

# Home & School

## CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

April 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal  
Title 1



### SHORT NOTES

#### Parents: Join the club!

It's never too late to get involved with the PTA or PTO at your youngster's school. You might sign up to help with a spring event, such as a car wash fundraiser or a teacher-student basketball game. You could also pitch in over the summer to help plan back-to-school activities for the fall.

#### Dealing with perfectionism

Some kids become frustrated if their work doesn't turn out "perfectly" on the first try. If this happens to your child, encourage him to think of his worksheet or drawing as a work in progress. He can go back and edit answers or tweak parts until he feels proud of his work.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Waiting lists for popular library books can be long, so now's a good time for your youngster to start thinking about summer reading. Let her list books she'd like to read. Then, visit the library or help her check its website to see if any of the books have waiting lists and add her name to them now.

#### Worth quoting

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." *Winston Churchill*

### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What goes up but never comes down?

**A:** Your age!



## A sprinkle of kindness

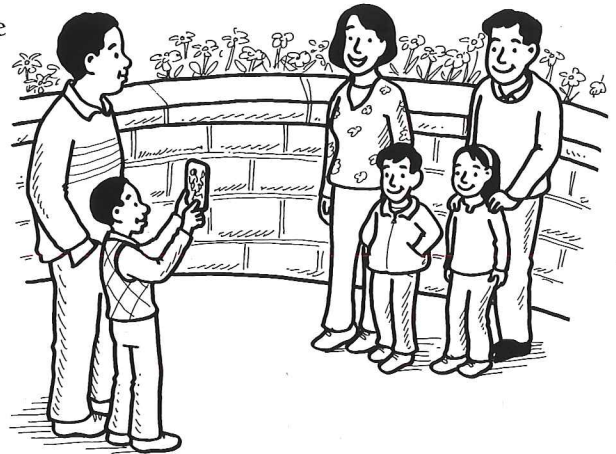
Kindness makes every place a better place, whether your child is in school, at home, or out and about. Inspire him to be kind with these ideas.

#### Be there for others

Is there a student in your youngster's class who seems lonely or an elderly neighbor who doesn't get out much? Suggest that your child seek out his classmate on the playground or in the cafeteria. Or you and your youngster could find out which board games the neighbor likes and invite him over to play one.

#### Pass it on

Teach your child about "paying it forward." When someone is kind to you (say, another driver pays your toll), tell your child about it. Then, ask him to think of ways to keep the kindness going by doing a kind act for another person. If the two of you notice people trying to



take their own photo, your youngster could offer to snap the picture.

#### Surprise with gifts

Giving handmade gifts to others "just because" is a sure way to brighten someone's day. Ask your child to come up with gifts he could make for someone else. He might create paper flowers for his aunt, design a bookmark for his brother, or write a poem for his grandpa. Then, help him follow through by delivering his gifts in person or mailing them.♥

## Seven ways to ask about school

Want to get your child to talk about her day at school? Try asking questions that encourage more than a yes-or-no answer. Here are seven to start with.

1. What do you think I would have liked best about school today?
2. How would you describe your day to a pet?
3. What's your favorite paper in your backpack, and why?
4. Who did you play or work with today, and what did you do together?
5. What was the easiest thing you did today? The hardest?
6. What healthy foods did you eat at lunch?
7. What new words did you hear or read, and what do they mean?♥





## Collect and learn

Whether your child has postcards on her bulletin board, a bucket of rocks on the patio, or a jar of sea-shells on her dresser, she's a collector! Encourage her to use her collection as a learning tool with these suggestions.

**Writing.** Let your youngster start a log to keep track of her collection. She can write a description of each item: "Uncle Phil sent me a postcard from his trip to St. Louis, Missouri. It has a picture of the Gateway Arch, the world's tallest arch."



**Math and science.** Ask your child math questions about her collection. How many rocks does she have? How many more does she need before she has 10, 25, or 100? She could also classify the items, perhaps organizing sea-shells by color, texture, or size.

**Research.** Your youngster can learn more about the objects she collects by reading library books or kid-friendly websites. She could use an atlas to discover more about states or countries on her postcards. Or she might visit a geology website to identify rocks or read a children's encyclopedia to learn about sea animals with shells.♥

## Playing on my own

No friends or siblings around to play with? No problem! Playing alone teaches your youngster to entertain himself, solve problems independently, and use his imagination. Consider these tips for helping him make the most of solo play:

- Have your child put together a basket of toys that he can play with alone. Good options include play dough, building blocks, jigsaw puzzles, and single-player games like Simon or Rush Hour.



- Share solo activities you enjoyed at his age. You might teach your youngster to play Solitaire, do yo-yo tricks, or make paper airplanes.

- Provide props for imaginary play, such as old clothes and accessories for dressing up, or take-out menus and catalogs for playing restaurant or store. Your child will have to be creative to play multiple roles—maybe he'll use two different hats and pretend he's two construction workers deciding how to dig a tunnel.♥

## Q & A

### Staying safe online

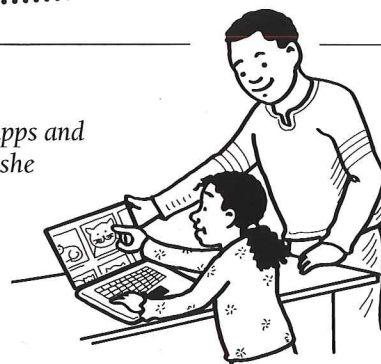
**Q:** My daughter loves to download new apps and play online games. How can I make sure she stays safe?

**A:** One of the best ways to keep your daughter safe online is to be involved in her activities.

If she wants to use a new app, explore it together first. Is there a setting that prevents strangers from contacting her? Are there ads, and if so, are they ones you're okay with her seeing?

Once you approve an app, have your child choose a username that doesn't reveal her name, location, or age. For instance, PizzaFan123 is safer than ChicagoKid2011. If she needs a profile picture, help her find a cute animal photo or another image she likes rather than her own picture.

Then, create a rule that she may only play with people she knows in real life. And finally, set screen time limits so your youngster has plenty of opportunities to play and talk with people in real life.♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Poetry month

April brings showers—and poems! Your youngster can celebrate National Poetry Month with these activities that encourage him to write and read poems.

#### Shared poems

Participate in Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 30—or any day. Let your youngster look in books and online for poems he'd like to carry with him and share with others. He could copy poems onto

index cards or write his own. He might read them to friends on the school bus, in the cafeteria, or on the playground.

#### Sidewalk verses

Have your child use chalk to write his own poems on the sidewalk. He could draw inspiration from spring, perhaps describing buzzing bees, blooming flowers, or chirping birds. He can leave his poem there for others to enjoy—until the rain washes it away.♥



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# Math+Science Connection

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

April 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal  
Title 1

## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Graph with blocks

The next time your child plays with

blocks, encourage him to practice graphing. He could grab a handful of Legos and snap together blocks that are the same color and same size. If he places the towers side by side, he'll create a "Lego graph" and easily see which color has the most blocks—that tower will be the tallest.



### Watch the wind blow

Have your youngster pretend she's a meteorologist and use a weather tool to detect wind. Help her tape colorful ribbons to a clothes hanger. Place it outside on a patio hook or low tree branch. When the ribbons move, she'll know it's windy. Using a compass or an app, point out north, south, east, and west. Which direction is the wind blowing from?

### Book picks

■ *Ten Black Dots* (Donald Crews) presents a fun way to count to 10. After reading the book, let your child make his own dot pictures.

■ Your youngster can dive into facts about the water cycle and more with *All the Water in the World* (George Ella Lyon).

## Just for fun

**Q:** What is the strongest animal?

**A:** A snail. He carries his house on his back!



## We're a happy (fact) family

Some families are made up of moms, dads, brothers, and sisters—and others are made up of math facts! A fact family contains problems with the same three numbers, such as  $2 + 3 = 5$ ,  $3 + 2 = 5$ ,  $5 - 3 = 2$ , and  $5 - 2 = 3$ .

Your child can play with these families to explore the relationship between addition and subtraction. Here's how.

### Introduce family members

Suggest that your youngster arrange toys into fact families. She could put squares of masking tape on 20 toys and label them 1–20. Give her a math problem (say,  $8 + 9$ ). Then, ask her to "introduce" the toys that belong to the fact family ("8 and 9, meet 17!"). Now she can say all four facts in the family:  $8 + 9 = 17$ ,  $9 + 8 = 17$ ,  $17 - 8 = 9$ ,  $17 - 9 = 8$ .

### Make a house

A family of people can live in a house, and so can a fact family. Have your child draw a house with four windows and roll



two dice. In each window, she should write a number sentence that belongs in the fact family. If she rolls 6 and 3, the bottom two windows could say  $6 + 3 = 9$  and  $3 + 6 = 9$ , and the top two windows would be  $9 - 6 = 3$  and  $9 - 3 = 6$ .

### Act it out

Let your youngster use plastic animals to see which numbers make up different fact families. She might show how 4 animals plus 6 more make 10, then have the groups trade places—6 and 4 make 10, too. Finally, she could show the subtraction facts that complete the family:  $10 - 4 = 6$  and  $10 - 6 = 4$ . 🐾

## Magnetic ... or not

Your youngster will be drawn to find out what is and isn't magnetic by making his own "magnet bottle."

Help your child fill an empty water bottle halfway with rice and add small items like paper clips, marbles, screws, and beads. (Include some that are magnetic and some that aren't.) Screw on the lid, and have him shake the bottle to mix everything up. Next he can rub a magnet over the bottle and make a chart to keep track of what's attracted or not attracted to the magnet.

Finally, let him dump out the bottle and sort the objects: magnetic and not magnetic. What do the magnetic items have in common? (They're made of metal. You and your child could research which kinds of metal are attracted to magnets.) 🐾






# Explore congruent parts

"That kite has four *congruent* triangles." Finding and making shapes that are congruent, or exactly the same size and shape, will help your youngster learn geometry and build a foundation for fractions. Try these ideas.

**Congruent or not?** Let your child look around the house for different pairs of congruent shapes. How can he show that they're congruent? He could lay one square



coaster on top of another square coaster or one round throw pillow on a second one. Or encourage him to search for things that are divided into congruent shapes, like a window with six congruent rectangular panes.

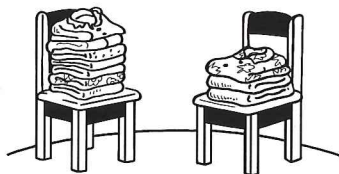
**How many parts?** Let your child create geometric shapes (square, triangle, rectangle, hexagon) out of play dough. Which ones can he cut into two congruent shapes? He might cut two congruent squares from a rectangle or two congruent rectangles from a square. Does he have a triangle that can be divided into two congruent triangles? 


## Q & A Word problems? No problem!

**Q:** My daughter sometimes gets confused by word problems. How can I help?

**A:** Show your child that word problems can be fun and doable with these two simple strategies.

First, have your daughter use objects to model a problem. *Example:* "Mary has 7 shirts, and Beth has 3 shirts. How many more shirts does Mary have than Beth?" Let her stack 7 shirts on one chair ("Mary") and 3 shirts on another ("Beth"). She can match them up, 1 for 1, and count the number Mary has left (4).



Second, suggest that your child draw the problem. She could label two stick figures "Mary" and "Beth." Under Mary, she should draw 7 shirts, and under Beth, 3. She can cross off one of Mary's shirts for each one Beth has. When Beth's shirts are all crossed off, she'll see that Mary still has 4 shirts ( $7 - 3 = 4$ ). 



## MATH CORNER


### Place-value sidewalk toss

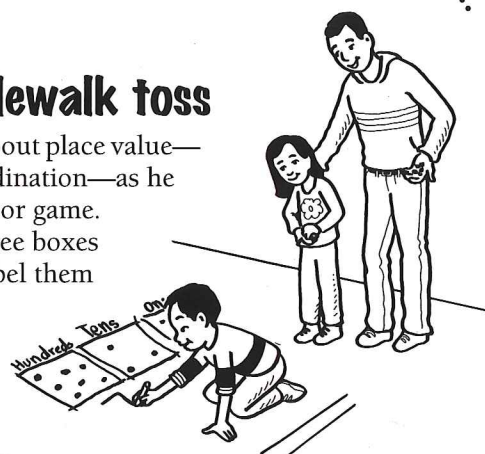
Your child will learn about place value—and build hand-eye coordination—as he aims for the highest score with this outdoor game.

Have your youngster draw a row of three boxes on the sidewalk with chalk. He should label them "Hundreds," "Tens," and "Ones."

Standing a few feet away, take turns trying to toss 9 pebbles into each box. Count the pebbles that land in each box, and write that digit under the box.

*Example:* If your child lands 7 pebbles in the hundreds box, 3 in the tens, and 5 in the ones, his score is 735. The player with the biggest number wins the round and goes first in the next round.

Your youngster will soon realize that getting pebbles in the hundreds box is most important, since the digit in the hundreds place is worth the most! 



## SCIENCE LAB

### Test your sense of touch


This mystery box puts textures at your youngster's fingertips as she explores her sense of touch.

**You'll need:** small household objects, shoebox, scissors, gloves

**Here's how:** While your child hides her eyes, gather small items with different textures (straw, stick, feather) and put them in a shoebox. Cut an opening in the lid (big enough for her to stick her hand

through), and place the lid on the box. Wearing gloves, she could reach into the box and feel each object. Can she tell what they are? Have her remove the gloves and try again.

**What happens?** It's harder to feel textures when your youngster wears gloves.

**Why?** The gloves are a barrier between the objects and your child's hands. To use her sense of touch, she must feel things with her skin. 



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# Math+Science Connection

Intermediate Edition

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

April 2020

Frazier School District

Title I

## INFO BITS

### My "fractional" day

Challenge your youngster to come up with two numbers related to her day—one that's a decimal and one that's a fraction. *Example:* "My lunch cost \$2.25." "I read  $\frac{1}{4}$  of my book today." Then, it's your turn to come up with two of your own (or maybe she can help you!).

### Floating soda

For a quick experiment with density, give your child a can of regular soda and one of diet soda. Let him fill two containers with water and drop an unopened can into each. Can he figure out why the diet soda floats and the regular one sinks? (The sugar in regular soda makes it denser.)



### Book picks

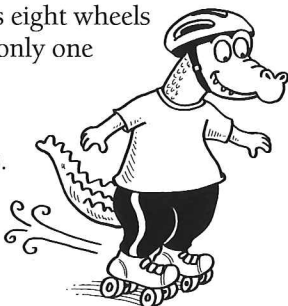
From Measure Up! to Computation Gridlock, *Mega-Fun Card-Game Math, Grades 3–5* (Karol L. Yeatts) includes 25 card games that build math skills.

Try This! *50 Fun Experiments for the Mad Scientist in You* (Karen Romano Young) will have your youngster making rainbow roses, super balls, dancing sugar, and much more.

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has eight wheels and carries only one passenger?

**A:** A pair of roller skates.



## Multiply the fun

It's comforting to know that  $2 \times 2$  always equals 4. But the predictability of multiplication doesn't end there. Learning the rules, or properties, of multiplication makes math easier for your youngster to understand. Try these activities.

### Make a comic strip

Add a little humor to multiplication. Suggest that your child draw a comic strip with each panel illustrating a different property. For the *zero property*, he could draw a plate of cookie crumbs and write, "I left  $3 \times 0$  cookies on the plate!" For the *commutative property*, he might show one garden with 7 rows of 4 plants and another with 4 rows of 7 plants. (" $4 \times 7 = 28$ , and  $7 \times 4 = 28$ . Each garden has 28 plants!")

### Roll the dice

Have each player write the numbers 1–30 on his paper (leaving out these prime numbers: 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29). Take turns rolling three dice and using the *associative property* to write three number sentences. For 2, 3, and 5, your youngster could write  $(2 \times 3) \times 5 = 6 \times 5 = 30$ ,  $(5 \times 3) \times 2 = 15 \times 2 = 30$ , and  $(2 \times 5) \times 3 = 10 \times 3 = 30$ . Now on his paper, he can



cross out all the numbers he wrote: 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 15, and 30. The first player to cross out every number wins. 🎲

### Multiplication properties

- **Commutative:**  $7 \times 8 = 56$  and  $8 \times 7 = 56$  (numbers can be multiplied in any order)
- **Identity:**  $8 \times 1 = 8$  (any number multiplied by 1 equals itself)
- **Zero:**  $5 \times 0 = 0$  (any number multiplied by 0 equals 0)
- **Associative:**  $(3 \times 2) \times 4 = 3 \times (2 \times 4)$  (numbers to be multiplied can be grouped in any order)

### Track April showers

Let your child make a rain gauge to see how much rain falls each week in April. Here's how.

Have her use a ruler and marker to make marks every  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch up the side of an empty glass jar. Set the jar outside in a spot where it won't fall over, and let her check it after each rainfall. She can record the amount, to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, on a calendar.

At the end of each week, your youngster should add up the total rainfall. Encourage her to repeat this each week for a month. Which week was the rainiest? What's the total rainfall for April? 🎲

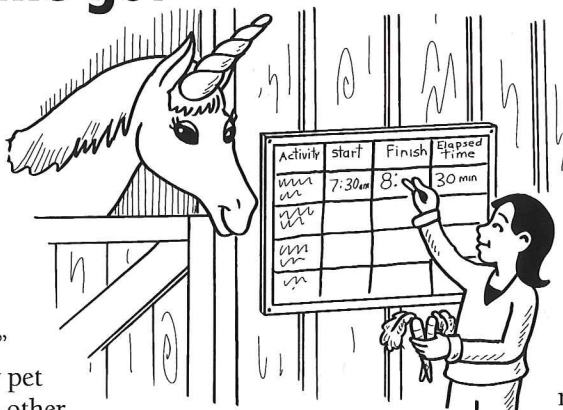




## Where did the time go?

"What time will we get there?" "When are we eating dinner?" Use these ideas to help your youngster calculate how much time something takes, or *elapsed time*.

**Plan a day.** Together, make a schedule for her perfect imaginary day. First, she divides a sheet of paper into four columns: "Activity," "Start," "Finish," and "Elapsed time." Now she lists an item (say, "Feed my pet unicorn"), and fills in any two of the other



columns. Example: 7:30 a.m. for start time and 30 minutes for elapsed time. You write the end time (8:00 a.m.) and add an item—maybe "Flying lessons" from 12:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. She fills in the elapsed time (2 hours) and sets up the next item for you.

**Match them up.** Have your child cut two different-colored sheets of paper into 10 squares each. Then, she should make pairs of opposite-color cards, with one card showing a random time (perhaps 6:17 p.m.) and the other with a matching scenario includ-

ing elapsed time and an end time. ("Jessica rode her bike for 25 minutes, finishing at 6:42 p.m. When did she begin?") Scatter the cards facedown. On each turn, draw a card of each color. If they match, keep the pair. Collect the most pairs to win. 🎲

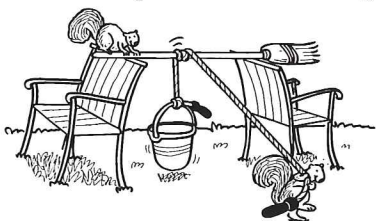
### SCIENCE LAB

## The power of pulleys

How could you lift a bucket of water from a well? Head outdoors for this experiment that shows your youngster how a pulley helps.

**You'll need:** broom, two chairs, bucket of water, jump rope

**Here's how:** Have your child lay a broom across the chair backs and put the bucket underneath. Now he should tie one end of the rope to the bucket handle and loop the other end over the broomstick. Hold the broom steady while he pulls on the untied end of the rope and tries to lift the bucket. Then, let him wrap the rope around the broomstick several times and attempt to lift the bucket again.



**What happens?** Looping the rope around the broom several times makes it easier to lift the bucket.

**Why?** The broom and the rope act as a *fixed pulley*—a simple machine that changes the direction of the force used to lift something, making the job easier. 🎲

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### MATH CORNER

## Create a scale drawing

Encourage your child to make a floor plan of his bedroom—using math to draw it to scale. He just may discover another way to arrange the furniture that gives him more space to play.

First, he should measure the dimensions of his room and decide on a scale that allows everything to fit on his paper. If the room is 12 ft. by 14 ft., his scale might be 1 in. = 2 ft.

Now your youngster can measure the furniture and draw each piece to scale. If his bed is 7 ft. by 3 ft., how big should it be on his paper? (Answer: 3.5 in. by 1.5 in., because  $7 \div 2 = 3.5$  in., and  $3 \div 2 = 1.5$  in.)

Once he's finished, suggest that your child experiment with other floor plans by cutting out the furniture and rearranging it on a new sheet of paper. If he finds a layout he likes better, consider helping him redo his room. 🎲



### Q & A

## Excited about STEM

**Q:** I know STEM careers are in demand these days. How can I spark my daughter's interest?

**A:** There are many ways to incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) into everyday life and build excitement for your daughter.

Show enthusiasm for the STEM papers and projects your child brings home from school. Ask her to explain how she did a science experiment or solved a math problem. Or let her gather

materials and demonstrate an engineering project she did in class.

Also, share STEM-related news that you think will interest your daughter. She might be fascinated by what's happening on the International Space Station or that robots are programmed to deliver pizza.

Finally, look for museums and events in your area. Maybe you and your youngster could visit a science museum or attend an engineering fair at a local high school. 🎲





# Reading Connection

## Tips for Reading Success

## Beginning Edition

April 2020

Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal  
Title 1

### Book Picks

#### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ **Bots: The Most Annoying Robots in the Universe** (Russ Bolts)

What happens when a pair of robots discover a camera that Earth launched into space and forgot about? They become reality stars and broadcast their lives, of course! Your youngster will laugh at their funny adventures in this graphic novel. The first book in the Bots series.

#### ■ **Girl Running**

(Annette Bay Pimentel)

In 1966, women weren't allowed to run in the Boston Marathon. Men said women weren't strong enough to finish the long race. But that only made Bobbi Gibb more determined to prove them wrong. This picture book biography portrays the determination of the first woman to run the race.

#### ■ **The Lost Stone (The Kingdom of Wrenly)** (Jordan Quinn)

Clara and Lucas are unlikely friends who live in the magical kingdom of Wrenly. When the queen's emerald goes missing, the pair embark on a journey and meet everybody from fairies to wizards along the way. Book one in the Kingdom of Wrenly series.

#### ■ **Skip Through the Seasons**

(Stella Blackstone)

This nonfiction book shows children enjoying the outdoors in each season. They ice skate in winter, play in spring rain, build sand castles in summer, and rake autumn leaves. The final pages are filled with facts about the calendar and seasonal changes. (Also available in Spanish.)



## Mix up family reading time

Enjoying books as a family every day can help your child grow as a reader. Try these suggestions for adding variety to reading time—and maximizing his learning.

### Vary the format

Give your youngster chances to read aloud, listen to others read, and read independently. Some days, take turns reading books to each other. Other times, listen to an audiobook together, or have everyone read on their own. *Idea:* Include extended family by inviting them over to read or arranging a video chat.

### Discover different materials

Expose your child to a wide variety of reading material with this idea. Make a “bingo” card by dividing a sheet of paper into five rows and five columns. In each square, help your youngster write the name of something to read. *Examples:* fairy tale, poem, recipe, biography, graphic novel, cereal box, newspaper, magazine. Each time your family



reads something on the card, your child gets to color the square.

### Explore in depth

Reading several related books lets your youngster dig deeper into a topic or notice similarities between books by the same author. Brainstorm a list of themes like Science Saturday or Roald Dahl Week. Take your list to the library and check out books to match. As you read each book, compare it to the ones you read before. ♥

## On-the-go storytelling

Boost your youngster's language skills and creativity by telling stories while you run errands. Use these ideas for inspiration:

- Ask your child to choose a person or an animal who would make an interesting main character in a story. At the pet store, she might begin a story starring a colorful fish in an aquarium. She can give him a name and describe an adventure that he and his tankmates go on.
- Stuck in line at the post office or bank? Use it as the setting for a story you tell together. You might say, “Once upon a time, a little girl visited the post office.” Your youngster could add, “She wanted to mail herself to Grandpa, but there weren't enough stamps.” ♥

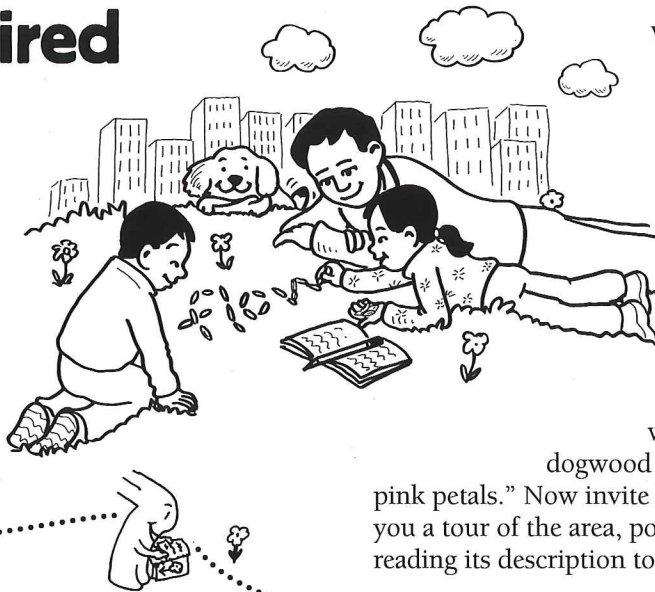




# Writing inspired by nature

Spring is perfect for a walk in the park or a romp in the backyard. While your youngster explores the great outdoors, encourage her to practice writing, too. Here's how.

**Use natural objects.** Help your child gather pebbles, flower petals, twigs, and other items from the ground. She can "write"



words by arranging the objects to form letters. She might write her name with blades of grass, use twigs and stones to form her spelling words, or create a message for you using flower petals. ("I love you!") Let her "save" her writing by taking a picture of it.

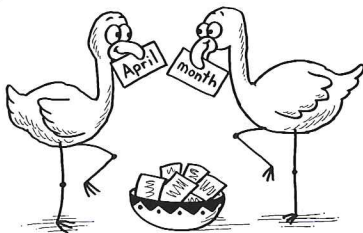
**Make a field guide.** In a small notebook, have your youngster draw and color plants or animals she sees outside. Then, she could write about each one. *Example:* "Our dogwood tree blooms in the spring. It has pink petals." Now invite her to use her field guide to give you a tour of the area, pointing out each plant or animal and reading its description to you. ♥

## Fun with Words

### Proper nouns

This game will help your youngster identify proper nouns—names of people, places, and things that are always capitalized.

On 10 separate slips of paper, have your child write proper nouns (*Jack, Maryland, April*). Then, he should make 10 more slips, each with a common noun (*boy, state, month*) to match each proper one.



Mix up all 20 slips in a bowl, and take turns drawing two. If they match (*Chicago* and *city*, *Mrs. Jones* and *teacher*), keep both, and set them aside. If not, keep either one, and return the other slip to the bowl. As you draw more slips, you may also keep any noun that matches one you previously saved.

When all the slips have been drawn, the player with the most pairs of nouns wins. ♥

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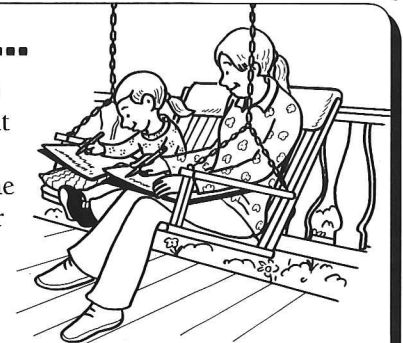
## Parent to Parent

### I like it because ...

My granddaughter Danielle was given a writing assignment that inspired the two of us to learn more about each other. She was asked to write one thing she liked and one thing she didn't, then explain her opinions. I knew she loved unicorns, but I had no idea she didn't like the color orange.

So I suggested that we each list five things we like and five things we don't, and write our reasons. We traded lists and took turns reading them aloud. I discovered that Danielle enjoys rainy days because they're cozy, and she learned that I've loved rock music ever since I started playing the drums in my teens.

This was a good way for Danielle to practice opinion writing and for us to bond. Now when she visits, I know not to put marshmallows in her hot chocolate—but cinnamon is just fine! ♥



## Q&A

### Questions for better comprehension

**Q** I want to talk to my son about the books he reads. What kinds of questions should I ask him?

**A** Asking your child questions about books gets him thinking about what he reads, improving his comprehension skills. Try choosing questions that require more than a one-word answer. For example, rather than "Who is the main character?" you could ask, "What lesson did the main character learn?"

Also, encourage your youngster to dig deeper by asking questions with answers that aren't in the book. *Examples:* "What did you like best about the book?" "What would you have done differently if you were the king?"

Finally, suggest that your son pose his own questions.

He could get your opinion of a book or ask about a part that confused him.

Your answers will give him new perspectives and help him understand what he reads. ♥





# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2020

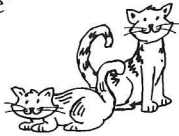
Frazier Elementary Schools - Kelly Lombard, Principal  
Title 1



## Book Picks

### ■ *Sparks!* (Ian Boothby)

Charlie and August are two cats who are anything but ordinary. Every day, they hide inside a mechanical dog while they save lives. Join them in this graphic-novel adventure as they try to stop an alien named Princess from taking over the world.



### ■ *Inventions That Could Have Changed the World ... But Didn't!*

(Joe Rhatigan)

This nonfiction book gives readers a glimpse into some of the wacky inventions people request patents for. Imagine a TV you can smell, an alarm clock that lunges you out of bed, and a screeching doll, to name a few. Find out what could have been in this hilarious read.



### ■ *Stella Diaz Has Something to Say* (Angela Dominguez)

Stella has a lot to say, but she's still learning English and is nervous about speaking in front of her classmates. This year in school she wants to make a new friend and compete in the spelling bee, and she has to give an oral presentation. Follow along as Stella gains courage and finds her voice.

### ■ *Poetry for Kids: William Shakespeare*

(William Shakespeare, edited by Marguerite Tassi)

Introduce youngsters to Shakespeare in this illustrated volume. The book includes excerpts from 35 well-known poems, verses, and sonnets, with definitions and explanations.



## Writing warm-ups

Creative writing is like any other skill—it gets easier with practice. Your child can limber up her imagination and stretch her writing muscles with these fun ideas.

### Collect characters

Let your youngster cut pictures of people from old magazines and newspapers. Then, she can glue each one onto an index card and write a "character sketch" (description) on the back. Suggest that she include lots of details: the person's name, his personality traits, and what's important to him. She'll have a cast of characters to use in her creative writing assignments.



### Ask questions

This exercise is good for brainstorming plot twists. Give your child a small notebook, and encourage her to jot down "What if?" questions whenever they strike her. For example, while working on her science fair project, she might think, "What if a science experiment made the whole school invisible?" She can use her questions as inspiration for stories.

### Pick a point of view

Have your youngster keep a list of story starters from different points of view. She might imagine how a ballerina feels before a recital—and how her ballet slippers might feel. ("We were nervous as we warmed up for the big performance.") **Tip:** Suggest that your child write the same story from a different object's or character's point of view. How does the story change? ■

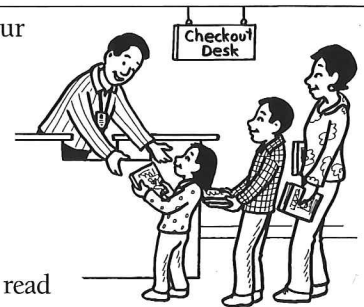
## Use your library

Tap into your hometown library to foster your youngster's love of reading and find free family activities. Consider these ways to put library trips into your regular routine.

**1. Make time.** Pick a day that works for your family. You might visit on the third Saturday of each month or every other Friday afternoon.

**2. Make each trip different.** Your child might read magazines on one trip and explore music or videos on another. Ask your youngster what he would like to dig into each time.

**3. Make it a family affair.** Check the library bulletin board or website for events your whole family would enjoy. Keep an eye out for club meetings, storytelling, concerts, and movies. ■





## Reading + community service

Encourage your child to share his love of reading with others, and he'll learn valuable lessons in generosity and compassion. Try book-related community service projects like these:

- Ask your youngster to decorate cardboard-box "donation stations" where people can drop off gently used books. He can ask businesses or places of worship to



display the boxes. Together, collect the books and donate them to a homeless shelter.

- Your child might invite friends along to read to seniors at a nearby assisted-living home. *Note:* Make sure an adult can chaperone.

- Turn outgrown picture books into audiobooks for younger children. Have your youngster record a story and give the tape and book to a day care center.

- Host a different kind of birthday party. Ask guests to bring children's books for your child to donate to the pediatric floor of your local hospital. 📖

## How many words?

Good writers vary the lengths of their sentences so the writing is more interesting and flows well. By making a simple graph, your youngster can see how her sentences stack up. Here's how.

1. Have her choose two or three paragraphs from one of her stories, reports, or essays. Let your child draw a bar graph showing the length of each sentence. If the first sentence has five words, she would draw a bar that is five squares tall.



2. Your youngster can compare the bars to analyze her writing.

If they are all about the same height, suggest that she edit her paragraph. She might use conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*) to combine two short sentences. Or she could break a long sentence into two shorter ones.

3. She can graph her revised paragraphs to see the difference—and then read the before and after versions to hear the improvement! 📖

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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### Fun with Words

## Singular to plural

Does your youngster get confused about how to make some words plural? Play this card game to help her remember.

Together, think of 20 words with tricky plurals (*fungus/fungi*, *shelf/shelves*, *deer/deer*, *potato/potatoes*). *Tip:* You can find lists of irregular plurals online.

Have your child write each singular word on one side of an index card and its plural on the other. Shuffle the cards and lay them out in rows on a table with the singular words faceup.

To play, take turns reading a card and, without looking, spell the plural version of the word. If you're right, keep the card, and go again. If not, return the card to the table, and it's the other person's turn. When all the cards have been collected, the winner is the player with the most. 📖



### Parent 2 Parent

## Series books build comprehension

As a child, I read all of the books in my favorite science fiction series. So when my son David showed an interest in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* books, I encouraged him to keep on reading. Every time he finishes a book, we stop by the library or a bookstore for the next one.

Although I knew I loved my books, I didn't know at the time that series books help readers build confidence and

comprehension skills. The familiar characters and words are helping my son become a faster reader, and he feels successful when he finishes each one.

I've also discovered some terrific adult series, and David and I are enjoying reading our books side by side. He says that after he finishes the first series, he's going to get started on the *Secret Coders* series by Gene Luen Yang. 📖

