com>

**Activities to look forward to:**

- April 2 and April 5  
Easter Break - No School
- April 7  
Teacher Inservice, 2:00-4:00;  
school dismissed at 1:30
- April 16  
Elementary Spring Concert at 7:00pm
- May 10  
Elementary Fun/Field Day
- May 14  
Last day of Preschool in Scotia, Wolbach and Greeley
- May 17-21  
Preschool home visits
- May 18  
6th Grade Graduation at 2:00pm
- May 19  
Kindergarten Graduation at 1:30pm
- May 21  
Last day of school - 1:30 dismissal



**Field trips**

- Preschool Walking Field Trip-April 29
- Kindergarten—Children's Museum in Kearney, April 26

**Field trips continued:**

- 1st Grade—Hastings Museum and IMAX Theater, May 3
- 2nd Grade—Edgerton Explorit Center in Aurora, May 6
- 3rd Grade—Edgerton Explorit Center in Aurora, May 6
- 4th Grade—Archway in Kearney, May 18
- 5th Grade—Coventry Cedars Camp, May 14
- 6th Grade—May 13 (leave after lunch) and return the evening of May 14, Omaha Zoo

We greatly appreciate the combined efforts of all stakeholders as we support our students in successfully meeting the highest of standards set before them!

**Instilling Pride; Inspiring Others!!**

**Mrs. Kacia Callan and Mrs. Julia Wood,  
Instructors**

It has been a busy month for the Central Valley First Graders! Along with our daily routines, we have been able to expand our educational experiences. The students have been given the opportunity to take part in several different zoom sessions. These include the NED Show, Miss Nebraska, and the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The NED show is a schoolwide character education program. NED is a lovable cartoon character whose name is an acronym for Never give up, Encourage others, and Do your best. The program uses yo-yos to show students yo-yoing is cool and simple, but not always easy. Students

are told that if they try yo-yoing, it's important to learn from mistakes and never give up. Most of all, this "NED" mindset, is transferable to school subjects.

Miss Nebraska was another guest that we interacted with via Zoom. She gave a strong message about bullying and the students learned about the four types of bullying: verbal, physical, cyber, and social. The students signed a contract where they pledged the BRAVE message, "Building Respect And Values for Everyone."

We were also able to connect with the Henry Doorly Zoo. During this Zoom, we were able to "walk-through" America's largest indoor rainforest: The Lied Jungle. They learned about the 4 layers of the rainforest: emergent, canopy, understory, and forest floor. We visited different animals and learned about their habitats. They also had the opportunity to ask questions!

Third quarter is an exciting time for the First Graders as they get to put their reading skills to practice. They are given their first AR goal. If they meet the goal, they can participate in their first AR party! This involved traveling to Grand Island to the Westside Bowling Lanes. The students enjoyed an afternoon of bowling, snacks, and the excitement of riding the bus together. We look forward to finishing the fourth quarter strong with a new goal and AR party.

**Is your home teen-friendly?**

In the high school years, friends have an increasing influence on teens' opinions and decisions. So it is worth the effort to get to know your teen's friends. Make your home a place where teens will feel comfortable hanging out. You'll get to know the people who matter to your teen—and know she's in a safe place.



# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

April 2021



#### SHORT NOTES

#### Family show-and-tell

Show-and-tell builds your child's speaking and presentation skills—and it's not just for school! Schedule special time each week or month for everyone to share a belonging, talent, or memory. Your youngster could share the stuffed animal he got for his birthday or read a poem he wrote, for example.

#### The definition of me

How kids see themselves plays a big role in their self-esteem. Ask your youngster to write a dictionary-style definition of herself that includes things she's proud of. ("Ellie: a 9-year-old girl who is friendly, loves to read, and has a good sense of humor.") *Idea:* Suggest that she write positive definitions for other family members.

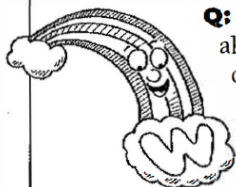
#### Current events

While it's important to become informed about current events, the news can be upsetting for children. Turn it off when you're not watching. If you'd like to let your youngster see the news, record it and watch together. That way, you can pause to discuss events, which will help him put them in context.

#### Worth quoting

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

#### JUST FOR FUN



**Q:** What will you always find at the end of a rainbow?

**A:** The letter W.

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Central Valley Elementary

Connie Shafer, El. Principal

## Get your child to listen—the first time

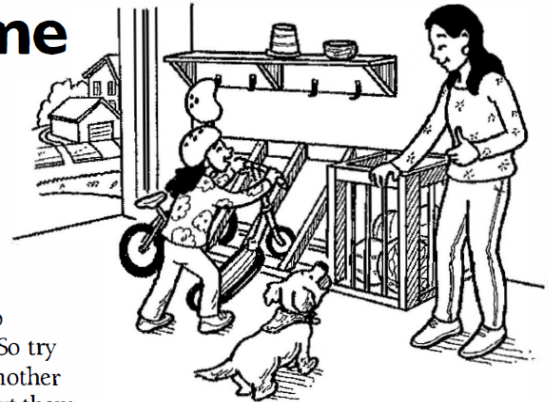
What you say and how you say it can make a world of difference when you need your child to listen. Consider these tips to curb nagging and encourage better listening.

#### Get close

Your youngster is more apt to listen when you're face-to-face. So try not to shout instructions from another room or across the yard—or to text them to her. It's also a good idea to get her attention before you start talking ("Hey, there's something you need to do ..."). Then, have her repeat your instructions ("I'm supposed to put my scooter in the garage") so you know she has heard and understood you.

#### Slow down

Too many instructions at once can overwhelm your child. Instead of rattling off a bunch of tasks (put away your laundry, do your homework, take out the trash), give her one at a time. Or



suggest that she write them down and check off each one as she completes it. She can come back and proudly show you her finished list.

#### Give options

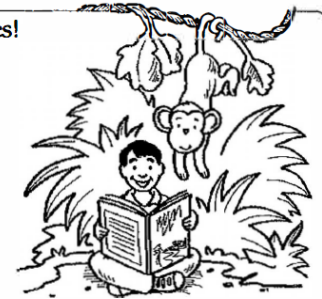
Say your youngster often procrastinates when you tell her to get dressed in the morning. Instead of nagging, you could ask, "Are you going to wear sweatpants or jeans today?" Or if you find yourself repeatedly telling her to eat her vegetables, you might try, "Do you want carrots or broccoli?" Giving her a say will make her more apt to listen and respond.♥

## A world of nonfiction

It's exciting to read about real people and places! Ask these questions to help your youngster pick out nonfiction books he'll want to read.

**"Who would you like to meet?"** Your child might read biographies of people who intrigue him, like his favorite baseball player or an explorer he learned about in history class. How does "getting to know" these people influence his opinion of them?

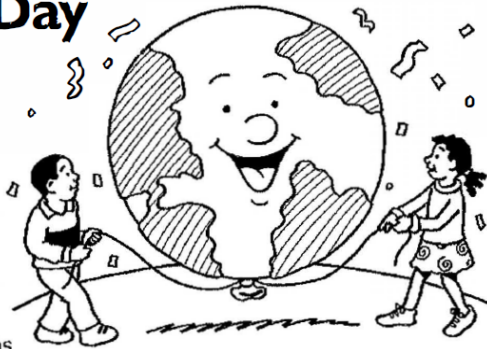
**"Where do you want to go?"** Nonfiction can transport your youngster anywhere in the universe—and even back in time. Maybe he'll read about a tropical rain forest, the International Space Station, or medieval times. Encourage him to imagine himself in the place or time he reads about.♥



# Celebrate Earth Day

Show the Earth some love on April 22—and every day. Here are activities that will help the planet *and* boost your child's math and research skills.

**Calculate and conserve.** A typical showerhead sprays out 5 gallons of water per minute. Have your youngster time his next shower and multiply the number of minutes by 5. If his shower took 8 minutes, he used 40 gallons of water ( $8 \times 5 = 40$ ). Encourage family members



to time their showers, too. Then, ask everyone to trim 2 minutes off their showers, and let your child calculate how much water your family saved.

**Try plant-based foods.** Eating less meat is an eco-friendly habit that's also healthy for your youngster. Ask him to research plant-based alternatives to some of the meat-based foods your family eats. He might find recipes for black bean burgers, shiitake mushroom "bacon," and eggplant "steaks." Make and try them together. *Idea:* Consider committing to one meatless day per week. Your child can choose the recipe—or come up with his own.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER DIY stickers

What makes stickers ... well ... sticky? Your youngster can find out with this art project.

**1. Draw stickers.** Let her make lines to divide a sheet of white paper into 12 equal boxes. Encourage her to use colored pencils to draw a picture (taco, star, heart) in each box.

**2. Make glue.** In a bowl, have your child stir together 1 tbsp. cold water and 1 packet unflavored gelatin. Meanwhile, boil 3 tbsp. water. Pour it into the gelatin. Now she can add  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. sugar and stir until dissolved. She made glue! Help her use a paintbrush to coat the back of her paper with the glue.



**3. Stick.** When the glue dries, she can cut out her stickers along the lines. To use, she should moisten the backs with a damp sponge. Then, she could stick them on papers, binders, notebooks, and more.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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to time their showers, too. Then, ask everyone to trim 2 minutes off their showers, and let your child calculate how much water your family saved.

## End-of-year volunteer

As the school year winds down, consider these ideas for helping your child's teachers.

• **Assist with projects.**

Offer to bind student-made books or frame children's artwork. You might also put together a slide show of photos the teacher took during the year.

• **Participate in special events.**

Ask the teacher how you can lend a hand during in-person or virtual events, such as end-of-year parties, awards ceremonies, or graduation.

• **Drop off boxes.**

Find out if teachers need boxes to pack up their books and supplies. You could call grocery stores and dollar stores to see which ones donate boxes, then volunteer to pick them up and drop them off at the school.♥



## Q & A Promote hopefulness

**Q:** *I don't want the negative events of the past year to keep my son from being hopeful. What can I do?*

**A:** Hope is contagious! Encourage your son to "catch" it from you. Share your plans for future good things. For instance, you might talk about fun things you hope to do this summer, like go camping or watch a fireworks display. Ask your son what he hopes for, too.

Taking action is another way for your

son to feel more hopeful. Whenever possible, let him do things to make a difference. For example, if he's worried about people needing food, the two of you might grow vegetables to donate to a food pantry.

Remember, you know your child best. If your son talks about feeling hopeless, or you are concerned that he might be suffering from depression, talk to his school counselor or doctor.♥







**Elementary Functional Living Skills**  
**Mrs. Danielle Killinger**

This year has brought around some changes in the Special Education Department at the elementary. I have begun working on functional living skills with some students in preparation for their programming at the high school level. Functional living skills refer to the skills that people need to successfully live independently. An important goal of our special education program is for our students to gain as much independence and autonomy as possible. This includes students with a wide range of disabilities.

Some skills that the elementary functional living program touches are:

- Cooking
- Using manners
- Cleaning
- Caring for a pet
- Job skills
- Making grocery lists
- Shopping
- Hands-on science experiments
- Functional vocabulary
- Following directions
- Focusing on functional math
- Sorting
- Laundry

By getting a jump start on these skills while students are young, they are better able to advance these skills at the high school and adult levels. We have seen significant growth in students' academics, attitudes, and willingness to participate when we are meeting their basic needs first. We plan to expand this program next year to further meet the needs of all Central Valley students.



**2021 Central Valley FFA Banquet**  
**Lexi Schaffert, Secretary**



The CV FFA Banquet will be held Tuesday, April 27 at the Central Valley Auditorium. Dinner will start promptly at 7:00pm.

This is a very exciting event as our chapter has had a very successful year. We have seen many accomplishments throughout the year. This year we have been fortunate enough to have several members qualify for state through Career Development Events in Floriculture, Welding, Livestock Management and Vet Science. The things we have accomplished were not only due to our hard work, but from the constant support we receive from people like you.

Please do us the honor of joining us in celebrating our chapter's success.



Cougar scientists had an opportunity to experiment with dry ice!



Front row l-r: Alexis Johnson, Kendra Cargill, Natalie Poss, Piper Shepard  
 Back row l-r: Mia Butcher, Dylan Rogers



Central Valley FFA was well represented at Career Development Events in Broken Bow and Shelton with 36 members participating. Through Career and Leadership Development Events, participating FFA members in grades 7 to 12 are challenged to develop critical thinking skills and effective decision-making skills, foster teamwork and promote communication while recognizing the value of ethical competition and individual achievement. FFA members participated in everything from welding and livestock management to agribusiness and livestock judging. FFA members competed against several hundred students from 16 area schools.

Central Valley brought two welding teams.

Team one earned 2nd place overall qualifying for state.

- TIG- Zach Stobbe, 4th overall Blue
- MIG- Terran Shepard, 3rd Blue
- Arc- Kean Benson, 2nd overall Purple
- O/A- Gale Treat, 2nd Purple

Team two earned 8th place.

- TIG- Bo Pokorny, 6th Red
- MIG- Logan Studley, White
- Arc- Morgan Behnk, 5th Blue
- O/A- McKade Pribnow, White



**Back row** l-r: Kean Benson, Morgan Behnk, Gale Treat, Terran Shepard  
**Front row** l-r: Bo Pokorny, Zach Stobbe, McKade Pribnow, Logan Studley



Our livestock judging teams did well in Broken Bow. Earning ribbons in the junior high division were Cannon Holley with a blue and Emalee Leth and Taylor Jensen with reds. In the junior division earning a blue was Ty Landers.



**Front row** l-r: Emalee Leth, Cannon Holley, Taylor Jensen, Ty Landers  
**Middle row** l-r: Riley Pedersen, Morgan Johnson, Callie Wadas, Caleb Studley, Ky Cargill  
**Back row** l-r: Talan Wood, Cordel Wagner

## congratulations

The FFA Livestock Management Team place 2nd at State in the Beef Management portion of the contest.



Cohen Grossart, Tamryn Klein, Piper Shepard, Carly Johnson, Tanner Landers







## Be a parent, not a peer, to your child

Your child is growing up physically and intellectually. He can understand concepts he couldn't last year. But he still needs to respect you, his teachers and other adults. To maintain your authority:

- Insist that your child speak politely to you and other adults. Don't allow him to speak rudely to you. Walk away and do not listen to him until he speaks respectfully.
- Require your child to follow your rules. He shouldn't need a huge list or rules, but enforce a few important ones with consequences for breaking them.
- Don't try to be the "cool" parent in the neighborhood. Be kind to your child and his friends, but don't act like a kid.
- Don't base decisions on what would please your child and his friends. Trust yourself as the adult and make decisions accordingly.

## CV students participate in Americanism Essay Contest

### Annual Americanism Essay Contest

Central Valley Public School students in grades 3-12 had the opportunity to participate in The American Legion Auxiliary's annual Americanism Essay Contest.

Students handed in their essays titled "How Can We Address the Health and Well-Being of Our Veterans, Military, and their Families," on March 8. Grade levels were divided into six classes. Class I: 3rd and 4th grade, 150-250 words; Class II: 5th and 6th, 250-300 words; Class III: 7th and 8th grade, 350-400 words; Class IV: 9-10th grade, 450-500 words; Class V: 11-12th grade, 450-500 words; Class VI: Students with Special Needs, word count based on student's grade level.

Awards are provided for each of the six classes while the local units give monetary amounts to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Winners at the Department level will receive \$50.



## How can I get my child to buckle down to do homework?

**Q:** My child always studies for tests and quizzes, but he often skips doing his homework. How can I help him to take responsibility for his daily assignments?

**A:** Quizzes and tests may seem more significant to your child, but it's homework that reinforces his learning on a daily basis.

To help him take homework seriously:

- **Discuss the problem.** If you haven't spelled it out yet, do so now. "I've noticed that you are letting a lot of homework slide. That's not OK, so let's figure out how to change the

situation."

- **Enforce a daily homework time.** Find a time that works for your child and stick to it. If he doesn't have any homework, he can use the time to review, work on a long-term project or read.
- **Connect homework to privileges.** "When you've finished your homework, you may watch TV." Check his work to make sure it's complete when he says it is.
- **Follow up.** If your strategies aren't working, get teachers involved. Let your child know you will be checking weekly to see whether he is turning in completed assignments. Decide what the consequence will be if you find he isn't. Then be sure to follow through.



## Central Valley Speech

**Mrs. Karen Reynolds/Mrs. MaryAnn McQuillan**

"Holy Whaa!" What a season it has been for this year's Speech team! Like a typical Nebraska March, this year's 13 participants came in performing like lambs and went out like lions!

Ours was a slow season start due largely to uncompromising weather but, once begun, our students' performances really showed promise. In spite of some tough competition at Districts, eight of our students (five in OID, two in Duet, and one in Humorous) all finaled to go to State where they roared! But before we begin their story, let us first tell you about four dynamic sophomore boys whose character representations in the OID, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, were dead-on, right down to 'dair' Upper Peninsula accents.

Newcomers Tanner Landers, Cohen Grossart, Kean Benson, and Zandar Wolf took on the challenging roles of four outlandishly obsessed deer hunters in *Escanaba, Michigan*. One of the characters, 35-year-old Reuben Soady who was played by Kean Benson, had yet to 'bag a buck,' an offense of monstrous proportions in the Soady family. Reuben's father and brother try encouraging him that this will be his year; however, when everything starts going wrong (including their experiencing an "alien sightin'"), the family fears that Reuben will indeed tarnish the Soady name as the oldest family member to ever go buckless.

Although our boys didn't make it to State, this young quartet deserves high praise for bringing *Escanaba* to life with such great heart and humor. So, boys, hang in there! Next year you'll get that trophy!

Now onto State Speech where there was enormous competition. Gabe Davis, one of our seasoned Seniors, took his Humorous prose entitled *Mancation* there and performed against 17 other students. Gabe's characters Carl and Ed put up two great performances but, in the end, they weren't enough to compete against several of

the finalists who had multi-character roles. Gabe can hold his head up high, though. He represented Central Valley with distinction and, even more importantly, just days before he performed at State, he enlisted in the Army where, following graduation, he will begin his new role as a soldier in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Senior Lexi Schaffert and Junior Airalee Evans took their duet entitled *Ten Easy Steps to Humiliation to State* after an impressive second place win at Districts. The girls' two rounds of performances were polished and clean, their characters funny and convincing, their timing, as usual, perfect. The judges' ballots contained a wealth of positive comments but, ultimately, our girls were edged out by other performances, and finals eluded them. Despite their disappointment, Lexi and Airalee are both gifted actors, and we couldn't be more proud of their accomplishments this season. Junior Airalee Evans has much to look forward to next year!

The OID we took to State dominated at Districts with two first place rounds and a second place final round. Three seniors, Ashlyn Wright, Audrey Wood, and Cayton Butcher, teamed up with Juniors Dilynn Wood and Neleigh Poss for 15 minutes of rollicking fun in a piece entitled *The Cause*. Audrey's character was that of a strict Russian instructor whose job it was to teach a group of clueless girls how to become proper protestors. However, the girls' cell phone obsession proves too much for the instructor until, harassed and hamstrung, she is left ready to hightail it back to Russia. Again, these girls gave two stellar performances but came up short for finals.

Every member of our team worked their tails off and deserved to be medal winners. But we understand the vagaries of competition and that judging performances is a subjective business. We know these 13 students deserve every praise for doing with ease what some people would rather die than do: speak in public.

And so, to this year's Speech team, thanks for the memories. Thanks for stepping up and showing up to practice when you were tired and exhausted. Thanks to the faculty and administration for all their support. Thanks to the teachers who allowed our team into your classroom so they could get in another practice or two before Districts. Thanks to all the students for the great send-off as we took our talents to State. Finally, thanks to the parents and families of this year's team for encouraging your child(ren) to invest themselves in this enrichment called Speech. You all have our deep gratitude.

As for us, until next year, we're 'gettin' our cellphones', 'grabbin' our dresses and date', and 'goin' off to ride that bull!' **'Holy Whaaa!'**



**Front row l-r:** Mrs. MaryAnn McQuillan, Dilynn Wood, Audrey Wood

**Middle row l-r:** Lexi Schaffert, Airalee Evans, Dilynn Wood

**Third row l-r:** Mrs. Karen Reynolds, Cayton Butcher, Ashlyn Wright

**Back row l-r:** Gabriel Davis



## MUSIC CONCERTS GO LIVE

Central Valley Music Department is looking forward to presenting live concerts this spring at both the elementary and the secondary school. The 7-12th grade concert will be presented on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 P.M. Auditorium. The elementary concert will be Friday, April 16 also at 7:00 P.M. in Scotia. A variety of groups and ensembles will be performing, both instrumental and vocal. Please come support these young people as they perform for the community, family, and friends. Masks will be required.

To finish off the music season is the yearly District Music Competition sponsored by the Nebraska School Activities Association. This year it is held in Broken Bow on Wednesday, April 21. We wish all the performers beautiful tone, clear articulation, and many memories of making amazing music.



### Enforce drug & alcohol rules

Alcohol and drug experimentation is not a normal rite of passage for young people. Just one use can harm your child. Make it clear that you expect him not to take the risk:

♦ **Be explicit.** Don't say "Be careful." Say, "You are

never allowed to participate in these behaviors."

- ♦ **Give reasons.** "Underage drinking and illegal drug use are against the law. Both are also harmful to your health."
- ♦ **Do not allow** your child to socialize with known users without supervision.



# IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY

To ask questions  
about your baby's  
development



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

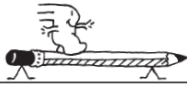
## Tips for Reading Success

## Beginning Edition

April 2021

Central Valley Elementary School

### Book Picks



#### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *12 Ways to Get to 11* (Eve Merriam)

Oh, no—where did number 11 go? Your youngster can tag along with the numbers 1 through 10 on a hunt for the missing number. She'll discover 12 different ways to make 11, like 9 pinecones + 2 acorns or 1 mother pig + 10 piglets.



#### ■ *A Tree Is Nice* (Janice May Udry)

What can you do with a tree? This book is full of fun—and practical—purposes for trees. Your youngster might nap in its shade or jump into piles of its leaves, for example. The story encourages readers to appreciate and care for trees. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art* (Barb Rosenstock)

When Vasily Kandinsky painted, he didn't just see colors and shapes—he heard sounds and music, too! As he grew older, he was determined to make art that reflected his uniqueness. This nonfiction book tells the story behind his revolutionary creation of abstract art.



#### ■ *The Magician's Hat* (Malcolm Mitchell)

The children are excited when a magician shows up at the library's family fun day. Little do they know that the magician can make their dreams of becoming a dentist or football player come true. But the enchantment truly begins when your child discovers what actually makes the magic happen.

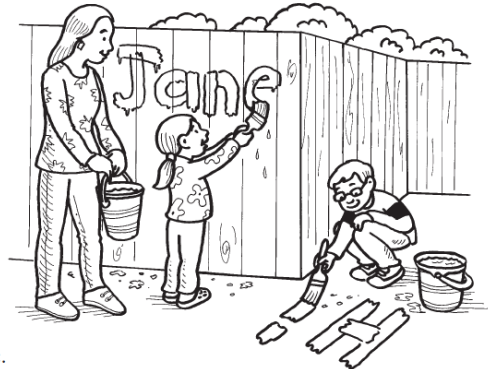


## Get outside and write!

Writing doesn't have to happen at a desk or table. As the weather warms up and the flowers bloom, let your youngster take writing outside with these suggestions.

#### "Paint" with water

Encourage your child to dip a paintbrush in water and use it to write letters or words on a sidewalk, driveway, or fence. She could even leave a message for passersby. ("Happy Friday!")



#### Make rock sentences

Have your youngster use a fine-tipped marker to write sentences on rocks—one word per rock. Then, she can mix up the rocks, and you try to put the words in the correct order. Switch roles by writing a rock sentence for her to unscramble.

#### Play nature bingo

Let your child make a bingo card filled with things to find on a walk, such as a yellow flower, a tree with fruit, a pond,

and a turtle. Head out and see how many items she can cross off her card.

#### Write stories and letters

Suggest that your youngster use nature as inspiration for a story or a friendly letter. She might write a story from the point of view of a squirrel or cactus. Or she could write a letter to the sun or sky.

#### List outdoor activities

Sit outside together, and help your child write a list of activities to try. If she spots a bird feeder in a neighbor's tree, she might write, "Make a bird feeder and watch birds."♥

## My book cover

Designing a book cover is a fun way to build reading comprehension. Ask your child to pick a book and follow these steps.

1. Talk about what the book cover includes (title, author's name, picture). Then, read the story together.
2. Have him fold a piece of construction paper in half to make a new jacket for the book. On the front, he can write the title and author, then illustrate something from the story. He might draw his favorite part, for instance.
3. On the back, help him write a summary. He could describe the main character and tell what happens to him. *Tip:* If he isn't writing yet, he can dictate his summary to you.
4. Let your youngster hang his cover near his bookshelf. Then, suggest that he make covers for other stories to display with it.♥





## Celebrate poetry

April is National Poetry Month. Make the most of it by checking out books of children's poetry from the library and enjoying these ideas together.

**Poetry picnic.** Pack food *and* poems for a picnic! For instance, put peanut butter sandwiches and pickles in your picnic basket in honor of "Peanut-Butter Sandwich" and "Ickle



Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" (Shel Silverstein). Enjoy reading the poetry along with your food! You might even make up your own food poems as you eat.

**Poetry charades.** Take turns secretly choosing a poem and acting it out. Everyone else looks through the book and tries to figure out which poem you picked. For "I Am Growing a Glorious Garden" (Jack Prelutsky), your child might pretend to weed, plant, and water. To make it more entertain-

ing—and easier for others to guess the poem, he could use props. He might wear a sun hat, pretend to dig with a shovel, and "sprinkle" from an empty watering can. ♥

**Fun with Words**

### Syllable sort

What do the words *teacher* and *pizza* have in common? Each has two syllables! This sorting activity helps your child hear syllables, which can make her a better reader and speller.

Ask your youngster to choose a book, perhaps *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Kevin Henkes). Read it together, then go back through and let her pick out a dozen words (*purple, purse, chocolate, porridge*). She can write each word on a separate slip of paper.



Now encourage your child to say the words aloud and sort them into piles according to the number of syllables. For example, *purple* and *plastic* go in a pile of two-syllable words, and *chocolate* and *artistic* belong in the three-syllable pile. When they're all sorted, she could look for more words in the book to add to each pile. ♥

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**Parent to Parent**

### Write about family history

I've been researching our family's ancestry, and my son Brian became interested in my project. So I asked him to help me add notes to our family photo album by interviewing his grandparents. It turned out to be a nice way for him to practice writing.

First, we brainstormed questions, such as "What did you do for fun when you were my age?" "What did your school look like?" "What sports did you play?"

Then, Brian called his grandparents to ask the questions. I helped him write their answers, and together, he and I wrote the highlights in our album. Under a photo of Grandma doing gymnastics, we wrote, "She won a gold medal on the balance beam." My son loved hearing the stories, and he enjoyed using writing to help me with my research project. ♥



### Q&A Build listening skills

**Q** My daughter's attention seems to trail off mid-sentence when I'm talking to her. What can I do to help her become a better listener?

**A** Playing games is an excellent way for your child to practice listening skills.

For example, try a classic game of Telephone. Have family members sit in a circle. One person whispers a sentence to the person next to her. Pass it on around the circle, and the last

person says the sentence aloud. Is it the original sentence? If not, try again!

Or ask your youngster to cover her eyes as you make noises like flicking a light switch, running water from the tap, or turning the pages of a book. How many sounds can she identify?

*Note:* If your daughter continues to have difficulty paying attention or listening, mention your concerns to her teacher so the two of you can work together to help her. ♥



# Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2021

Central Valley Elementary School

## Book Picks

### ■ *Lost and Found* (Andrew Clements)

What happens when twins Ray and Jay Grayson pretend to be the same person at a new school? Things get a little out of hand! In the end, they learn a lesson: Trying to be someone else doesn't work, and people who care about us appreciate what makes us different.

### ■ *Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives* (Elizabeth Rusch)

A sleeping volcano in Colombia suddenly erupted in 1985, killing 23,000 people. Were there clues that could have prevented this tragedy? This volume from the Scientists in the Field series describes how U.S. Geological Survey scientists work to uncover early warning signs of an eruption.

### ■ *Akissi: Tales of Mischievous*

(Marguerite Abouet)

In book one of the Akissi graphic novel series, readers will meet a young girl from Ivory Coast. Akissi takes us along on her days filled with hilarious mishaps and silly adventures—like when she has to chase a cat up a tree for stealing her fish! Based on the author's own childhood in West Africa.

### ■ *The Crayon Man: The True Story of the Invention of Crayola Crayons* (Natascha Biebow)

This illustrated nonfiction book tells the story of Edwin Binney and how he invented the famous Crayola crayons. He started by creating a special kind of chalk and eventually brought the colorful crayons to life. Includes a section with photographs showing how crayons are made in factories today.



## Be a reading family

Did you know that children read more when their parents are readers, too? Consider these ways to get your family excited about reading together.

### Collect "frequent-reader miles"

A trip around the world covers almost 25,000 miles. Let 1 book = 2,500 miles, and have a race to see who will be the first to read his way "around the world." *Bonus:* Your youngster will practice math skills as he tallies his miles.

### Become super-sleuths

Encourage your child to draw conclusions by reading short mysteries aloud. Try a book like *Five-Minute Mini-Mysteries* (Stan Smith). Before revealing the solution, let each person make a prediction and tell what clues tipped him off.

### Crank up some karaoke

Help your youngster find song lyrics online. Then, play the song, and read

the words as you sing along together. *Tip:* Encourage your child to add words to his vocabulary by looking up unfamiliar ones in a dictionary.

### Play reading games

Give your youngster practice reading aloud. You might hold a contest by attempting to read correctly from a book of tongue twisters. Or make up fill-in-the-blank stories (like Mad Libs), and try to read the results without laughing! 📖



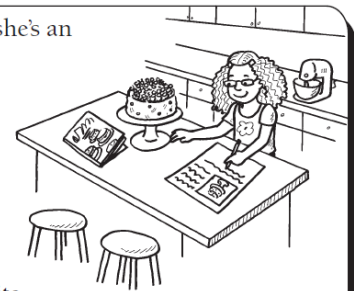
## Write about what you like

Encourage your child to write about a topic she's an expert on: herself! Suggest these three ways.

1. Perhaps your youngster enjoys painting pottery or decorating cakes. She can write descriptions of her finished products. Encourage her to be specific (for example, describe materials or colors) so she'll learn to use details in her writing.

2. Suggest that your child create a monthly newsletter for family and friends about her favorite sports teams. She can practice summarizing by writing a few sentences after each game she watches.

3. A youngster who loves hiking might keep a trail journal. She'll learn to record observations as she keeps track of different trails you hike together. ("The Red Trail at the park can be really muddy after the rain.") 📖





## Understanding cause and effect

The ability to recognize cause and effect boosts your child's reading comprehension whether she's reading fiction or nonfiction. These fun ideas will give her practice.

**Mix and match.** Together, write sentences involving cause and effect. (Hint: Cause-and-effect sentences use "signal words" like *if*, *then*, *because*, *since*, *so*, *consequently*, *as a result*, and *the reason for*.) First, brainstorm 10 "real" cause-and-effect sentences, such as "Because Mars has no atmosphere, nothing lives there," or "The kids were bored, so Sam invented a game." Then, pair each cause with a different effect to make



illogical—and funny—combinations. "Because Mars has no atmosphere, Sam invented a game."

**Show a chain reaction.** Suggest that your youngster make a paper trail to track the causes and effects in a story she reads. She could write each cause on one color of paper and each effect on another color. *Cause:* "Hansel and Gretel are left in the woods." *Effect:* "As a result, Hansel and Gretel become lost." *Cause:* "They have no food." *Effect:* "They're hungry, so they eat the gingerbread house." As your child lays down her paper trail, she will see how cause and effect drive the plot. ■



### Q&A In a reading rut

**Q** My son keeps starting books and not finishing them. He can't seem to find one he likes. Do you have any advice?

**A** Suggest that your son give books a fair chance before abandoning them. Depending on their length and his reading ability, he might want to read at least 25–50 pages of a book to decide whether he likes it. He may discover that it gets better as he reads.

Also, it's possible your son is tired of the kinds of books he normally selects. Encourage him to browse the library for something different. If he usually reads mysteries, he could try fantasy or short stories, for instance.

Finally, encourage him to get recommendations from people who share his interests. Ideas from friends or relatives just might supply the spark he needs. ■



### Fun with Words Comma quest

Play this game to help your youngster remember the sometimes tricky rules about when and where to use commas.

**Materials:** index cards, pencil, books, magazines, newspapers

1. On separate index cards, have your child write rules for using commas. He might find the rules in a textbook, in class notes, or online. *Examples:* Use a comma after introductory phrases ("In the morning, we broke camp"). Use a comma before a conjunction when it joins two independent clauses ("He wanted to read, but he had no books").
2. Shuffle the cards and spread them out facedown. Take turns flipping one over. Then, race each other to find an example of the rule in one of the books, magazines, or newspapers.
3. The winner reads the sentence and the rule aloud and claims the card. The person with the most cards at the end is the comma champ! ■



### Parent 2 Parent Expressive read-alouds

My daughter doesn't use much expression when she reads aloud. Her teacher suggested that I could help Melissa improve by doing this activity together.

On separate sticky notes, Melissa drew faces showing different emotions, such as happy, sad, mad, excited, and surprised. Then, she read a book aloud to me, and I used the sticky notes to help with expression. For instance, after she used a flat voice to read

"He couldn't believe it when he finally won a race," I held up the surprised note. She laughed and repeated the sentence in an enthusiastic voice.

Melissa has started keeping her sticky notes nearby to refer to when she reads aloud at home. She won't always need them, but for now, they're a good reminder for her to adjust her tone to match how characters are feeling. ■



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