Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal
Title 1

SHORT NOTES

Measure up

Who can make the longest "inchworm"? Your child will practice measuring with this game. Take turns rolling a die. Using a ruler, measure a "worm" out of clay to match the number rolled (roll a 2, make a worm 2 inches long). Add to the worm on every turn. The player with the longest worm after five rolls wins.

Make time for family meals

Research shows that family meals can improve your youngster's well-being and help him do better in school. Look over your schedules each Sunday to find times when everyone can eat together. If one parent is working late on Wednesday and can't make dinner, for instance, plan to meet for a nice breakfast instead.

DID YOU KNOW? Asthma is a leading cause of school absences. If your child has asthma (or another chronic medical condition), talk to her doctor and the school nurse about ways to ensure good attendance—and good health. Examples might include avoiding triggers like dust and mold and taking medication as directed.

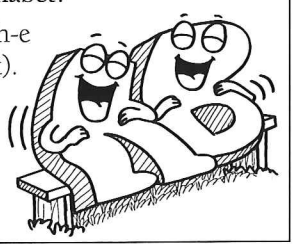
Worth quoting

"The most wasted of all days is one without laughter." *e. e. cummings*

JUST FOR FUN

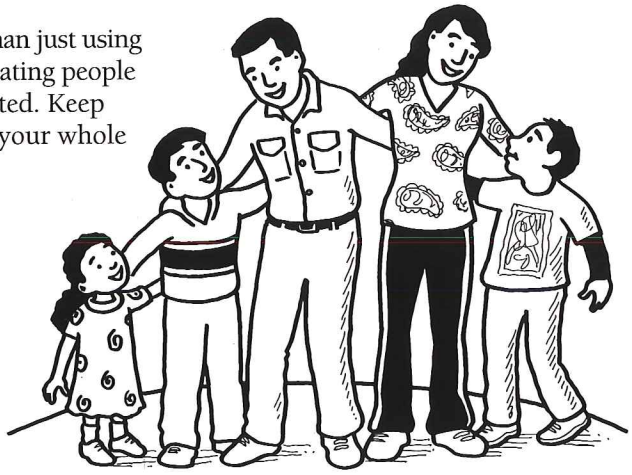
Q: How many letters are in the alphabet?

A: Eleven (t-h-e a-l-p-h-a-b-e-t).



We respect each other

Being respectful is more than just using good manners—it means treating people the way you want to be treated. Keep these ideas in mind to help your whole family focus on respect.



Use peaceful tones

It's a fact that shouting often leads to more shouting. Ask your child to speak in a normal tone to show respect for the person he's talking to—and for everyone around him. If he starts yelling, speak to him in a whisper. He'll likely lower his voice to match your volume. Or if he shouts from another room, wait until he comes to you so he learns that you don't respond to yelling.

Avoid making assumptions

Your youngster can respect others' feelings by giving them the benefit of the doubt. For example, encourage him to rephrase an accusation like "Who took my water bottle?" Instead he could ask, "Has anyone seen my water bottle?" That's more respectful because it won't make anyone feel accused or defensive.

Accept different opinions

With your child, role-play ways to respect opinions that are different from his own. He might start a sentence with "That's one way to look at it, but I think…" or "A lot of people would agree with you. In my opinion… " If a conversation is getting heated, he could simply say, "Let's agree to disagree and talk about something else."♥

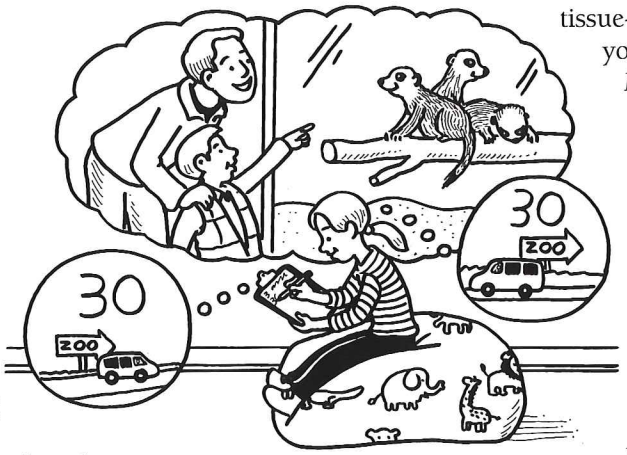
My studying tool kit

Developing strong study skills now will help your youngster throughout elementary school and the rest of her school career. Suggest that she add these tools to her studying tool kit.

- **Color:** Let your child use highlighters to color-code her notes for easy reference. Perhaps she'll highlight dates in yellow, people's names in pink, and vocabulary terms in blue.
- **Recordings:** Encourage your youngster to record herself asking questions about the material. She can hit "play" to hear the questions and "pause" to give each answer.
- **Sticky notes:** Your child could write a one-sentence summary of each textbook section on a sticky note, then use the notes to bookmark the section.♥

Here's how I use math!

Give your child real-world reasons to use math—she'll see connections between what she's learning in school and what she enjoys in everyday life.



Do a craft. Maybe your youngster would enjoy knitting or making friendship bracelets. In each case, she'll count and work with patterns. Or she could explore shapes and symmetry with tissue-paper mosaics or origami. Let her tell you about the math in her project.

Examples: "The pattern for this hat is knit 2, purl 2, knit 2, purl 2." "My mosaic has hexagons, right triangles, and trapezoids."

Plan an outing. Whether you're running errands or going to the zoo, your child can use math to plan your schedule. Say you have three hours for a zoo trip. Your youngster wants to see the parrots, and her brother wants to visit the meerkats. Ask her to calculate how long it will take to drive to and from the zoo, then figure out how long you can spend at each exhibit. Remind her to allow time for walking from one area to the next.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

A vivid vocabulary

"Draw a *magenta* bird with a *plethora* of polka dots and a *quirky* tail playing a *harmonica*." Would your youngster know what to draw if you gave him those instructions? Try this fun art project to help him learn new words.

1. Together, flip through a book or magazine and pick out words that you each think look interesting.

2. Write the words on separate slips of paper, and mix up the slips in a bowl.

3. Take turns pulling three words from the bowl and using them to describe something for the other person to draw. *Note:* Check a dictionary if you don't know what a word means.

4. Let your child describe his finished picture to you—he'll practice using the new words.♥

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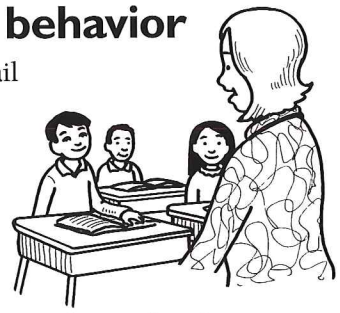
PARENT TO PARENT

Good classroom behavior



Yesterday I received an email from my son Simon's teacher saying she had to move his seat because he talks too much in class. I replied to ask whether there should be a consequence at home, too.

Mrs. Roberts said she emailed me because she wanted Simon to know that she and I work together to help him succeed. She wasn't asking me to punish him, but she suggested that I might speak to him.

Simon complained that his friends start the conversations. I pointed out that he didn't have to respond, and I asked him what he could do next time. He said he will keep his eyes on the teacher or his work and talk to his friends at recess.

I'm glad his teacher told me what was happening. Now she and I will stay in touch to help Simon behave better in the future.♥

Q & A

Your child's IEP review

Q: *I have a meeting next month to review my daughter's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Any tips on how to get ready for it?*

A: The first step is knowing what's in your child's IEP. Ask for a copy if you don't have one. There's a lot of information in there, so before the meeting, try to read over her goals and her accommodations (tools and strategies to help her). Jot down questions about anything you don't understand, and ask for explanations during the meeting.

Also, write down what you want to tell the IEP team about your daughter. Perhaps she struggles with certain subjects at homework time or sometimes has meltdowns.

Finally, plan to take notes during the meeting. That way, you can refer back to what you wrote and follow up with your child's teachers.♥

Beginning Edition

Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

February 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal

Title 1

TOOLS & TIDBITS

Cook with fractions

Let your child begin to explore fractions when you cook together. Say your recipe calls for 1 cup flour. Give him a $\frac{1}{2}$-cup measure, and ask how he could make 1 cup (fill the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup twice). Also, show him fractions like $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ in recipes. Can he find the cup or spoon with the matching fraction?

Talk like a scientist

Pretend your youngster is a scientist on a TV show! Interview her about an experiment she did in school or at home. Pose questions like "What did you predict would happen?" "Was your prediction accurate?" and "What did you learn?" Explaining the science in her own words will help her understand it better.

Book picks

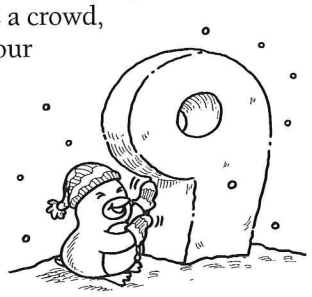
In *100 Days of School* (Trudy Harris), your child will read rhyming word problems and learn different ways to make 100.

Your youngster can learn how animals use tools like rocks and sticks in *Tooling Around: Crafty Creatures and the Tools They Use* (Ellen Jackson).

Just for fun

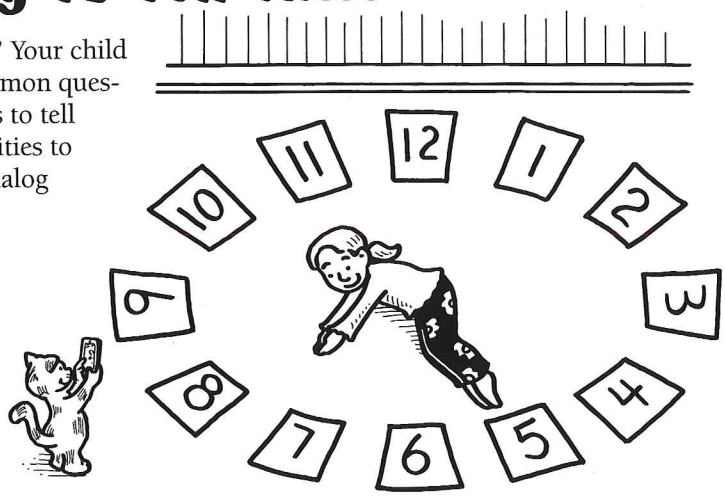
Q: Since two's company and three's a crowd, what are four and five?

A: Nine.



Learning to tell time

"What time is it?" Your child can answer this common question when she learns to tell time. Try these activities to help her use both analog and digital clocks.



Life-sized clock

Tick-tock…your youngster's arms and legs can be the hands of a clock! Have her number sheets of paper 1–12 and arrange them in a circle on the floor. Now call out times for her to "set" the clock to. For 7:25, she would lay on her left side with the "hour hand" (her arms) pointing at 7 and the minute hand (her legs) pointing at 5. *Idea:* Take pictures so she can see how her body shows the times.

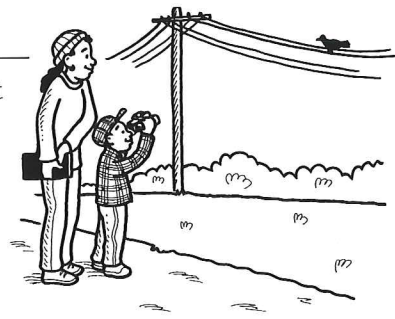
Daily schedule

Suggest that your child list things she does every day. *Examples:* "Wake up." "Go to school." "Eat dinner." Beside each one, she could draw a digital clock showing what time she normally does it. She might put 6:45 beside "Eat breakfast" and 8:30 by "Go to bed."

Matching times

Your youngster will see analog and digital clocks side by side with this idea. Ask her to create a clock face on a paper plate and cut a straw into two "hands" (one longer than the other). Now set a digital clock (say, the one on the microwave) to a random time, such as 2:10. Can she show the same time on her clock? Then, trade roles.

My cardboard binoculars



Inspire your youngster to take a closer look at nature with a pair of homemade "binoculars."

Help your child tape together two empty toilet paper tubes. Punch a hole in each side, help him string yarn through, and tie a knot.

Now head outdoors so he can use his binoculars, and take along a notebook and colored pencils for sketching observations. He might spot a crow perched on a power line, a pinecone on the ground, or a holly bush by the mailbox.

Ask him to describe what he sees. Zeroing in on one thing at a time will make it easier for him to notice details like feathers on a crow, scales on a pinecone, and berries on a bush.

Let's subtract

Your youngster can use subtraction to find missing numbers or figure out the difference between two numbers. Use these hands-on ideas to help him practice.

What's missing? These ladybugs are missing some dots—and subtraction will tell your child how many. Have him draw 10 ladybugs and write a different number (1–20) on each one's head. Now you pick a ladybug and think of a subtraction problem that begins with that number (for 15, you might think 15 – 7). Draw the number of dots equal to the answer (8) on half of the ladybug's body. Can your youngster find the missing number (7) and draw that many dots on the other half?

What's the difference? To find the difference between two numbers, your child needs to subtract. Make a number line to help him see the difference. Put a piece of duct tape or masking tape on the floor from one side of a room to the other. Let him write the numbers 1–20, evenly spaced. Now give him a "difference" subtraction problem: "What's the difference between 11 and 5?" He can stand on 11 and hop on the numbers until he gets to 5, counting his hops. ("The difference is 6, so 11 – 5 = 6.")

MATH CORNER Shape art

This art project is made entirely of geometric shapes. Your child will discover that he can combine two or more shapes to make completely different shapes.

First, help your youngster cut several of each of these shapes from construction paper: circles, triangles, trapezoids, pentagons, hexagons. Then, he can decide what picture he'll create with them (perhaps a robot or a house).

How could he form all the shapes he needs? Perhaps he'll combine two triangles to make a square or use two trapezoids plus two triangles for a rectangle. Ask questions about his picture. How many triangles are there? What shapes are in that rectangle?

Idea: Encourage your child to rearrange the shapes again and again. How many different pictures he can make?

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Q & A Should my child use a calculator?

Q: *My daughter has discovered calculators, and she likes to play with them. I often use them for math—is it okay for her to do so, too?*

A: It's great that your child is interested in exploring math on a calculator when she plays. However, have her put it away when she does homework or practices math facts.

Encourage your daughter to solve everyday problems with paper and pencil or mental math. She'll master basic facts and do math in her head. For example, in the car, tell her how many miles away your exit is (maybe 7) and how many miles the exit is from your home (5). How many miles do you have left to drive? (*Answer*: 12, because 7 + 5 = 12.)

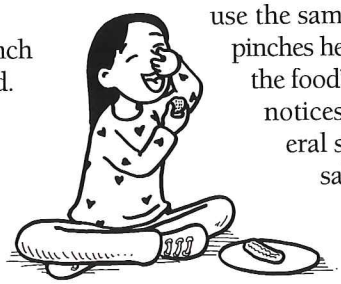
Finally, when you use a calculator (say, to figure out how much to tip), invite her to "solve" the problem by telling her which buttons to push. It's good for her to see more complex problems that she can look forward to solving one day.

SCIENCE LAB Taste and smell

Give your child an appetite for science with this experiment that shows how her sense of smell is related to her sense of taste.

You'll need: two foods with similar textures but different flavors, such as strawberries and pickles or oranges and lemons

Here's how: Have your youngster close her eyes, pinch her nose, and taste each food. Can she name the foods? Then, she should taste the foods again, with her eyes closed but without pinching her nose. Does she think she identified them correctly the first time? Now have her open her eyes to check.



What happens? Even with her eyes closed, it's easier to identify the food when she doesn't pinch her nose.

Why? We smell and taste foods at the same time because our nose and mouth use the same airway. When your child pinches her nose, she no longer smells the food's unique scent, so she only notices its texture and gets a general sense of whether it's sweet, salty, sour, or bitter. That's why food doesn't taste as good when she has a stuffy nose!

Intermediate Edition

Math+Science Connection

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

February 2020

Frazier School District
Title I

INFO BITS

Which Super Bowl is it?

Kick off Super Bowl LIV by exploring Roman numerals. Share this key with your child: I = 1, V = 5, X = 10, L = 50, C = 100, M = 1,000. For the digits 4 or 9, a letter is placed before another, indicating subtraction: 4 = IV (5 – 1), 90 = XC (100 – 10). Can she translate LIV? (*Answer*: 54.)

How about family members' birth years? (*Example:* 1978 = MCMLXXVIII.)

Explore evergreens

Take a walk with your youngster to observe evergreen trees. If he looks closely at the needles, what does he notice? Some are reddish (old and ready to drop off), and others are light green (new). Evergreens shed needles and grow new ones all year, so they never have bare branches like *deciduous* trees that lose all their leaves in autumn.

Book picks

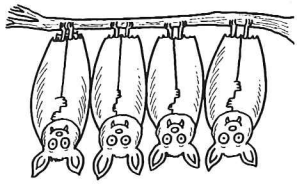
Short stories introduce your child to math greats in *Mathematicians Are People, Too: Stories from the Lives of Great Mathematicians* (Luetta Reimer and Wilbert Reimer).

Your youngster can find experiments for dissolving ink and making ice cream in a can in *The 101 Coolest Simple Science Experiments* (Rachel Miller, Holly Homer, Jamie Harrington).

Just for fun

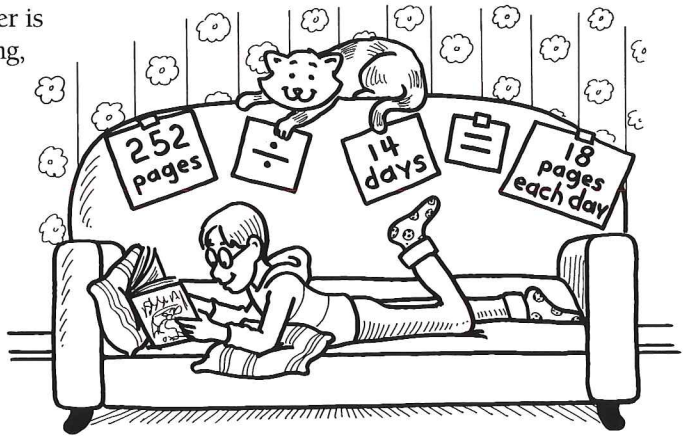
Q: Why don't bats live alone?

A: They like to hang with their friends.



Division is practical!

Whether your youngster is playing, reading, or shopping, he can do division. Here are ideas that will show him why it's useful to know how to divide.



Playing

Ask your child to set up shared time on a family computer or gaming console. Say you want 4 family members to share 2 hours (or 120 minutes) of computer time. He would figure out that $120 \div 4 = 30$ (or 2 hours $\div 4 = \frac{1}{2}$ hour), so each person gets 30 minutes.

Reading

Start a family book club! Pick a book, let each person get a copy, and set a date to meet. Then, have your child determine how many pages each person needs to read each day to finish before the meeting. If the book is 252 pages, and your meeting is in 14 days, you each have to read 18 pages each day ($252 \div 14 = 18$).

Shopping

Let your youngster check the price of something sold in multiples, such as socks or pencils, and then use division to find the best deal. Say you can buy 4 pairs of socks for $5.99 or 6 pairs for $7.50. With the four-pack, he'll see that each pair costs about $1.50 ($5.99 \div 4 = 1.4975$), while the pairs in the larger package are $1.25 each ($7.50 \div 6 = 1.25$). His answer? The six-pack is the better deal.

Phases of the moon

Encourage your child to learn about our closest neighbor in space by tracking the moon's phases.

Have her start with a new moon—when the moon's lit side faces away from Earth and isn't visible. Then, she could sketch the moon each night for two weeks, until it's full.

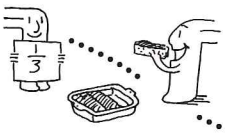
To help your youngster understand what she observed, try this. Get two colors of play dough, one light and one dark. She should make a sphere with each color, flatten one side of each to turn it into a half-sphere, and press the flat sides together. If she holds the "moon" with the dark side in front of her and slowly turns it, she will see the phases. Can she match her sketches with her model?

"Healthy" math

Those nutrition-facts boxes on food packages can help your child eat healthier—but only if she knows the math behind the label. Give these activities a try.

Check the serving size. Let your youngster see why it's best to stick to one serving, rather than eating the whole container! Challenge her to find the calories, fat, and other nutrients in an entire box of crackers. The label shows the amounts per serving and number of servings per container. If there are 140 calories in a serving of crackers and a box has 8 servings, how many calories are in the box? (140 x 8 = 1,120 calories)

Create a snack. Suggest that your child make trail mix and write a nutrition label. She can look up the serving size for each ingredient, such as raisins, peanuts, and pretzels, and put 1 serving of each into a bowl. Now have her add up the total amount of protein, sodium, and other nutrients. She could scoop $\frac{1}{4}$-cup servings into separate snack bags, count the servings, and divide her totals by the number of servings. Finally, she can make labels to tape to the bags.



MATH CORNER Make a million

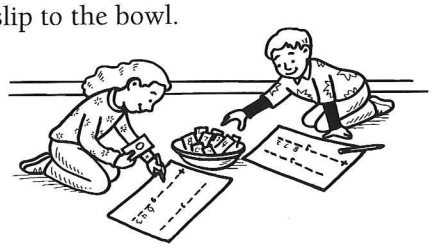
Let your youngster work with numbers to a million with this game that combines math and strategic thinking. The object is to make two numbers that add up to 1,000,000—or as close as you can get!

1. Have your child write the digits 0–9 on individual scraps of paper and put them in a bowl.

2. On separate pieces of paper, each player should write blanks for a six-digit addition problem like this:

_ _ _ , _ _ _
\+ _ _ _ , _ _ _

3. Take turns picking a scrap of paper and writing the digit shown on any one of your blanks. Where is the best place to put a small digit like 0 or 1? How about a big one like 8 or 9? Return the slip to the bowl.



4. When everyone's blanks are filled, solve your problems. Whoever comes closest to 1,000,000 wins!

SCIENCE LAB Watch the balloon inflate

How could your child inflate a balloon without blowing it up? Try this science experiment together to find out.

You'll need: funnel, measuring spoon and cup, baking soda, uninflated balloon, vinegar, empty water bottle

Here's how: Have your child use a funnel to put 1 tbsp. baking soda into the balloon, then rinse the funnel and pour 1 cup vinegar into the water bottle. Being careful not to spill the baking soda, help him stretch the balloon's opening over the mouth of the bottle. The baking soda will fall into the bottle.

What happens? The baking soda-vinegar mixture foams up and the balloon inflates.

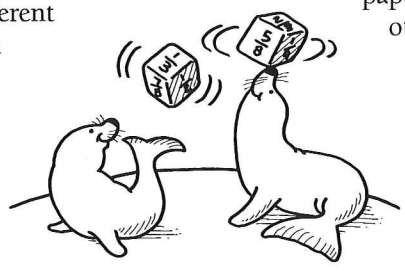
Why? When baking soda and vinegar combine, the chemical reaction forms carbon dioxide gas. That gas expands—and blows up the balloon.

Q & A Fraction dice

Q: *My son is learning to compare fractions in school. What is a fun way to practice at home?*

A: Help your child make a set of fraction dice. He can cover each side with masking tape and write a different fraction ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{2}{5}$) on each side.

Now have him roll one die at a time and fold and color a different sheet of paper to show each fraction. Say he rolls $\frac{1}{3}$. He would fold one paper into thirds, color one section, and label it $\frac{1}{3}$. If your youngster rolls $\frac{1}{2}$ next, he would fold a second sheet in half, color one section and label it $\frac{1}{2}$. Lining the papers up, one above the other, he will easily see that $\frac{1}{2}$ is larger than $\frac{1}{3}$. Suggest that your child continue rolling, folding, and coloring—and comparing fractions to each other!



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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal

Title 1

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ ***It's Only Stanley*** *(Jon Agee)*
The Wimbledon family is trying to fall asleep, but every time they do, Stanley the dog wakes them up. First he howls, then there are clanks, buzzes, and other random sounds. What's all the noise about? Stanley is up to something wonderful in this rhyming story.

■ ***Starring Jules (As Herself)*** *(Beth Ain)*

Second-grader Jules Bloom is in a panic. She has an audition for a commercial that she's sure will lead to fame. But she's going to need the help of her ex-best friend and a potential new best friend to make it happen. This early chapter book is the first in the Jules series.

■ ***Little Libraries, Big Heroes*** *(Miranda Paul)*
How did Little Free Libraries get their start? Readers will find out in this biography about Todd Bol. He created the first Little Free Library to share his mother's love of reading with others. Since then, the movement has spread, turning Todd into a reading hero for people all over the world.

■ ***I Am Earth*** *(Rebecca and James McDonald)*

Earth itself "narrates" this nonfiction book about gravity, changing seasons, orbits, and more. Information on keeping the planet healthy is woven in, and comic-style illustrations and speech balloons make the book easy to read. (Also available in Spanish.)

Clever decoding strategies

What goes through your child's head when he's reading and comes to a word he doesn't know? Encourage him to think like a detective by asking himself these questions that will help him "decode" unfamiliar words.

"Does it remind me of a word I know?"

Once your youngster learns to read a word, he can use it to read other words. For practice, take turns picking a word and saying words it makes you think of. See a stop sign? Your youngster might say *stop* starts like *step* or rhymes with *top*. Now have him use this strategy when he reads. *Example:* "*S-t-o-m-p* looks like *stop*. But there's an *m* in it. *Stomp*!"

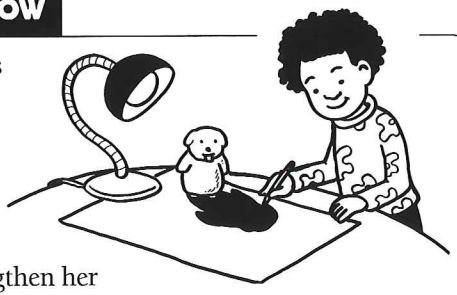
"Is there a part I recognize?"

Even if your child doesn't know a long word, chances are there are small words inside it that he can read. Choose a long word in a book, and see who can find the most words in it. In *window*, your youngster may see *win* and *wind*. Or maybe he'll notice that *macaroni* contains *car* and *on*. Putting together the familiar parts can help him read the whole word.

"Does it have a pattern?"

What do *cake*, *lime*, and *note* have in common? They all follow the pattern consonant / long vowel / consonant / silent *e*. When you read with your child, encourage him to look for words that fit patterns he is learning in school. Spotting the pattern might help him correctly read *mine* instead of saying *min*, for instance.♥

Trace the groundhog's shadow



Will the groundhog see his shadow this Groundhog Day? The groundhog in this activity will—and by tracing the shadow, your youngster will give her "writing muscles" a workout.

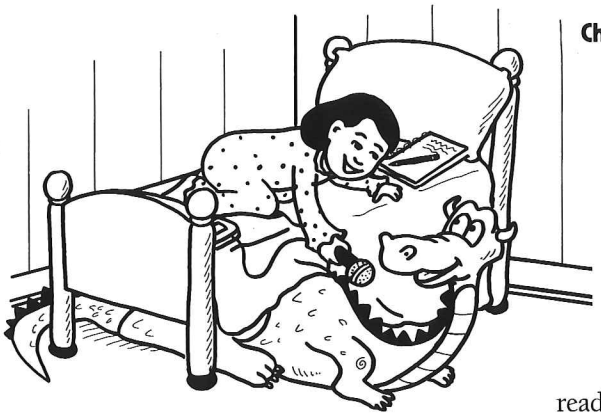
● **Sculpt.** Let your child use clay or play dough to make a groundhog. She'll strengthen her fingers as she rolls and shapes the dough.

● **Trace.** Have your youngster trace her groundhog's shadow to work on hand coordination. Lay a sheet of paper under a lamp. She can position the groundhog so the light casts a shadow on the paper. Then, she could use a crayon to trace around the shadow's outline.♥

Write to learn

As your child learns to write, she can also use writing to learn. Here are a few ideas.

"What I know" journal. Encourage your youngster to start a notebook about what she's studying in school. After a science experiment with magnets, she might list things that she discovered are magnetic, then test household objects and add to her list. Or if she's learning to solve story problems in math, she could make up her own problems and illustrate them.



Character interviews. What would your child ask a famous person or a fictional character? She can use her imagination by writing pretend interview questions and making up answers. Maybe she'd ask, "What's the hardest thing about being a dragon?" and reply: "Hiding under the bed!"

Reading log. Suggest that your youngster keep track of books she reads. She could practice summarizing by writing a sentence or two about each title. She may even rate each book with 1–5 stars—she'll practice critical thinking as she compares books and decides which ones she liked more or less than others.♥

Q&A Silent reading

Q *My daughter has started reading silently. What is my role now?*

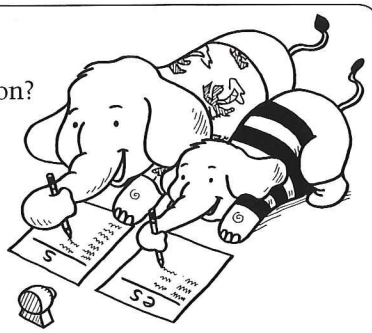
A The ability to read silently shows that your child is becoming more independent as a reader. Still, she'll benefit from the same kinds of things you did when she was just beginning to read.

For example, make sure she has plenty of reading material. Take regular trips to the library, and encourage your daughter to choose a variety of books. Also, set aside time to read. You might snuggle up and read your own book alongside her—you'll show her that reading is a lifelong pleasure.

Finally, talk about books with your youngster. Ask her about what she reads in school and at home, and tell her what you're reading. The two of you might even read the same book and discuss it when you're finished.♥

Fun with Words Play with plurals

What do *s* and *es* have in common? They turn singular words into plural ones! Play this game to help your youngster discover guidelines for choosing the correct ending when he writes.



1. Have your child label two sheets of paper, one with *s* and the other with *es*. You take one sheet, and he gets the other.

2. Set a timer for three minutes. Each of you should look through a book and write plural words you find with the ending on your sheet. For *s*, your youngster might list *arms*, *birds*, and *cups*. For *es*, you could write *dishes*, *couches*, and *boxes*.

3. When time's up, have your child count the words on each sheet. Which ending "wins" (is most common)? He'll see that most plural words end with *s*.

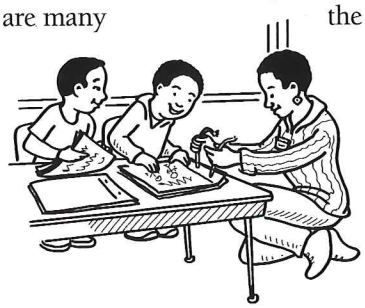
4. Ask your child what he notices about the *es* words. He may realize that many have *ch*, *sh*, *s*, *o*, *x*, or *z* before the *es*, while other words take an *s*. Then, suggest that he keep the lists handy when he writes so he can refer to the examples.♥

Parent to Parent Be a reading volunteer

I wanted to support the reading program at my son Ricky's school. Since I stay at home with my infant twins, I emailed the teacher to ask if she had take-home projects I could do.

I found out that there are many ways I can help. Sometimes the teacher sends home instructions and materials for me to make classroom games like spelling bingo and vocabulary tic-tac-toe. Other times, she has asked me to write poems or sentences on poster board. The projects are fun, and Ricky is always interested in what I'm doing.

I've also volunteered in the classroom a couple of times while my mom watched the twins. One morning, I read with small groups, and another day, I helped students turn their stories into books. Ricky likes seeing me in his classroom, and I like that I'm making a difference at his school.♥



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Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

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Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal

Title 1

Book Picks

■ ***The Nora Notebooks: The Trouble with Ants*** *(Claudia Mills)*

Nora dreams of being a scientist like her parents. Her current fascination? Ants. When she's given a persuasive writing assignment in school, she decides to present scientific facts to convince others that ants are as interesting as she thinks they are.

■ ***Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood from Sports Legends*** *(David Stabler)*

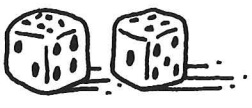
Explore the childhoods of famous athletes like gymnast Gabby Douglas, basketball player Yao Ming, race car driver Danica Patrick, baseball player Babe Ruth, and others. Before they were world-renowned athletes, they were just kids who went to school and dealt with daily challenges—like your child does.

■ ***The Time Machine*** *(H. G. Wells)*

What will life be like in the future? In this classic science fiction novel, a man travels in a time machine. He discovers a society without disease, poverty, or war—but the people have also lost the qualities that make each person unique. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ ***Pass Go and Collect $200: The Real Story of How Monopoly Was Invented*** *(Tanya Lee Stone)*

Learn all about how one of the most famous and beloved board games was invented by Lizzie Magie in the 1800s. The history of Monopoly is told in this nonfiction book that includes a trivia section and Monopoly Math problems for readers to solve.



Nonfiction family fun

Biographies…science…history…nonfiction books not only give your youngster practical reasons to read, they're fun and interesting, too. Use these ideas to encourage her to enjoy and learn from nonfiction.

Explore art

Ask each family member to read a biography of a famous artist. Then, talk about the artists' lives and how they created their art. Each person can choose her favorite and do an art project based on that artist's style. If your child picks Georges Seurat, she can try *pointillism*—Seurat's technique of making entire pictures with tiny dots.

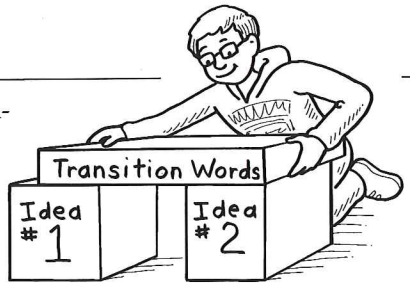
Discover nature

Field guides and other nature books have detailed photographs and descriptions of trees, birds, and flowers. They can introduce your youngster to new vocabulary and spark her interest in science. Plus, they'll get the whole family outdoors. You might find one at the library and use it to identify plants and animals in your neighborhood.

Delve into history

Read about family trees in a book like *Climbing Your Family Tree* (Ira Wolfman). Gather photos and information from relatives (full names, dates and places of birth), and make your own family tree. Or pick a local landmark, such as a historic home or battlefield. Then, read about it in your library's local history section, or research it online.

Transition words

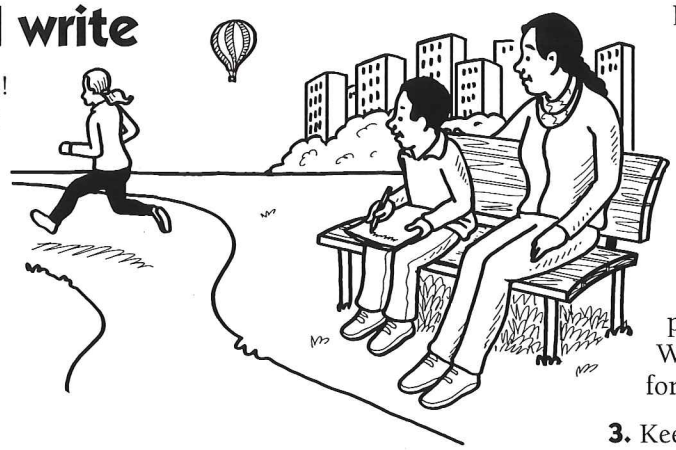


Writers use transition words to help readers move smoothly from one idea to the next. Show your child these ways to use them when he writes.

- **To indicate order:** *first, second, next, then, finally, last.* (*First*, Josie unlocked the door. *Then*, she opened it. *Finally*, she peeked inside.)
- **To compare ideas:** *like, unlike, however, instead, still, also.* (*Unlike* spiders, which have eight legs, bees have only six legs.)
- **To indicate cause and effect:** *because, since, as a result, therefore, so.* (*Since* it's getting late, we have to go to bed.)

Stop, drop, and write

Anytime is a great time to write! Spark your child's enthusiasm for writing with these spur-of-the-moment activities.



1. Bring a spiral notebook along for writing on the go. He can choose three things he spots, say a jogger, a hot-air balloon, and a park bench. Then, ask him to write a news report that uses all three. When he finishes, he can pretend to be a TV or radio reporter and "broadcast" his story to you.

2. Hang a poster board on your child's bedroom door, and let him use markers and colored pencils to cover it with "graffiti." He could write interesting quotes, compose poems, or draw comic strips. When the board is full, he's ready for a new one.

3. Keep index cards on hand for "writing breaks." A family member can hand out cards and ask everyone to stop and write about what they're thinking or doing. *Idea:* Exchange cards and take turns reading one another's words aloud.

Parent 2 Parent: Speak confidently

My son's teacher told me that Jeremy tends to mumble and look down when he talks. She explained that this will affect his grades as oral presentations become more important in school.

Mrs. Ross suggested that I give Jeremy opportunities to practice at home. We started with phone calls. I had him RSVP for a family reunion and make his own dental appointment. Then he worked on face-to-face communication. He practiced making eye contact as he ordered at restaurants or asked store clerks where to find items.

When Jeremy's next presentation rolled around, he rehearsed speaking clearly, looking at his audience, and using gestures. He said it went well—and he told me the practice helped him feel more confident.

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Habits of good readers

A good reader doesn't necessarily know every word or immediately understand everything she reads. But she does know strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words and understanding tough material. Your youngster can use this checklist when she reads:

❑ Before I read, I skim the book cover, inside flap, table of contents, or chapter subheads so I know what to expect (and look for) when reading.

❑ I pause while I'm reading to visualize a story event or jot down information. This helps me understand and remember what I read.

❑ I slow down when a book gets confusing so I don't miss anything important. If necessary, I go back and slowly reread difficult material.

Fun with Words: Digging up roots

Has your child ever wondered how spelling bee contestants learn all those long words?

One of their secrets is understanding word roots. For example, the root *geo* means *earth* (*geography*), *voc* means *word* (*vocabulary*), and *sub* means *under* (*submarine*). Help your child learn more about roots with this game.

Find a list of roots in a dictionary or online. Then, let your youngster choose one and read its definition. Now take turns calling out a word with that root. The twist? Your word can be real or made up. For *phon* (*sound*), she might say *xylophone* (real) or *cellophone* (made up).

The other person has to say if the word is real—and, if so, give its definition. Then, look it up in the dictionary to check. If she's right, or she correctly identified the word as fake, she picks a new root for the next round.