

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION[®]

September 2016

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I



SHORT NOTES

I can visualize it

Whether your child is reading or doing math, being able to “see” the material can help her understand it. For example, have her sketch a scene from a story or draw a map of the setting. Or she might use objects to solve a math problem. For $15 \div 3$, she could arrange 15 barrettes into 3 equal groups to find the answer (5).

Update your information

Has your contact information changed since spring? Check that your youngster’s school has your correct home address, phone numbers, and email addresses on file. That way, teachers and staff will know the best way to reach you about school events, concerns with your child, or emergency closings.

Trait of the week

Encourage good character all year long! Each week, vote on a trait to celebrate, such as respect, honesty, or tolerance. Ask your youngster to create a poster illustrating the trait, and hang it up. Then, family members can look for examples and jot them on the poster. At the end of the week, read the examples aloud—and vote on a new trait.

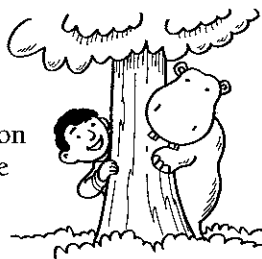
Worth quoting

“If you can dream it, you can do it.”
Walt Disney

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Where can you find hippos?

A: It depends on where you hide them!



Launch into learning

Three...two...one...blast off! It’s a brand-new school year, and your child’s mission is to learn. With these tips, he’ll land in class ready to succeed.

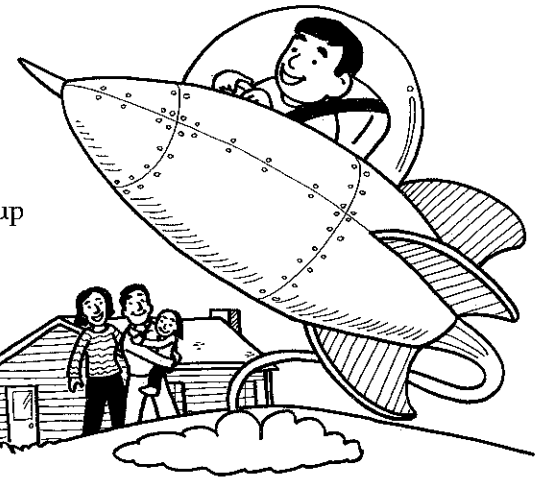
3...Build excitement

Help your youngster get revved up about what he’ll learn this year. To find out what’s ahead, attend back-to-school night, talk to his teacher, and check the school website. Find topics you think will interest him, and read about them together in library books or online.

Look for hands-on opportunities to get him excited, such as visiting a public garden or planting seeds at home if he’s going to study plant life cycles.

2...Set goals

Specific, doable goals are critical to any successful mission. Let your child write goals and “due dates” on strips of construction paper (“I will finish long-term projects one day early so I have time to review them”). He can loop the strips together into a paper chain, then



cut off each link as he achieves the goal. With hard work, he’ll be able to say, “Mission accomplished!”

1...Develop routines

Your youngster will blast off ready to learn if he is well rested, well fed, and active. Set a bedtime that gives him the recommended 9–11 hours of sleep. Make sure he wakes up early enough to enjoy a healthy breakfast. Also, try to see that he gets at least an hour of physical activity a day.♥

In school every day

Did you know that attending school regularly will affect how well your youngster does this year *and* in later grades? Use these suggestions to help her get an A+ in attendance.

● **Stay healthy.** Remind your child to wash her hands with soap and water before eating and after using the restroom or playing outside. Also, work with your pediatrician if your youngster has a chronic condition, such as allergies or asthma, that could cause her to miss school.

● **Address problems.** If your child wants to stay home when she’s not sick, ask why. Talk to her teacher if this happens frequently or if you suspect a bigger issue. For example, struggling with schoolwork and being bullied are two common reasons for wanting to avoid school.♥



Building friendships

Children with friends enjoy school more, develop important social skills, and even do better academically. Here are ways to help your child build and strengthen friendships.

Find shared interests. Suggest that your youngster ask classmates what they do in their spare time and ask follow-up questions to show she cares. (“What’s your favorite skateboard trick?”) Then, she could talk about her own interests, whether she likes solving her Rubik’s Cube or crocheting hats. She and a classmate may discover new activities to



share—which can naturally lead to friendships.

Be a good friend. Talk to your child about what you value in your friendships, and ask about hers. You might say, “I can always count on Debbie at work to help me think of ideas when I’m stuck.”

Perhaps your youngster will say, “Maddie invites me to play at recess even when she’s with the older girls from her class.” She’ll realize which traits she values in a friend, such as dependability and loyalty. Discuss ways she could show those traits, too (helping friends study, making them feel included).

Note: Does your child struggle to make friends or complain she has no friends? Have her teacher recommend a classmate who may be a good match. Then, contact the other parent to arrange a get-together.♥

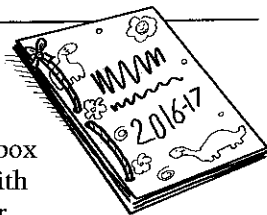
ACTIVITY CORNER

My school-year memory book



Encourage your youngster to create a personalized memory book this school year. It will give him a place to save schoolwork he’s proud of and provide a nice keepsake for both of you.

1. To make the front and back covers, have him cut off the large panels of a cereal box and cover them with construction paper.



2. Let him write his name, the year, his school, and his teacher’s name on the front. He can decorate both panels with stickers or drawings.

3. Hole-punch the covers, thread yarn through, and tie loosely so it’s easy to untie and add pages.

4. As the school year goes on, he might add graded assignments, artwork, programs from plays or concerts, and notes from teachers.

Keep his memory book in a special spot so you can both enjoy looking through it this school year—and beyond.♥

Q & A

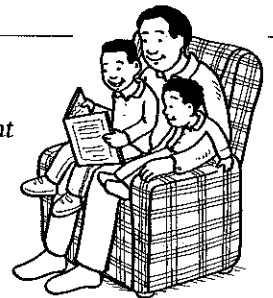
A reading habit

Q: This year, my son has a daily homework assignment to read for 20 minutes. What should we do to make sure this happens?

A: Reading every day is one of the best ways for a child to become a strong reader, and it’s great that you’re eager to help.

Some evenings, you could invite him to read to you. He’ll practice reading, and you’ll get to hear how he’s doing. On other nights, hold family reading time where everyone quietly reads their own books, newspapers, or magazines. Your son might also enjoy reading aloud to younger siblings.

Here’s another suggestion: If you normally read him a bedtime story, try ending your nightly routine by reading one chapter aloud. Does he want to know what will happen next? He can continue reading on his own for 20 minutes to find out!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

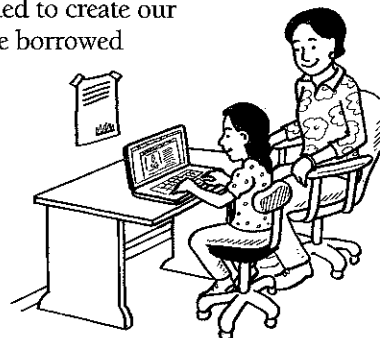
Stay safe online

My daughter Sierra brought home an “online safety contract” that listed classroom rules for using the Internet. After we read it together and Sierra signed it, we decided to create our own version at home. We borrowed some ideas from the school form like:

- Keep usernames and passwords private.
- Do not post personal information online.
- Only respond to messages from people you know.

- Then, we added a few rules of our own:
- Turn on “safe mode” when using a search engine.
 - Do not create social media accounts.

Sierra helped me write out the contract, and everyone in our family signed it. We posted it by our computer as a reminder. While I still supervise my kids online, I feel better having a written agreement as an extra layer of protection.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5621

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2016

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Dad's First Day* (Mike Wohnoutka)

In this twist on a first-day-of-school story, Oliver's dad is the one who is nervous. Oliver is excited, but his dad isn't ready for summer to end or for his son to start school. Your child will laugh as the dad complains of a tummy ache and ends up having a tantrum when it's time to leave Oliver at school.



■ *Ruby Lu Brave and True*

(Lenore Look)

Ruby Lu lives in Seattle with her family. She loves to put on backyard magic shows and dress up. But she doesn't love going to Chinese school on Saturdays. This first book in the Ruby Lu series includes "Ruby's Fantastic Glossary and Pronunciation Guide" with Chinese words.

■ *Edmund Unravels* (Andrew Kolb)

A ball of yarn named Edmund always loved adventure and travel. But whenever he went too far, he'd unravel, and his parents had to wind him back up. As he gets older and bigger, Edmund goes farther away to explore the world. The farther he goes, the smaller he gets, and eventually he misses the familiar tug from his family.



■ *Ada's Violin* (Susan Hood)

Read the true story of an orchestra in Paraguay that plays instruments made entirely from recycled materials. Young Ada never thought she'd be able to play the violin until a new music teacher got creative with materials found in a landfill. (Also available in Spanish.)



Fall into reading

Autumn is quickly approaching! Your youngster can learn all about the new season while he practices reading for information. Here are fun opportunities.

Collect facts

How do pumpkins grow? Why do leaves fall off trees? Read non-fiction library books about fall, and encourage your child to listen for interesting facts. Then, let him cut out autumn shapes (pumpkins, leaves) from construction paper, and help him write down the facts. *Example:* "Pumpkins grow on vines." He could hang up the shapes for a colorful autumn display to read again and again.

Read autumn "news"

Take a walk around town, and look for fall-related announcements. A police station sign might remind drivers that students are back at school, a street banner may announce an autumn festival, and a sign in a store window could advertise



a fall sale. Ask your youngster to read any words he knows, and read the rest to him.

Research fall produce

Visit an apple orchard, a farmers' market, or the grocery store, and help your child discover fall fruits and vegetables. Together, read signs or brochures to learn about them. For instance, which apples are more popular for baking pies—Golden Delicious or Granny Smith? Where was the cauliflower grown? What is quince used for?♥

Show me what you wrote in school

Invite your child to "read" a story she wrote in class. You might be treated to an elaborate tale while she points to a drawing with random letters underneath—that's okay! She has picked up on the fact that printed words tell a story, and she is taking her first steps toward writing them.

Then, encourage her to talk about her writing by asking open-ended questions like these:

- "How did you come up with the idea for your story?"
- "What do you think will happen to the characters next?"
- "Does the story remind you of anything that has happened in real life?"♥



Alphabet fun

Lines, loops, circles, and tails...each letter of the alphabet has its own shape. And being able to instantly recognize every uppercase and lowercase letter is an important foundation for reading success. Try these activities.

ABC collage. Have your youngster cut out letters in different colors and sizes from cereal boxes, magazines, newspapers,



and catalogs. She can arrange and glue them onto paper however she likes. Take turns pointing to a letter and saying its name. This will help her recognize letters out of order and in various sizes and fonts.

Mystery letter. What has one big vertical line with three smaller horizontal lines attached to it? (A capital E.) Think of a letter, and give your child directions to draw it on

paper. For a lowercase g, you might say, "Make a circle at the top. Add a tail going down that curves up to the left." Can she tell you what letter she made? Next, she could give you one to draw. She'll learn to notice small differences between letters—a key to mastering letter recognition. For example, ask her what happens if she erases the bottom horizontal line on a capital E. She has an F!♥

Parent to Parent

Pictures contain clues

My son Jackson is just starting to read, and he often looks at the pictures to help him figure out words. I wondered if he should be sounding out words instead, so I asked his teacher.

To my surprise, Mrs. Thomas said using picture clues and sounding out words are

both good strategies for early readers.

For example, Jackson might come to a word that starts with R and see a rainbow in the illustration. Using what he knows about beginning sounds, he could guess that the R word is rainbow. Mrs. Thomas said this builds confidence and teaches children to try different strategies.

She suggested that when Jackson and I choose library books, we get some with just a few words on each page and pictures that match. A librarian helped us find books, and Jackson is enjoying practicing his reading strategies at home.♥



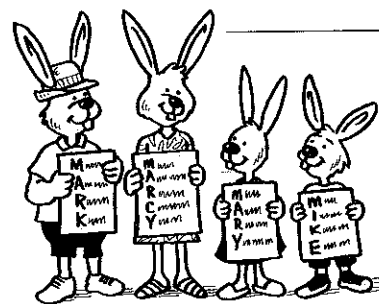
Fun with Words

Family acrostics

Your youngster will stretch his vocabulary as he selects just the right words to describe himself and his family.

On separate sheets of paper, have family members write their first names down the left margin. Then, each person adds a word or phrase that begins with each letter in his name and tells something about him. For instance, Luke might think of "Loves to laugh," for L and "Ultra strong" for U. *Note:* Keep a dictionary on hand in case anyone gets stuck.

When everyone is finished, read your acrostics to each other. Next, work together to make one with your last name. Maybe the Barr family will write, "Barbecue fans, Adventurers, Readers, Riders of bikes."♥



Q&A Fine-motor play

Q My daughter is just learning to use a pencil and cut with scissors. Can you suggest ways I can help her practice at home?

A Playtime is ideal for strengthening little hands for writing, cutting, and other fine-motor tasks.

For example, let your daughter make a car wash for her toy cars. In a sink or big plastic bin, she can squirt shaving cream onto her vehicles and use a spray bottle to rinse them off. Pressing the dispenser on the

shaving cream and squeezing the spray nozzle are both great workouts for her "writing muscles."

Or encourage your child to use kitchen tongs when she builds with blocks. She'll think it's fun to pick up each block with the tongs and add it to her tower. And she'll work on hand-eye coordination as she tries to see how tall she can make her building before it topples over.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5648

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2016

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I



Book Picks

■ *The World According to Humphrey*

(Betty G. Birney)



Being the class pet is a big job for little Humphrey. The hamster helps a shy girl speak up, finds friends for a lonely janitor, and has his own notebook. Then the regular teacher returns, and she hates hamsters. Can he win her over? Book one of the Humphrey series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *If: A Mind-Bending New Way of Looking at Big Ideas and Numbers*

(David J. Smith)

If 100 coins represented all the money in the world, half of the population would share one coin.



This nonfiction book scales down huge concepts in ways your youngster can understand. She will think

about food, water, time, and more in a whole new way.

■ *Raymie Nightingale* (Kate DiCamillo)

Raymie thinks that if she can beat her rivals and win the title of Little Miss Central Florida Tire, her runaway father will come home. But something unexpected happens as the competitors prepare for the pageant—they become friends.

■ *Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions*

(Chris Barton)

Welcome to the world of Lonnie Johnson, inventor of the Super Soaker. This is the story of a young engineer who kept designing and building despite obstacles in his way. A true story of perseverance and dedication.

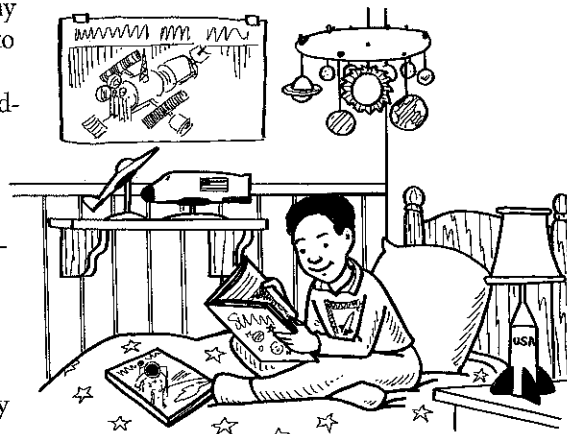


Motivated to read!

Reading is more than a fun way to pass the time—it's also a key to success in school and on the job. Keep your child interested in reading with these ideas.

Make time

Help your youngster work reading into his day wherever possible. Share jokes over breakfast, put magazines in the bathroom, and slip a book into his backpack to read when he has a few minutes. *Tip:* Visit the library regularly so your child has a steady supply of interesting reading material.



Build interest

Look for a "hook" that will make your youngster want to read. If he's a natural problem solver, get him the first volume of a mystery series. A child who dreams about outer space might love science fiction. For a budding athlete, try a biography of a sports hero or a book of records. Whatever his passion, there's a book for it!

Read for a reason

Make your youngster the directions reader or movie-review reader in your

house. You'll give him reasons to read, and he'll feel important. For instance, when you're putting together a bookcase, he can read the instructions aloud. Or he might read reviews to choose a video for family movie night.

Be an example

The more your child sees you read, the more likely he is to view reading as a part of everyday life. Talk about the novel or nonfiction book you are enjoying and the books you are looking forward to. Then, ask what books he would like to try next. ■

Polish your writing

A few finishing touches can make the difference between a so-so paper and one that shines. Remind your youngster to review these things before she turns in assignments.

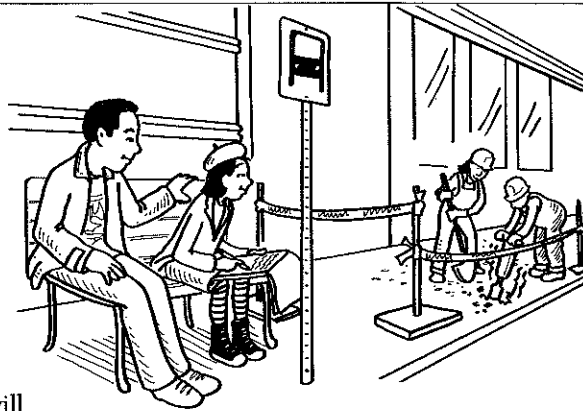
- **Originality.** Encourage your child to double-check that what she has written is her own work. She should understand that copying someone else's words is plagiarism.
- **Clarity.** Have her read her paper out loud, listening to be sure each sentence is clear and makes sense. Are there any fragments or run-on sentences? Did she leave out any words?
- **Grammar.** Misspelled words, missing punctuation, and forgotten capitalization will hurt her grade. Suggest that your youngster reread her work once for each type of error. ■



Think like a writer

Authors have a keen sense of observation. They notice things around them that may inspire their writing, such as an interesting news story or the scent in the air before a rainstorm. Here are ways your child can see the world like a writer, too.

Words. Paying attention to words in books, on signs, or during conversations will help your youngster spice up her own stories and poems. Have her make a three-column list for storing these words as she discovers them: “Unusual nouns,” “Specific verbs,” and “Colorful adjectives.”



Sights and sounds.

Encourage your child to start a journal of things she sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes. She might describe the clanging and beeping at a noisy construction site, for instance. Later, she can draw on her descriptions to add concrete details to her writing.

People. Writers often fictionalize real people. Ask your youngster to imagine people she knows as characters in her stories. She might base a hero on her cousin who is good at fixing things or create a chef inspired by her aunt. Using real-life people as models may make her fictional characters more realistic. ■



Fun with Words Spelling “hot potato”

When does p-o-t-a-t-o spell *fun*? When your family plays this familiar game with a spelling twist! Stand in a circle. One player calls out a word from your youngster’s spelling list or the dictionary. Then, he says the first letter and quickly tosses a small toy or beanbag “hot potato” to the player beside him. As each person catches the potato, he gives the next letter in the word and tosses the potato on.



Remind your child to listen carefully so he can think about which letter comes next. Say a wrong letter, and you’re out for that round. When the word has been spelled correctly, the last person spells the entire word aloud. Choose a new word, and play again. ■

Parent 2 Parent Siblings as reading buddies

My older son, Mark, just started fifth grade. As one of the “big kids” in elementary school, he is paired with a kindergarten “reading buddy” who needs help. That gave me an idea. Since my first-grader, Dylan, is struggling with reading, I suggested that Mark and Dylan become reading buddies at home.



I knew Dylan would learn from his big brother—what I didn’t realize was that the arrangement would help *both* boys. Mark typically reads silently, but by reading to his brother, he hears his own mistakes and corrects them. As a result, he is reading more fluently, and he seems to be getting more confident, too.

When it’s Dylan’s turn to read, I smile hearing Mark give his little brother hints about how to figure out big words. And Mark said that now he remembers strategies to use when he’s stuck, even though he’s “older” now! ■

Q&A After-school literacy fun

Q We’re looking for after-school activities for my daughter. Any suggestions for ones that would help her with language arts?

A Book clubs, poetry circles, and conversation groups for English-language learners are all great ways for youngsters to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Drama club is a good fit, too. If your child lands a role in the school play, she’ll need to read her lines many times as she memorizes them. And

singing in the chorus requires reading words *and* music. Even a photography club can boost reading and writing skills. Your daughter could read about new picture-taking techniques and write captions for her photos.

Ask about after-school programs at your youngster’s school, and check with the public library or community center. Then, help your child pick out the ones she likes best. ■



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583