

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

March 2021

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I



SHORT NOTES

Ask about tests

If your child has standardized tests coming up, ask her to show you any study guides or practice tests she completes. You might have her explain how she arrived at some of the answers. Your interest shows her that the tests are important to you and will encourage her to do her best on test day.

Patience pays off

Enjoying leisurely activities with your youngster can teach him the value of patience. For example, make chili together in a slow cooker, then eat a delicious meal you've waited for all day. Play Jenga or build a house of cards—he'll need to take his time to avoid toppling the structure!

Sad, or depressed?

It's normal for kids to feel sad occasionally. But if your child becomes withdrawn or moody, has changes in her eating or sleeping habits, or loses interest in things she normally enjoys, talk to her pediatrician. Those may be signs of depression, and the doctor can recommend next steps.

Worth quoting

"Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of someone else." *Judy Garland*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: I get bigger every time you subtract something. What am I?

A: A hole!



Learning with hobbies

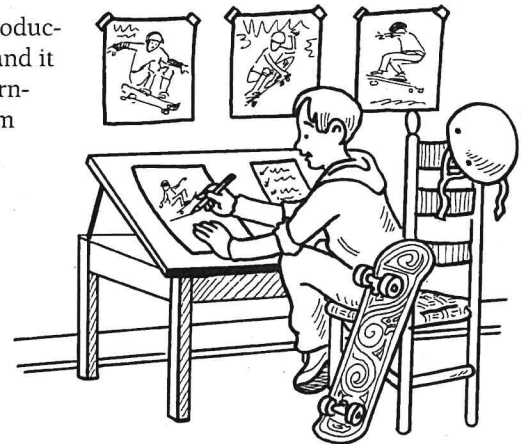
A hobby gives your child a productive way to spend his free time, and it brings a wealth of real-world learning opportunities. Encourage him to pursue a hobby—and learn from it—with these ideas.

Reading

Let your youngster read to learn more about a hobby that interests him. If he'd like to learn to play chess, he could read a book on opening moves. Or if he collects comic books, he might read about how to draw comics. Then, give him opportunities to share what he learns. For instance, offer to play chess with him or ask to see the comics he sketches.

Writing

Have your child start a journal or scrapbook about his hobby. A skateboarder can write instructions for tricks he's learning and check off each one as he masters it. A youngster who makes balloon animals could take photos of



his completed projects to put in a scrapbook, then write a caption for each.

Math

Help your child find math in his hobby. If he's a runner, suggest that he keep track of his times and distances and then make a graph to see how he improves. Or if he plays a musical instrument, he can work on timing by writing the fractions above the notes ($\frac{1}{4}$ note, $\frac{1}{2}$ note) in sheet music and using them to keep count.♥

Ways to offer encouragement

Going beyond general praise and giving your youngster specific feedback can inspire her to keep up the good work. Consider these examples:

- Instead of "You're so smart," try "You're good at thinking things through." *Why?* You'll avoid labeling your child.
- Instead of "You're so helpful," try "Thanks for doing your chores before I asked." *Why?* Your words will motivate your child to repeat her behavior.
- Instead of "Awesome grade," try "I'm proud of you for studying hard." *Why?* This puts the focus on effort rather than grades only.
- Instead of "What a pretty painting," try "I'm impressed by all the details." *Why?* Your youngster will know exactly what made it appealing to you.♥



A caring family

A supportive family can give your youngster confidence and teach her to care about others. Use these ways to show one another that you care.

Highlight good news. Let your child write “Family News” on a sheet of paper and tack it to a bulletin board. When something good happens (her big sister is accepted to college, you get a new job), have her post it on the board. Encourage everyone to add a comment to each news item. (“Way to go, Mom!”)



Build each other up. When a family member is disappointed or frustrated, chances are someone in your house has been in a similar situation. Ask that person to talk about her experience and how she handled it. For example, your youngster might tell her little brother, “I was sad when I couldn’t have a birthday party with my friends because of the pandemic. But we had fun playing games together on Zoom.”

Laugh together. Humor can relieve stress and strengthen bonds. Many families have a collection of “inside” jokes and stories. Tell them frequently, and share a good laugh. (“Remember when we found the cat on the top shelf of the pantry?”)♥



Healthy snacks

Q: The only snacks my daughter wants to eat are cookies and chips. What should I do?

A: Try suggesting fun, creative ways your child can prepare nutritious snacks. You’ll get her invested in making healthy ones that she’ll want to eat.

For instance, have her layer trail mix ingredients in a clear jar. Perhaps she’ll use whole-grain cereal pieces, dried fruit, and nuts or seeds. She could store the jar on the counter with a scoop equaling one serving.



She might also make colorful, single-serving veggie bags to keep front and center in the refrigerator. In separate zipper bags, she can put raw (rinsed) vegetables, such as broccoli florets, carrots, grape tomatoes, and snap peas.

Finally, try to avoid buying empty-calorie snacks like chips and cookies so she’s not tempted by less-healthy options.♥

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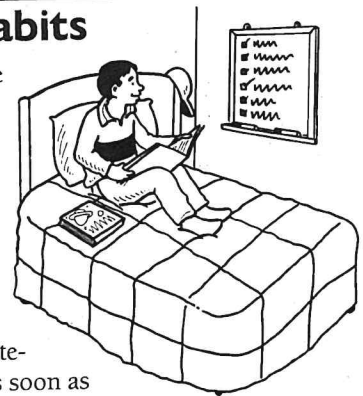
PARENT TO PARENT

Strong work habits

Each year it was the same pattern: My son Luis started off the school year strong, but then his work habits slid in the second half. This year was no exception, so I suggested that Luis make a checklist to keep himself on track.

We talked about his habits, such as waiting until the last minute to study for tests or doing homework in front of the TV. Then for each problem area, he listed a solution on a small whiteboard. He included things like “Study for tests as soon as they’re announced” and “Work where I won’t be distracted.”

Luis hung his whiteboard in his room. He reviews it before he starts working each day, then puts a check mark beside each good habit he uses. He’s happy when he shows me he’s checked off all his boxes—and I’m relieved to see him staying on track!♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Smart spending starts now

Learning to make smart financial decisions will help your child now and in the future. Try these activities when you shop together.

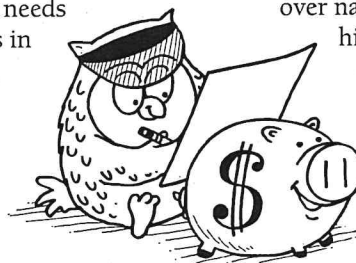
Identify needs and wants

Make a grocery list, and ask your youngster to highlight needs in one color and wants in another. For example, he could use a green highlighter for milk and toilet paper and a yellow one for ice cream and popcorn. Explain

that you’ll shop for needs first, then wants if there’s money left in your grocery budget.

Go on a saving spree

How much money can your child save your family by choosing generics over name-brand products? Have him write down the prices for both versions of each item. When you finish shopping, he can subtract to find the savings for each product, then add up all the savings to find the total.♥



Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2021

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ *Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring* (Kenard Pak)



Explore the magic of the changing seasons in this joyful story of a

boy and his dog who welcome the colors, animals, and flowers of spring. Your child can follow along as snowy winter nights transform into sunny spring days.

■ *Art Play! Activities for Preschoolers* (Meredith Magee Donnelly)

This book designed for little hands will inspire your youngster to make a magic wand, create a home for a stuffed animal, draw while dancing, and more. The easy-to-follow ideas use everyday supplies and focus on the process of making art.

■ *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (Meg Medina)



When Mia's Spanish-speaking *abuela* (grandmother) moves in with her family, the little girl isn't sure how they'll be able to communicate. Still, she's determined to learn Spanish and teach her *abuela* English. With the help of a parrot named Mango, Mia and her *abuela's* relationship flourishes. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *The Napping House* (Audrey Wood)

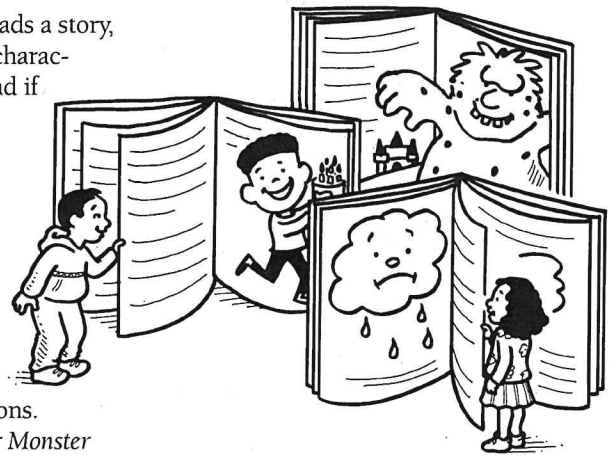
In the house where everyone naps, you would think everything was calm. And it is—until too many people and animals climb into the cozy bed. Your youngster will love discovering what

happens in this silly story when one too many creatures try to take a nap.



Boost empathy with books

When your youngster reads a story, he might feel happy if one character wins a soccer game or sad if another's best friend moves away. Books can help him understand others' feelings in real life, too. Try these ideas to boost his empathy—and his reading comprehension.



Explore feelings

Ask a librarian to help you find books about emotions. She might suggest *The Color Monster* (Anna Llenas) or *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* (Britney Winn Lee), for instance. Read the stories to your child, and let him look for words that describe characters' feelings (happy, sad, scared). Then, you can each share a time when you felt those emotions.

"Read" pictures

Have your youngster look at the pictures in books and try to figure out how characters are feeling. He might say a girl with her mouth open looks surprised or that a monster with a red face looks

mad. Together, read the page to find out why the character feels that way.

Handle tough times

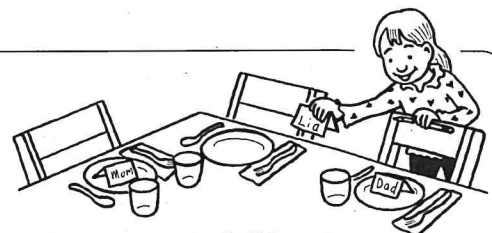
Seeing how characters deal with challenges, like being bullied or starting a new school, can help your child cope with his own struggles. As you read, encourage him to predict how a character might handle a difficult experience. What might your youngster do in the same situation? Read on to find out what happens. ♥

Writing in the kitchen

Bring writing into the kitchen to show your child everyday ways she can practice:

- Let your youngster make place cards for each person at the table.
- Suggest that she write a menu for lunch options on a chalkboard or piece of paper.
- Ask her to help you make a grocery list. She might copy words from food packages to spell them.
- Have your child use mailing labels or write on freezer bags to identify leftovers. She can write what's inside and the date.

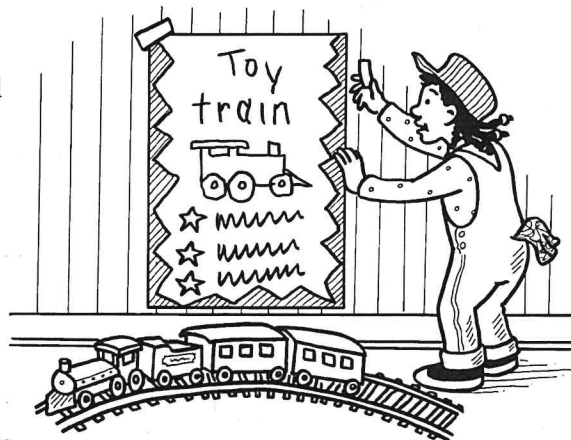
Idea: Keep slips of paper or a notepad in a kitchen drawer to encourage regular writing. ♥



Persuade me!

Persuasive writing gives your child a chance to express her opinions—and to convince others that she has a good point. These activities will let her put her persuasive skills to work.

Advertisements. Suggest that your youngster draw a picture of a favorite product, such as a toy or her sneakers, and write an ad that would inspire others to buy it. For a train, she could write, “Trains are fun to play with. This train goes fast down the



hills. Kids will love it.” Let her read her ad to you. She could hang it up like a billboard—or make more ads and staple them together to create a catalog.

Family message board. Leave persuasive messages for each other on a whiteboard, a bulletin board, or a space on the refrigerator door. Encourage your child to write recommendations for things like family outings or meals. She should also list

reasons in an effort to persuade you. *Example:* “Let’s hike on Saturday. It’s going to be sunny. Hiking is fun.” When possible, try her ideas!♥

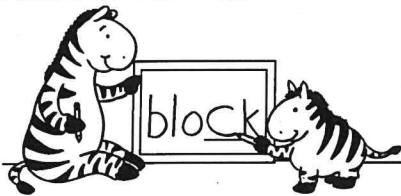
Q&A



Spelling progress

Q My first grader sometimes leaves out letters in words when he writes. Is this something I should be concerned about?

A When children begin writing, they often write only the letters for the sounds they hear. So it’s common for them to leave out letters. If your son writes *blok* (*block*), he’s showing that he hears the *b*, *l*, *o*, and *k* sounds—and that he still needs to learn that *k* is spelled *ck* in some words.



As he learns new sounds and spelling patterns, he’ll spell more words correctly. Help him with this idea. Say he’s learning in school that *oa* sounds like *o*, and he writes *cot* (*coat*). Write the word, leaving a blank in place of the missing letter (*co_t*). Ask him to say the word aloud (*coat*), and see if he can fill in the blank (*a*). Now have him write a word with a missing letter for you to figure out!♥

Fun with Words

Roll-and-read suffixes

Rain, rained, raining ... your youngster can change a word by adding an ending like *-ed* or *-ing*. Play this game to help him explore suffixes.

Materials: poster board or construction paper; pencil, die, one game token per player

Help your child draw an S-shaped game-board path, label opposite ends “Start” and “Finish,” and add lines to make spaces. On each space, have him write a word that can use the suffix *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*, or *-s*, such as *play*, *dance*, and *call*.

Put your tokens on “Start,” and take turns rolling a die and moving your token that number of spaces. Pick a suffix that makes sense and use the new word in a sentence. For *call*, your youngster might say, “I *called* Nana on the phone today.” Reach “Finish” first to win.♥



Parent to Parent

Film a book trailer

My daughter Liza loves to watch book trailers online. They’re like movie previews—but for books! So she decided to create one of her own.

She practiced reading the book title (*Knuffle Bunny*), the author’s name (Mo Willems), and the summary on the back. She also used sticky notes to bookmark her favorite pages so she could show them to her audience.

When Liza was ready, I recorded her giving an introduction and talking about the pages she had chosen. She wrapped up her trailer by leaving her audience with a question: “Will Trixie be reunited with Knuffle Bunny?”

My daughter has made several trailers since then, and she’s building her speaking skills and learning to talk about books. I help her email them to our relatives and friends so their children can watch—and hopefully find new books to read.♥



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Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2021

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Book Picks

■ *Paint the Wind* (Pam Muñoz Ryan)

When 11-year-old Maya's grandmother dies, the little girl goes to Wyoming to live with relatives she's never met. There she enjoys new freedom and the friendship of a wild mustang. After the mustang saves Maya's life, she must decide whether to keep the horse or set her free. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas* (Gwendolyn Hooks)

In this inspiring biography, readers will learn about African American surgical pioneer Vivien Thomas. Unable to go to medical school, he landed a job in a research lab at an all-white college. There, he helped to pave the way for children's open-heart surgery.

■ *Professor Astro Cat's Deep-Sea Voyage* (Dominic Walliman)

Follow along as Professor Astro Cat explores the deep sea. Blending fiction and non-fiction, this book includes facts about shipwrecks, coral reefs, sea creatures, and much more. Contains illustrated diagrams and maps plus a glossary with ocean terms. Part of the Professor Astro Cat series.



explores the deep sea. Blending fiction and non-fiction, this book

■ *The Hero Revealed* (William Boniface)

Meet Ordinary Boy. In his hometown of Superopolis, he's the only resident without superpowers. Then, he gets to help his favorite superhero and learns that even regular people can be heroes. This humorous book is the first in the Extraordinary Adventures of Ordinary Boy series.



Creative study guides

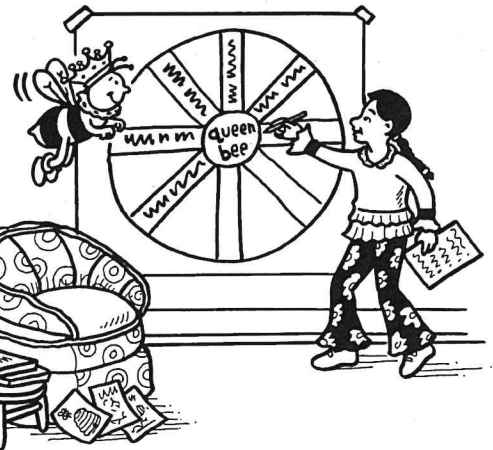
Reading for information is a skill every student needs. Suggest that your child create a study guide to use for her next test. In the process, she'll practice reading closely for key ideas and details. Here are formats she could try.

Details, details

For each section of a textbook chapter, have your child draw a wheel (a circle with spokes, coming out from its center in all directions). In the hub, she can write the topic (*queen bee*). On each spoke, she could write a detail about that topic (one queen bee per colony, lays up to 1,500 eggs per day).

Color-coding

Let your youngster choose a different-color pen or font for each kind of fact. For instance, if she's reading about the American Revolution, she could use blue to write notes about people (George Washington, Benjamin Franklin), red for dates (1775, 1783), and green for places (Bunker Hill, Yorktown).



Color-coding will help her remember the information.

Q&A

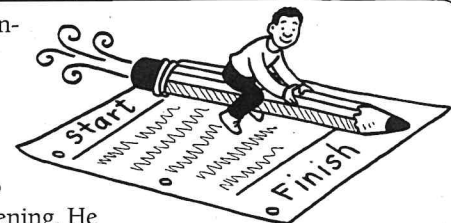
Ask your youngster to pretend she's an expert on a topic she's studying and that a news reporter has interviewed her. She can write an "interview transcript" and use it as a study guide. First, she should rewrite each topic as a question. For instance, "The Importance of Protein" might become "Why is protein important?" Then as she reads, she can fill in the answers to create her transcript.

Strong starts, fine finishes

It takes practice to write effective beginnings and endings for essays or reports. Share these tips with your youngster.

● **Introduction:** The opening sentence welcomes the audience and hints at what's to come. Encourage your child to experiment to find the most inviting opening. He might pose a question ("When was the first robot built?") or present a fact ("The earliest known robot had wings").

● **Conclusion:** The last sentence offers a snapshot of the ideas presented. Have your youngster reread his paper and ask, "What do I want readers to remember?" Then, he can write a line with that in mind. ("Robots may seem like new technology, but history shows they've been around for a long time.")



Combine books with crafts

Crafty activities can encourage your child to think more deeply about books—and make reading more enjoyable. Spark his imagination with projects like these.

Design graffiti boards. Have your youngster decorate poster boards with drawings and words related to a book. For example, if he's reading a mystery, he could draw a part of the setting, write clues from the story in a giant question mark, and fill the margins of the poster with his favorite quotes from the book. He'll



have to read carefully to pay attention to what's important.

Build models.

Let your child use household materials to make 3-D creations that match a book. If he's reading about roller coasters, he might engineer one with cardboard tubes

and straws. Or for a tale

about forest animals, he could sculpt creatures out of clay. Have him dig for details in the text and examine the illustrations so he can make accurate models. ■

Parent & Parent Be a better speller

My son Elliott has been struggling with spelling, so I shared rules I used at his age, like “i before e, except after c.” But he said he'd learned that many words don't follow those rules. So I asked his teacher for better ways to help him at home.

The teacher suggested that Elliott keep a list of words he frequently misspells and post it over his desk. For example, she pointed out that he tends to put *-able* at the end of words that should have *-ible*. So Elliott made a list that included *collectible*, *edible*, *flexible*, and *visible*.

She also said that while rules can be useful, looking for exceptions might be a fun way to help Elliott remember difficult spellings. When he found *e* before *i* in a “neighborhood meeting” notice and on a “weigh produce here” sign in the store, he decided that words with *igh* have their own rule: *e* before *i* if it sounds like *a*. Now, he's looking for exceptions that don't include *igh*. ■



Read and write about science

Q I think my daughter might want to be a scientist when she grows up!

How could we use her love of science to help her with reading and writing, too?

A It's great that your child enjoys science so much. Try getting books of science experiments for her from the library. She can read them and pick out experiments to do at home—following the instructions will give her good reading practice.

Your daughter may enjoy reading science fiction, too. Ask her to point out inventions or technology in the stories that are based on real science or that she thinks could be possible in her lifetime.

You might also suggest that your child start a science journal. She could record the results of her experiments or write about what she spots during walks, such as animal tracks in the mud or flowers sprouting from the ground. ■



Once upon a time

Give your youngster's speaking skills a boost with this family storytelling game.

1. Have each player write 10–20 random words (*feud*, *crucial*, *magical*) on separate slips of paper. Fold the slips in half, put them in a bag, and shake.

2. Let your child pull out a slip and begin telling a story that uses the word she drew. “Once upon a time, there was a *feud*

between two kings who just happened to be brothers.” Then, the next person draws a word and continues the story.

“One king thought it was *crucial* to build a moat to keep his brother's knights from invading.” Continue taking turns picking slips and adding to the story.

3. The person who chooses the last word gets to wrap up the tale. ■



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