

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2016

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I



SHORT NOTES

Focused on learning

Does your youngster know that sitting up straight and watching the teacher helps him stay focused? This position signals his brain to be alert so he can pay attention to lessons and instructions. *Tip:* To avoid distractions, he might pretend there's a tunnel directly between him and his teacher.

Respect for all teachers

Tell your child to treat substitute teachers the way she would treat guests in your home. She should be respectful and provide help if the substitute asks for it. Explain that it's also important for your youngster to follow classroom rules and routines—just as she would if her regular teacher were there.

Time to play

No matter what grade your child is in, he's not too old to play! He'll stretch his imagination and relieve stress. Try pulling out toys he hasn't used in a while, like building blocks or toy trains. Having them in plain sight may inspire him to play with them again. Or walk to a playground after dinner—and invite the entire family to swing, slide, and climb.

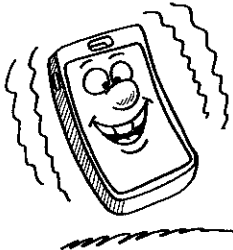
Worth quoting

"Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind." *Henry James*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What never asks questions but gets a lot of answers?

A: A phone.



Homework: Set the stage

Homework is your child's job, but you play an important role, too. Here are everyday things you can do to set her up for success.

Show interest

Before your youngster starts homework, ask her to tell you about her assignments. She could show you her textbooks or worksheets and explain what she is supposed to do. ("I have to finish the even-numbered math problems on this page and answer questions about this poem.") This shows her that homework is important to you.

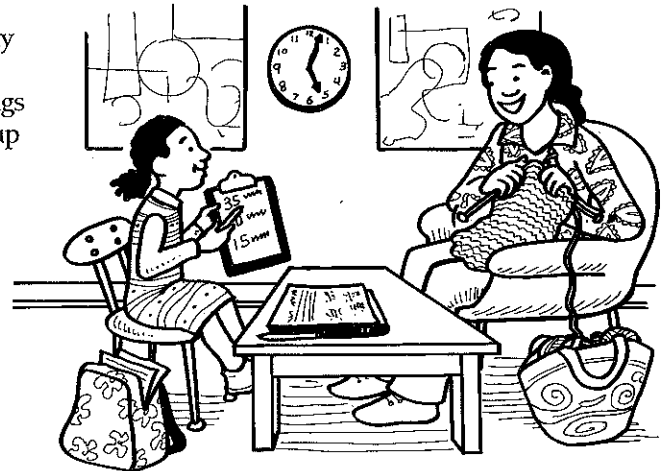
Create a schedule

Encourage your child to list the subjects she has for homework every day, and help her estimate how long each will take. ("Math: 35 minutes. Writing: 20 minutes.") Keep in mind that some kids prefer to do easier assignments first so they can quickly accomplish something,

while others would rather start with harder work. Have your youngster decide which method suits her best.

Offer support

There are lots of ways to support your child while she works. Let her bounce ideas off of you for a project, or listen as she reads her essay out loud. If she gets stuck, ask questions to guide her rather than giving her the answers. Or suggest strategies like looking at a previous textbook chapter, consulting her notes, or calling a friend. She'll see that she can rely on herself to find solutions. ♥



After-school recap

"What did you do in school today?" If your youngster usually answers, "Nothing," you're not alone. Try these alternatives to get insight into what he's learning:

- Let your child pretend he's a newscaster reporting on the day's events. He could decorate a paper towel tube as a "microphone" for delivering his newscast. ("Alex's class had a guest speaker this morning! She talked about her job as a computer programmer.")
- Before dinner, have each family member write something he learned that day on a slip of paper and put it in a shoebox labeled "Guess what I learned today?" *Example:* "Jupiter has 63 moons." Pass the box around as you eat, and take turns pulling out a slip and reading it. The person who wrote it can answer everyone's questions. ♥

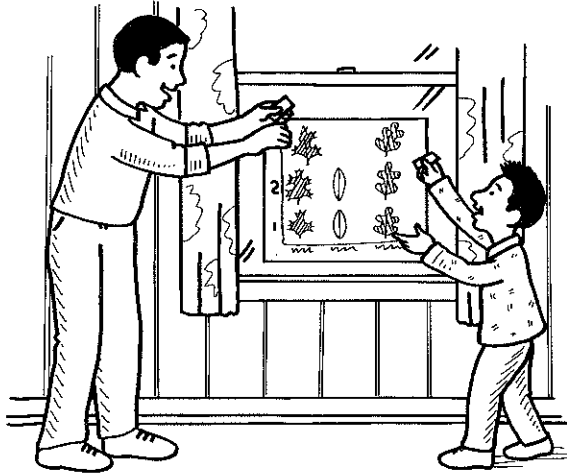


Learning with leaves

Fall leaves aren't just fun and colorful—they're ideal for practicing all sorts of skills. Help your youngster collect leaves from the ground, and enjoy these activities together.

Leaf prints. Have your child dip each leaf into finger paint and firmly press it onto a sheet of white paper. He'll see the imprints of the veins—ask what he thinks the veins are for. (They deliver water to the leaves.)

Graph of leaves. Encourage your youngster to sort his leaves into columns, lining them up evenly across each row. If he sorted by color, you



could ask, "How many more red leaves are there than yellow leaves?" or "Which color did you gather the most of?"

The story of my leaf. Suggest that your child pick his favorite leaf and write a story starring it as the main character. Perhaps he

will write about the leaf changing color or being carried to the ocean by the wind.♥

Q & A Finish what you start

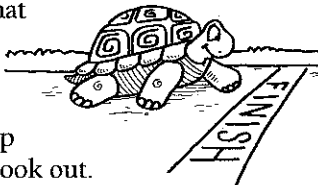
Q: My daughter often signs up for activities and then wants to try something different. Recently, she asked if she could quit the school yearbook to join the art club. What should I do?

A: It's okay to try different activities, but sticking with commitments teaches your child to show grit, or perseverance and mental toughness.

Explain that the yearbook staff is counting on her to help get the yearbook out.

Find out why she doesn't want to continue. Is her job too hard? Does she want to join the art club because her friends are members? Then, brainstorm solutions. Perhaps your child could switch to a different role on the staff or get to know another member better by inviting her over after school.

Point out that she'll feel proud of herself for doing her best and meeting her obligations. And the perseverance that it takes to finish out the semester or year will serve her well in the future.♥



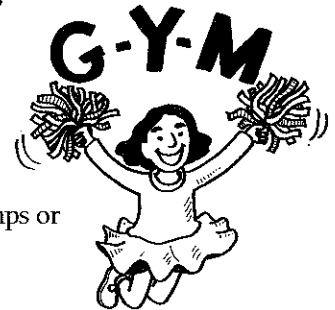
ACTIVITY CORNER

Action-packed spelling

Be active and practice spelling? Yes! Encourage your youngster to grab her spelling list and use these ideas to study.

Cheerleading

Give me a G! Give me a Y! Give me an M! What does it spell? Gym! Suggest that your child spell her words like a cheerleader. She could do cheerleading jumps or other moves as she calls out the letters.



Basketball

Head to a basketball court for this twist on Around the World. Take turns choosing a word to spell (say, *piece*). Then, stand in a different spot and say a letter of the word for each shot. Get one point for each basket you make—and double your score if you spell the word correctly. When all the words on the list have been spelled, the player with the most points wins.♥

Communication counts

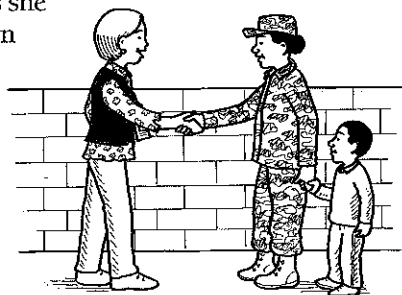
Build a strong relationship with your child's teacher by communicating regularly. Here are tips:

- Ask the teacher about the best way to contact her. Does she prefer email, notes in your youngster's backpack, or phone calls?

- Sign and return items as soon as possible. Your signature on a graded test or reading log

communicates to the teacher that you're interested in how your child is doing.

- Your youngster's life at home can have a big impact on his life in school. Talk to the teacher right away about changes like a new custody arrangement or a parent's military deployment. That way, you and the teacher will both be able to keep an eye out for any changes in his grades or behavior.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

October 2016

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Where Are My Books?*

(Debbie Ridpath Ohi)

While a little boy named Spencer sleeps, his beloved books disappear. He soon discovers they're being stolen by squirrels who love to read. Instead of getting angry, Spencer opens a "library" and lets the squirrels borrow and return his books.



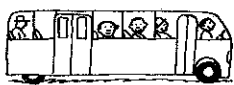
■ *My Colors, My World / Mis colores, mi mundo*

(Maya Christina Gonzalez)
Young Maya and her cute bird friend search for colors in their sandy desert neighborhood. From the pink sunset to the yellow pollen to Papi's black hair, they spot beautiful colors everywhere. A bilingual story told in English and Spanish.

■ *Last Stop on Market Street*

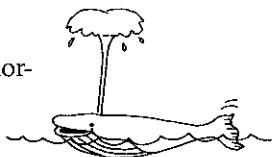
(Matt de la Peña)

Take a ride on the city bus with CJ and his nana as they travel to a soup kitchen. On their journey, CJ wonders why they live in the "dirty" part of town and don't own a car. Then, CJ realizes that although they don't have much money, they can help people who have even less.



■ *The Blue Whale*

(Jenni Desmond)
Does your youngster know that a blue whale blows water as high as seven people standing on each other's heads? Or that a baby whale drinks 50 gallons of milk a day? This nonfiction picture book uses fun comparisons to help young readers imagine the enormous animal's size.



Listen and understand

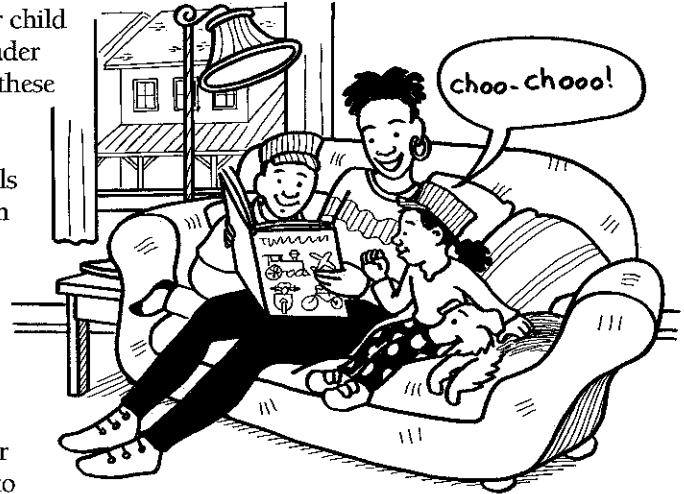
Reading aloud to your child can make her a better reader and a better listener. Try these story-time suggestions to boost her listening comprehension. The skills she develops will come in handy when she reads to herself, too.

Let's get acquainted

Before reading, help your youngster make a personal connection to the book. You'll spark her curiosity and set her up to understand it. *Example:* "This little girl is in kindergarten just like you" or "This book shows different dog breeds. I wonder if there's a border collie like ours."

Encourage participation

A good listener is an *active* listener. Give your child a special role—perhaps she'll do a particular motion every time she hears a certain word or line. If you read *The Pout-Pout Fish* (Deborah Diesen), she could puff out her cheeks and pout when you read "I'm a pout-pout fish..."



Or while listening to a nonfiction book about transportation, maybe she'll add sound effects (car horn, train whistle).

Shed light on new words

When you come across a word you think your youngster doesn't know, weave a quick explanation into your reading. You'll help her understand what's happening without interrupting the story's flow. *Example:* "They were *stranded* on the island—they were *stuck*—so they had to search for food."♥

Magazine storytelling

For these storytelling activities, your youngster will need a stack of old magazines—and his imagination!

Help your child cut pictures from magazines. He can keep them in a paper bag labeled "My story bag." Each day, let him pull one out and tell a story about it. Encourage him to look closely for details to use. He might notice a saxophone player on a city street corner or a frog on a lily pad in a pond.

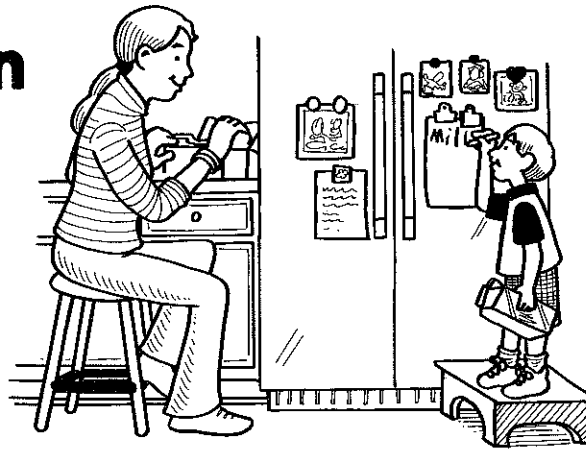
Or let him choose several photos and arrange them into a "storyboard." Explain that moviemakers use storyboards to plan what will happen first, next, and last in a movie. He could point to his storyboard as he tells his tale.♥



Write this down for me!

How often do you add an item to a grocery list, write down a reminder for yourself, or send mail to a relative? These are all examples of real-life writing that you can share with your youngster.

● **Ask for his help.** You could say, “I’m busy looking for recipes. Will you start the grocery list?” Hand him a notepad and a pencil, and encourage him to look in the refrigerator or pantry for help



You might even write to troops together. Visit operationgratitude.com/writeletters for information.♥

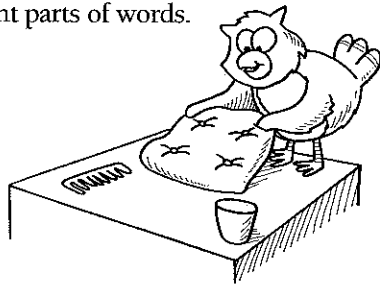
writing words like *milk* and *macaroni*. Or have him put a sticky note on the front door saying “Take grocery bags” or “Return library books.”

● **Send mail.** Fill a basket with paper, envelopes, postcards, note cards, and stamps. Then, suggest that your child write to friends and relatives. Show him how to include a greeting and a closing, and help him address his mail. *Idea:*

Fun with Words

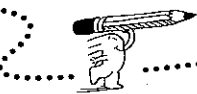
Guess the sound

What do *pen*, *spoon*, and *can* have in common? They all end with the letter *n*! This word game lets your youngster identify sounds in different parts of words.



Take turns walking around the house and choosing three objects with the same sound at the beginning, middle, or end. Place the items on the table, and the other person has to figure out which sound they have in common. If your child picks a *comb*, a *cushion*, and a *cup*, you would say, “Beginning sound, *c*.” On your turn, if you choose a *remote*, a *hammer*, and a *lemon*, she would say, “Middle sound, *m*.”

Idea: Pick objects whose names share a letter combination, such as a *brush*, a *leash*, and a toy *clownfish* (ending sound, *sh*).♥



Parent to Parent

And the book award goes to...

My daughter Sarah recently noticed gold and silver seals on the covers of some books, and she asked what they were for. I explained they were awards the books had won.

Sarah thought it would be fun for us to give medals to books, too. She came up with categories like “Funniest book,” “Kindest main character,” “Coolest setting,” and “Best writing.” Now every time we go to the library, we pick a category and check out books that might qualify. At home, the whole family reads the books, and each person nominates her choice and presents an argument for why it should win. Then, we vote.

Finally, Sarah makes a medal for the winning book that lists the title, author, and year. Her choice doesn’t always win, but she’s practicing making arguments and talking about books.♥



Q&A

Be a reading volunteer

Q I want to volunteer at my son’s school, but I’m not sure what I can contribute. I do love to read—could I use that to help out?

A Let your son’s teacher know when you’re available and that you enjoy reading. She might ask you to listen to students read or to read aloud to a small group or even the entire class. Or perhaps she’ll have you help students read math story problems.

Try contacting the school librarian,



too. She would probably appreciate help shelving books or creating displays—and these are tasks that could possibly be done outside of school hours.

If you prefer to volunteer at home, you may be able to place book club orders or compile book titles for a unit the teacher is planning. As you’ll see, school is the perfect place for a parent volunteer who loves to read! And when you help out, you show your son that school—and reading—are important to you.♥

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Working Together for Learning Success

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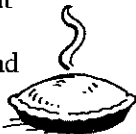
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Book Picks

■ *Pie* (Sarah Weeks)

Aunt Polly's cat inherited her famous pie-crust recipe, and Alice inherited the cat. Now the cat is missing, and Alice fears that someone in her pie-crazy town has stolen him to get the recipe and win the baking contest. It's up to Alice and her friend Charlie to solve the mystery and find the cat.



■ *Howtoons: Tools of Mass*

Construction (Saul Griffith, Ingrid Dragotta, Nick Dragotta)

While following the fictional adventures of Tucker and Celine, your child can do real projects that combine math, science, engineering, and art. He'll learn to turn a turkey baster into a flute, create a submarine, and much more.

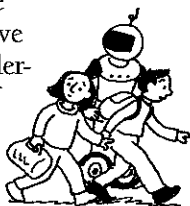


■ *Poet: The Remarkable Story of George Moses Horton* (Don Tate)

Born into slavery, young George taught himself to read and write, even though it was against the law. Soon he was writing poetry while he worked, eventually becoming the first African American to be published in the South. This biography follows his struggle to educate himself and gain freedom.

■ *Eager* (Helen Fox)

Siblings Gavin and Fleur aren't comfortable with their family's new robot, Eager. He's different from the robots they're used to—he learns and has emotions. When a robot uprising begins, Eager and the children set out to save humanity and to understand the meaning of "alive." The first book in the Eager series.



Before you write...

Whether your child lists facts, brainstorms ideas out loud, or draws a comic strip, doing pre-writing activities can make her finished report or essay more interesting and organized. Share these ideas.



Write ABC facts

This list will make it easy for your youngster to keep track of information she gathers. Have her write the alphabet down the left side of a sheet of paper and write facts starting with as many letters as possible. For a paper on reptiles, she might write "cold blooded" for C and "vertebrates" for V.

Hear me brainstorm

Turn on a voice recorder, and let your child talk about her topic. Without paper and pencil in front of her, she may feel more relaxed, and her ideas will flow. Encourage her to state facts she already knows and to ask questions she needs to

research. When she's finished, she should play back the recording and take notes on what to include.

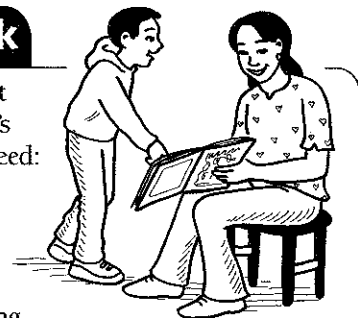
Draw a comic strip

Your youngster might enjoy creating a colorful comic strip as an outline for her paper. For instance, if she's writing about the Wright brothers' first flight, the frames of her comic strip could show them designing, building, testing, fixing problems, and taking flight. She can refer to the comic to keep events in order while she writes her report.

Support for reading homework

From novels to textbook chapters and worksheet instructions, reading is a big part of your youngster's nightly homework. Here are ways to help him succeed:

- ✓ Listen to your child read. Reading aloud keeps him from skipping over words or skimming, both of which can interfere with comprehension.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions about what he's reading. Thinking more deeply about the novel or science chapter will help him absorb and remember the material.
- ✓ Have your youngster tell you what a book or a chapter is about and give his opinion. He'll practice summarizing and analyzing what he reads.

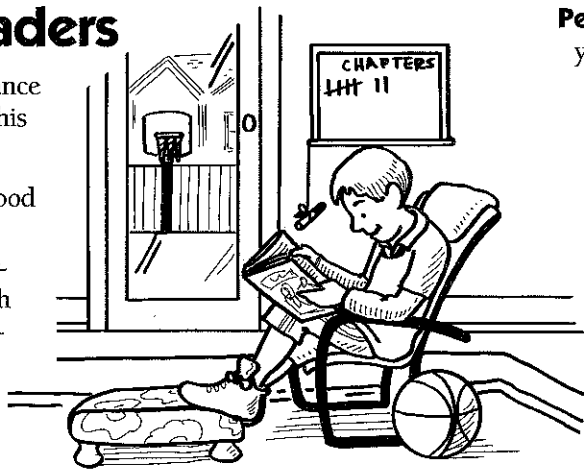


Traits of successful readers

Character traits like confidence and perseverance tend to make children better readers. Consider this advice for instilling both in your youngster.

Confidence. Does your child see himself as a good reader? To build confidence, you could:

- Help him find a series that he enjoys. The characters and the format will become familiar, which will improve comprehension and give him confidence to read the next installments.
- Offer specific praise. Rather than “You’re becoming a good reader,” try “You read that page so smoothly.”



Perseverance. Sometimes, your youngster will be assigned a book that he doesn’t find interesting or that’s challenging. Suggest that he approach it with strategies for finishing successfully. You might:

- Have him break big assignments into smaller chunks and set goals for the number of pages to read each day.
- Encourage him to take short breaks to do

physical activity when he’s feeling frustrated or overwhelmed—and then get back to it. ■

Fun with Words

Which words are related?

Vocabulary words are easier to understand and remember if your child connects them with other words. Try this friendly competition.

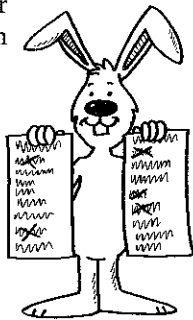
1. Ask your youngster to choose a word from her vocabulary list or a textbook glossary. Each player writes the word at the top of her paper.

2. Set a timer for 1 minute, and everyone lists all the related words they can think of. If the word is *hemisphere*, your youngster’s list might include *half*, *equator*, and *meridian*.

3. When time’s up, take turns reading your lists aloud. Cross off any duplicate words. The player with the most remaining words wins.

4. Let the winner pick a new word, and play again.

Note: If a player questions a word, the person who listed it has to explain why it’s connected. Does everyone else agree? ■



Parent & Parent

Write a sportscast

My daughter Bailey and I love watching the World Series together. Last year, when my work schedule caused me to miss a game, I asked Bailey to be my personal sportscaster. I promised not to listen to the radio on the way home so she could give me the “scoop.” She was excited about watching the game and writing a recap to “broadcast” to me.

I let her know that I wanted all the details and encouraged her to jot down specifics on the hits, runs, and stolen bases to bring her recap to life. When I got home, Bailey read her “broadcast” in her best sportscaster voice.

Now Bailey’s sportscasts are an ongoing thing at our house. She plans to write recaps on any World Series games I miss this year, and I look forward to “seeing” them through her eyes. ■



Q&A

Sharing the newspaper

Q When I was my son’s age, my family read the newspaper every morning at breakfast. I’d like to get back to that, even though we could get our news online these days. Any ideas?

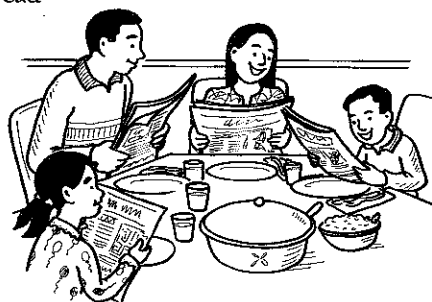
A A newspaper is nice because it’s something the entire family can share rather than reading the news on individual screens.

Try passing around sections over breakfast or after dinner, and talk about what you’re reading.

Pay attention to what captures your

youngster’s attention, such as articles about the upcoming election or the latest fitness craze, and look for follow-up stories. Point out issues that interest you, too.

Finally, help your son see the paper as a go-to resource. For example, try a recipe from the food section, attend a play that’s reviewed in the entertainment pages, or explore a hiking trail mentioned in the outdoor section. You’ll reinforce the habit of enjoying the paper together. ■



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