

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2017

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I



SHORT NOTES

Is my child over-scheduled?

Take a moment to review your youngster's after-school schedule together. While there's no magic number of activities that's right for every child, consider whether she has enough time to do homework and enjoy downtime. If one or more days each week are jam-packed, think about having her drop an activity.

School supply inventory

The year is halfway over! Your youngster's school supplies may be running low, so check if he needs more pencils, paper, or calculator batteries. You might also ask his teacher about shared items like tissues or glue. *Note:* Contact the school counselor if you need assistance in getting supplies for your child.

Good handwriting matters

Although your youngster will type more of her work as she gets older, it's still important for her written assignments to be legible. Also, she will be less apt to make math mistakes if she writes numbers clearly. Encourage her to take pride in completing her work neatly.

Worth quoting

"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it until it begins to shine." *Emily Dickinson*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work?

A: Lost.



Motivated to learn

What's the best way to keep your child inspired to learn? Help him learn to motivate himself! Raise a self-motivated youngster with this advice.

Point to the future

Your youngster may feel more motivated to learn something if he understands how it will be important later. Tell him about ways you use school subjects like math and writing at work. You might explain how you count the money in your cash register and compare it to sales receipts when your shift ends. Or show him advertisements that you helped to write or design.

Move on from mistakes

There are two ways to react to mistakes: Feel discouraged, or get motivated. Encourage your child to look at a mistake as an opportunity to succeed next time. If he made careless errors on a report, for example, he could proofread papers more



carefully in the future (take a break before proofing, read backward).

Celebrate hard work

Have your youngster find natural motivators when he is faced with a big job. For instance, he may plan to read a new mystery he's been looking forward to after finishing a challenging book for school. Or you might let him organize a fun family activity that's related to his science project—perhaps a visit to a cavern if his experiment involves minerals. ♥

Winter workouts

No matter what the weather, your family can stay active this winter. Try these ideas.

Sticky catch. Use gloves for more than keeping warm. Get Velcro circles with sticky backs (available at craft stores), a Wiffle ball, and a pair of knit gloves. Stick Velcro pieces all over the Wiffle ball. Each person wears one glove, leaving one hand free to throw. Go outside for a game of catch!

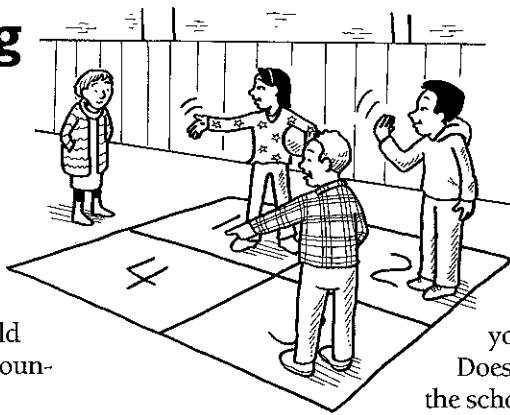
Fitness hunt. Ask each family member to draw and label pictures of physical activities (making snow angels, doing forward rolls). Hide the drawings, and race around trying to find them. When you spot one, do the activity five times. Then, hide that picture for someone else to find. ♥



Speak out about bullying

It can take courage for your youngster to ask for help when she or a classmate is bullied. Here are ways to reassure her that it's okay to speak up.

To start a conversation... "What have you heard in school about bullying?" Simply opening the lines of communication may make your child feel comfortable coming to you if she witnesses bullying or is a victim of it herself. If she doesn't have much to say, you could talk about what you've heard or relate situations you encountered as a youngster.



If she is bullied...
 "I'm glad you told me. Let's decide how I can support you." Children who are bullied may feel helpless. Discuss options so your youngster feels more in control. Would she be okay with your talking to her teacher? Does she want to meet with the school counselor?

ACTIVITY CORNER

Think like a historian

Does your child know that history isn't just something that happened a long time ago? In fact, history is made every day. Let him be a historian with this activity.

Find and document

Have him pay attention to history-making events like "firsts" (his little brother's first steps), unusual occurrences (the decade's biggest snowfall), or significant changes (moving to a new house). Encourage him to document each event by writing about it or making audio or video recordings.



Analyze and predict

Like a historian, he should analyze why the event is important and what we might learn from it. He might say, "We normally get a dusting of snow in our state, but this week we got six inches," and "Now we know how snow drifts when the wind blows."

Idea: Let your youngster share his historical "document" with your family by reading aloud what he wrote or playing his recording. ♥



When a classmate is bullied... "What could you do to help?" Together, brainstorm ideas. Have her think about where the bullying takes place. She might ask the child to play with her at recess or sit with her on the bus or at lunch. Or she could walk with her classmate to tell an adult about what happened. ♥

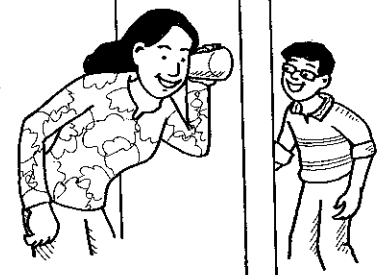
PARENT TO PARENT

Teach me!

My son recently had what I thought was an unusual homework assignment. He had to study for a science quiz by teaching me the material, and I was supposed to write a sentence about what I learned.

It turned out to be interesting and helpful for both of us. I learned something new—about how sound travels better through solid objects than through liquids or gases—and my son earned a good grade on his quiz. We realized that talking it through in his own words was a good way for him to study. Also, I think it boosted his confidence to be able to teach me something I didn't know.

Now instead of asking what he learned in school, I sometimes have him teach it to me. If he struggles to explain it, that's a clue for him to go back and study more, then try again. ♥



Q & A Resolve to find family time

Q: Our New Year's resolution is to spend more time together as a family. Do you have any suggestions for getting our daughters on board?

A: Try letting each girl pick one special event a month for your family to do, such as a winter nature walk or a kite-flying festival. She could plan the activity and be in charge for the day. For ideas, look at calendars from the library or the parks and recreation department.

Also, look for ways to carve out small amounts of time. If you know you won't be able to eat dinner as a family, pick a different meal to eat together that day. Do errands cooperatively, and try to add an element of fun. For example, divide your grocery list in half, break into teams at the store, and see who can get their items first.

Finally, post family plans ("Pancake breakfast on Sunday," "Craft night at the library") to get your daughters excited about what's ahead. ♥



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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

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Book Picks

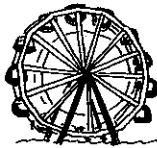


Read-aloud favorites

■ *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*

(Kathryn Gibbs Davis)

This is the true story of how an American engineer invented the Ferris wheel.



George Ferris designed an enormous steel wheel with fancy cars that fair-goers could ride in, and it became one of the most popular carnival attractions of all time.

■ *Henry and Mudge: The First Book*

(Cynthia Rylant)

Henry's new puppy, Mudge, quickly grows into a 180-pound dog who walks Henry to school, sleeps in Henry's bed, and occasionally gets into trouble. The boy and his dog learn a valuable lesson when Mudge gets lost. Book 1 in the Henry and Mudge series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Before After* (Anne-Margot Ramstein and Matthias Arégui)

In this wordless book, pairs of pictures show "before" and "after"—a caterpillar



and a butterfly, a pumpkin and a carriage, a snowy winter scene and a lush spring one. Can your child explain how each pair is related?

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■ *I Had a Favorite Dress*

(Boni Ashburn)

A little girl wears her favorite dress every week until she starts to out-grow it. She asks her mom to turn it into a shirt—which she wears every week until it's too small. But that's not the end of it! What will her mom turn it into next?



Plan for creative writing

Youngsters are naturally creative, whether they're doing art projects or playing with toys. Let your child use his creativity to plan the stories he writes. Here are playful ideas.

Sculpt a character

Who will star in your youngster's story? Encourage him to create a main character out of play dough. It could be a person, an animal, or an imaginary creature. Suggest that his character perch nearby as he writes about it—he might write its name and its age, describe its personality (silly, serious), and tell what it likes to do for fun.



write a detailed story: "My best friend and I sit at the same round table in class."

Plan a plot

What problem does your youngster's character face? He could flesh out his plot by using small toys (action figures, bouncy balls, blocks) to act out scenes. "Seeing" the action will help make his writing more vivid and specific. For instance, he might describe exactly how a basketball player sank the winning shot or how the dragon toppled the tower.♥

Sketch a setting

Where will your child's story take place? Have him draw or paint the setting (a classroom, a playground, a castle), and ask questions that will inspire him to add details. For example, are there tables or desks in the classroom? Does the castle have a moat and a drawbridge? He can refer to his picture while you help him

Everyone reads!

Show your youngster the importance of reading by talking about books on a regular basis. Consider these everyday tips.

● "Today I read..." Tell your child what you read at work or in your spare time. You could describe the dishes on the new menu at your restaurant or mention a suspenseful mystery that's keeping you on the edge of your seat. Ask her to tell you what she's reading, too.

● "I know who'd enjoy this book..." Point out what relatives or friends might like to read. While looking at the "new arrivals" shelf at the library, you could say, "Uncle Rick loves science fiction. Let's tell him about this book." Then, encourage your youngster to be on the lookout for other books to recommend.♥



Super sight-word activities

Being able to recognize common words automatically is an important step toward fluent reading. Try these activities to help your youngster learn to read frequently used words like *said* and *went*.

Note: Use a list of sight words that your child's teacher sends home, or find a list online (try lincs.ed.gov/readingprofiles/Dolch_Basic.pdf).



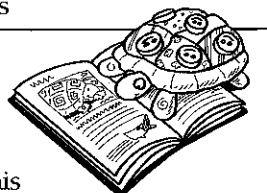
Slide and find. Your youngster can reveal sight words hidden in rice. First, cut a sheet of construction paper to fit inside a plastic zipper bag. Write 15–20 sight words in random places on one side of the paper, slide it into the bag, and have your child add scoops of dry rice until the page is covered. Seal the bag, and lay it flat on the table. She

should use her finger to slide the rice around through the plastic and say each word as she uncovers it.

Park and read. Let your youngster draw a parking lot for her toy cars on poster board or construction paper. In each parking space, have her write a sight word (*was*, *they*, *because*). As she parks each car, she reads the word in its spot. Or call out any word in the lot, and she has to park a car in the space labeled with that word. ♥

Stuffed animal research

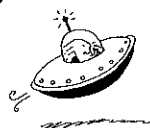
What would your child's stuffed squirrel like to eat? What kind of home does his turtle need? He can practice reading nonfiction and build early research skills as he finds out!



1. Together, find library materials that would answer his questions. You might try information books, picture book biographies, children's encyclopedias, or kids' science and nature magazines.

2. Help him read the table of contents and the glossary to see which pages contain the facts he wants. For instance, he could look for pages that mention *diet* or *habitat*.

3. Now it's time to use what he learned to "take care of" his animals. He might "serve" acorns to his squirrel. Or he can create a pond for his turtle using blue construction paper. He'll discover that doing research to learn new things is fun and useful! ♥



Q&A

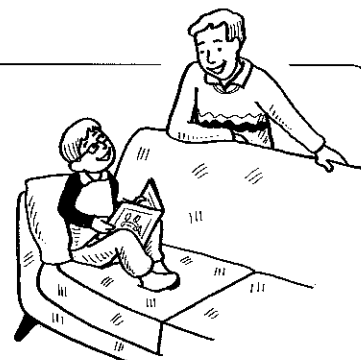
Reading silently

Q My son recently started reading silently. Since I can't hear him read, how can I check on how he's doing?

A Silent reading is typically—but not always—a sign that a child is reading automatically and efficiently.

To make sure your youngster understands what he reads silently, invite him to tell you about it when he's finished. Browse through the book as he talks so you can see how well he understood it. Ask him to show you any hard words he figured out—or any he couldn't get. Also, tell him that he can come to you or an older sibling for help when he reads.

And remember, just because your son *can* read silently doesn't mean he has to do it all the time. Let him read aloud to you, and you'll be able to hear his progress. ♥



Parent to Parent

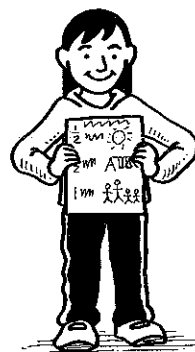
A recipe for writing fun

In school, my daughter Sara had to write a recipe for something other than food. Sara decided that her recipe would be for friendship, and it called for "ingredients" like 1 cup loyalty and a pinch of laughter.

She enjoyed the assignment, so I suggested that she write recipes for other things. In her recipe for a perfect day, her instructions included mixing together

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sunshine, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup playground fun, and 1 cup family. Sara has also written recipes for her ideal sleepover, soccer game, and school field trip.

This has been a great way to encourage my daughter to practice writing. Now, she's compiling her recipes into a "cook-book" to keep on our bookshelf for everyone to read. ♥



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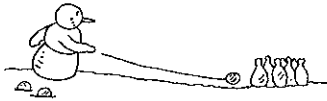
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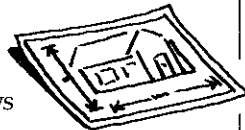
Book Picks

■ *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary* (Laura Shovan)

Emerson Elementary is closing at the end of the year, and the 18 fifth-graders in Ms. Hill's class want to keep it open. This novel, told in poems from the students' journals, shares their daily struggles with family, friendship, and fitting in, along with their attempts to save their school.

■ *The Future Architect's Handbook* (Barbara Beck)

Readers will follow a fictional architect who draws plans for a house.



Detailed illustrations lead aspiring young architects through the process—and may even encourage them to come up with their own designs.

■ *White Fang* (Jack London)

Your child will see the world through the eyes of White Fang, a wild wolf-dog, in this classic novel. Can the

wolf-dog leave his wild life behind and learn to love a human?



Read along as White Fang becomes a sled dog and a fighting dog before finally finding a home. (Also available in Spanish.)

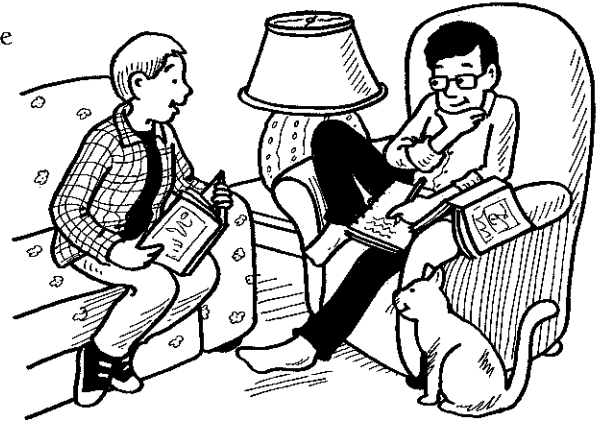
■ *How to Turn \$100 into \$1,000,000: Earn! Invest! Save!* (James McKenna and Jeannine Glista)

You don't have to win the lottery to become a millionaire. This guide, designed to teach youngsters to be financially smart, offers tips for earning money, setting financial goals, creating budgets, and investing.



The power of predictions

What will happen next in the book your child is reading? Encourage him to combine clues from the text with what he already knows to make predictions—a powerful strategy for building reading comprehension. Try these steps.



1. Predict

Have your youngster pause after each chapter and make a prediction about the following one. Let him use a notebook to jot down his forecast, along with evidence from the book to back it up. For example, he might write, "I predict the prince will get in trouble because he invited a stranger into the castle, and the king forbids that."

2. Revise

As your child continues reading, he could gather more evidence and consider whether the new clues make him want to change his prediction. If so, he should note what he has learned and

how his thinking changed. For instance, after he reads that the king's advisor has called a council, he might add, "Now that I know about the council, I expect the prince will stand trial."

3. Confirm

When he finishes the book, he will find out if his predictions came true. Since books may contain twists and surprises, some of your youngster's forecasts may not happen as he expected. If so, suggest that he go back and reread for clues he overlooked or that could be interpreted in a different way. ■

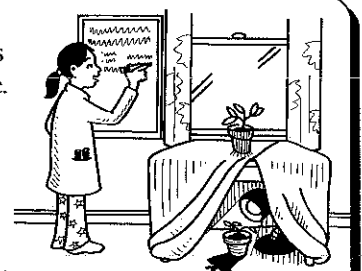
Write like a scientist

Your youngster may not realize it, but doing science involves a lot of writing. Have her imitate real scientists by documenting her own science experiments at home.

● **Before.** Your child could write an "If/then" statement giving a hypothesis about the outcome. *Example:* "If a plant is left in sunlight rather than artificial light, then it will grow faster."

● **During.** Remind your youngster that scientists write reports so others can repeat their experiments. She'll need to include each step along with her observations. "Day 3: The plant receiving sunlight has more new leaves than the one getting artificial light."

● **After.** Now your child will describe what happened. "The plant grown in artificial light is smaller than the plant exposed to sun." ■

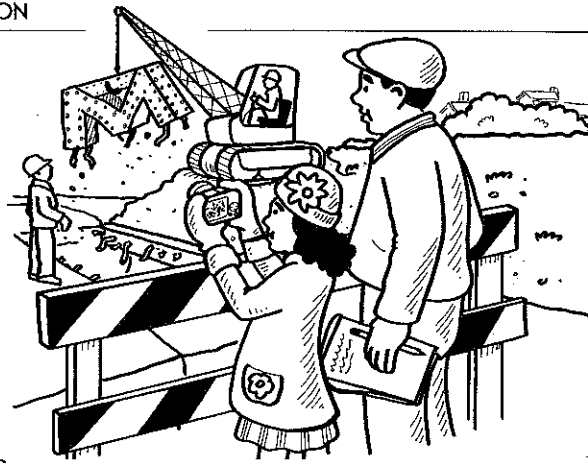


Writing for the future

One hundred years from now, who will tell people what it was like to live in 2017? Your youngster, of course! Inspire her to practice writing with that audience in mind as she creates a record for readers of the future.

Share the latest fads. Hula hoops and yo-yos were once crazes. What toys or activities does your child love today? Encourage her to write about them in a notebook. She might provide instructions for a popular game and explain why she enjoys it.

Explore current events. Today's news is tomorrow's history. Ask your youngster to create news articles about interesting



events like a baby panda born at the zoo or the opening of a new park. Remind her to answer the six questions crucial to information gathering: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Think local. In 2117, your hometown will probably look different. Let your child keep a record

of things that change. If a bridge is being replaced, she could compare and contrast the old and the new to put things in context for future readers. "The historic bridge had only two lanes, and the town needed a bigger one to support more traffic." Suggest that she snap photos to add to her record. 📷



Name my "whatsit"

Figuring out unfamiliar words from context clues is a key part of reading comprehension—and a skill that gets a workout with this fun activity.

Let your child write a sentence or pick one from a book or magazine, replacing one word with *whatsit*. For instance, "The bandage has *whatsit* that sticks to skin but not the wound."



Use clues from the sentence to determine the word your youngster replaced. Talk out your thinking as you go. "I think *whatsit* is *adhesive* because it's the sticky part of bandages."

If you need more clues, ask your child to write another sentence using the word. "This *whatsit* holds wood together better than white glue."

Once you guess his word, trade roles, and replace a word in a sentence with *whatsit* for your youngster to guess. 📖

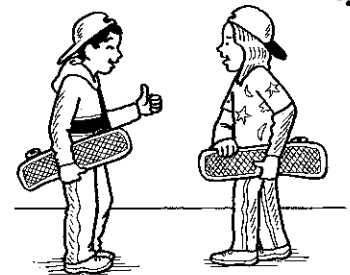


Strike up a conversation

Good conversation skills prepare your child for group discussions at school. These ideas can help him start and continue conversations.

Similarities

To get a conversation rolling, suggest that your youngster talk about shared interests. "I see you're wearing a Colts jersey. I love that team! How do you think they're playing this year?"



Compliments

Is there something your child admires about the person? Paying a compliment creates a natural opening for more talk. "That's a cool trick you did on your skateboard. Will you teach me how to do it?"

Advice

People love to share their opinions, so asking others what they think is a simple way to start or add to a conversation. "I need to pick out a birthday gift for my cousin in college. What do you think would make a good present?" 📖

How to help your struggling reader



Q My daughter reads below grade level. She meets with a reading specialist once a week, and I'd like to help her at home, too. Any suggestions?

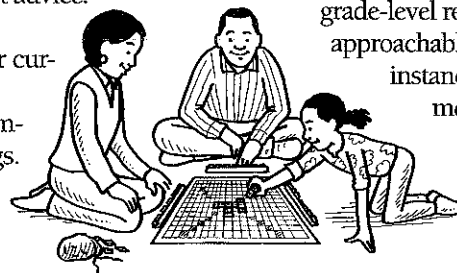
A Start by working closely with your child's teacher and reading specialist—they can give you great advice.

Then, encourage your daughter to read at her current skill level for fun, whether it's books, comics, magazines, or blogs. This can help her develop confidence and a love of reading.

Also, use reading and reading-related activities for entertainment. Word games like hangman and Scrabble increase vocabulary and improve word recognition. Reading trivia questions aloud builds fluency.

Ask her teacher for ways to make grade-level reading materials more approachable for your child. For instance, she may recom-

mend that your daughter listen to an audio version of a novel while she follows along in the book. 📖



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