

Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

November 2019

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

SHORT NOTES



Promises matter

Before you promise your child something—for instance, that you'll take him to the playground—make sure you'll be able to follow through. This teaches him that he can count on you, and he'll learn to keep promises, too. *Tip:* If needed, include contingencies. (“We'll go as long as it's not raining.”)

Speak up about allergies

Family gatherings are good opportunities for your youngster to speak up about food allergies, whether she has one herself or is being considerate of others. She might ask the host if a casserole contains eggs or tell a cousin who's allergic to dairy that there's milk in the mashed potatoes.

Boost working memory

This activity improves your child's working (or short-term) memory. Have him close his eyes while you draw three emojis (cupcake, sun, leaf). Let him study the paper for five seconds, flip it over, and try to name the emojis. Repeat the activity, adding one more each time. How many can he remember?

Worth quoting

“When you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours.”
Zig Ziglar

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What's black and white and black and white and black and white?

A: A penguin rolling down a hill.



An atmosphere of learning

When families create a supportive learning environment at home, children are more successful in the classroom. Use these tips to make your home a great place for your youngster to learn.

Stock up

Fill your house with items your child can use to explore and investigate. Visit the library regularly so you always have plenty of books. Have her set aside a drawer for math and science supplies (ruler, measuring cups and spoons, food coloring, seeds). Also, display a map or globe—when she reads or hears about a place, she can discover where it's located.

Build on interests

Notice what your youngster is into, such as dinosaurs or music, and help her learn more about it. Read nonfiction books or watch documentaries together. Let her make a hallway gallery based on her interests. She could create and hang up posters to share interesting facts and photos with family members.



Learn together

Learn something new as a family. You might work on American Sign Language and then practice together. Or learn to code or knit. You'll enjoy a new hobby as you expand your knowledge. Also, plan special nights where you play board games. Try ones that build language skills (Scrabble, Boggle) or involve math or logic (Monopoly, chess).♥

I'm thankful for...

What is your family grateful for? Try this idea to find out—and teach your child about gratitude.

Pick categories. Choose six crayons, and assign each color a category. *Example:* red = person, blue = place, green = object, yellow = food, orange = animal, purple = your choice. Place the crayons in a bowl, and give each person a sheet of paper.

Draw and write. Take turns selecting a crayon, drawing a heart on your paper, and writing something you're grateful for that matches the category. Your youngster might write “My Aunt Amy” in red and “Macaroni and cheese” in yellow.

Share. Once everyone has a heart of every color, read what's in your “hearts” to each other. Display the papers for a nice reminder to be grateful all year long!♥

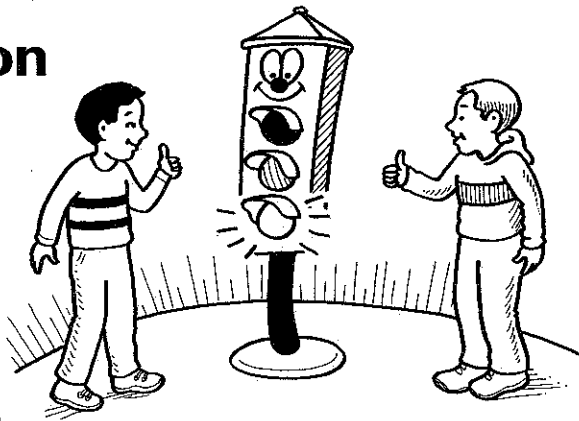


Conflict resolution know-how

Healthy conflict resolution skills help your child maintain friendships, solve problems, and stand up for himself in positive ways. Share these strategies.

Red light! Green light!

Problems are easier to solve when your youngster is calm. Suggest that he think of a feeling like anger or frustration as a “red light”—a signal to stop and think. Say he and a friend are arguing over the topic for their group



presentation. He might take a few deep breaths or walk away for a little while. Once he calms down (the light turns green), he may be ready to think of a solution, such as combining their ideas to create a whole new topic.

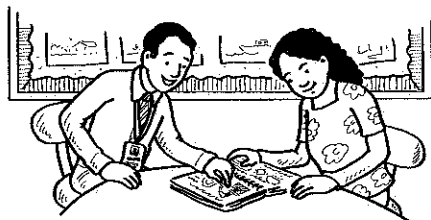
“I” statements

When your child is trying to resolve a conflict, suggest that he start each statement with “I” instead of “you.” *Example:* “I get angry when I’m yelled at” rather than “You make me angry.” He’ll put the focus on his own feelings rather than blaming the other person—which can keep the conflict from escalating.♥

Q & A Attend parent-teacher conferences

Q: My son usually gets good grades and isn’t having any problems in school. Do I still need to go to a parent-teacher conference?

A: Yes! A conference lets you and your child’s teacher exchange information beyond what’s on his report card. Plus, meeting with the teacher is one way to keep the lines of communication open.



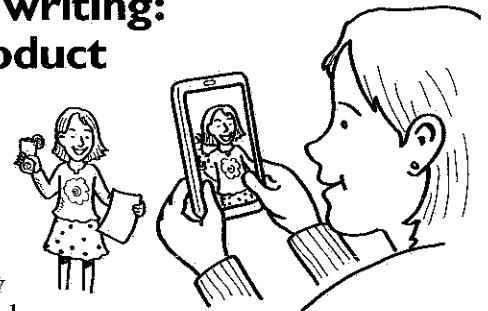
The teacher will talk about your son’s strengths and areas for improvement. For instance, he might say he has good work habits but could participate more in class. And you may get to see his writer’s notebook or science journal. You’ll also learn how he’s doing socially—does he get along well with others?

Finally, ask the teacher what you can do at home to support your son.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Persuasive writing: Buy my product

Could your child convince someone to buy a rock? What about an ice cube? This silly family activity lets her practice persuasive writing by creating a commercial for an unlikely “product.”



- 1. Decide what to sell.** Ask each family member to think of something you probably wouldn’t buy in real life, such as an empty cardboard box, a snowball, or a brick.
- 2. Write a script.** Each person should make up a commercial advertising her product. Include a vivid description of your item and convincing reasons to buy it. *Example:* “Introducing our smooth, perfectly square ice cube! Just this single cube will keep your small glass of lemonade nice and cool—without watering it down.”
- 3. Present your ads.** Take turns performing your commercials in your best TV-announcer voice. The advertisement voted most persuasive wins!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

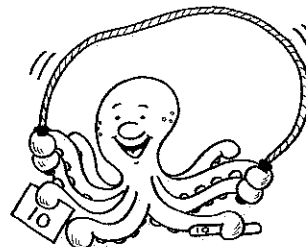
Mix math with fitness

When my daughter Elizabeth was working on addition facts, we invented a game to help her practice—and to give all of us some exercise.

She wrote the numbers 1–10 on separate index cards, and I hid them around our yard. Then, she wrote the same numbers on separate craft sticks and put the sticks (number ends down) in a cup. We took turns drawing a stick, running to find any number card, and

adding the two numbers to get our score for that turn. So if Elizabeth drew the 10 stick and got a 6 card, her score would be 16, since $10 + 6 = 16$. The winner was the person with the highest score after all the sticks were used.

Our game has grown with Elizabeth. Once she mastered basic addition facts, we wrote bigger numbers to play with. And now that she’s learning multiplication, we multiply to get our score.♥



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

November 2019

Snowflake School District # 5

Title I

Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

■ *Do Not Lick This Book*

(Idan Ben-Barak)

The title of this picture book offers good advice—since, as the pages explain, germs are everywhere. A little microbe named Min gives readers a humorous introduction to germs, explaining where they live and what they do.



■ *Froggy Gets Dressed* (Jonathan London)

Froggy should be hibernating through the winter, but playing in the snow is more exciting. Soon, he's outside and ready to play—but he's not dressed for the weather. Early readers will love predicting what Froggy



has forgotten each time his mother calls him back inside. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Katherine Johnson* (Thea Feldman)

Even as a little girl, Katherine Johnson knew she wanted a job using her favorite subject—math. But she didn't know that one day she would help NASA calculate flight paths for astronauts. This biography describes her life and work. Part of the You Should Meet series.

■ *The Treasure* (Uri Shulevitz)

In this retelling of a classic folktale, Isaac keeps dreaming about hidden treasure under a bridge near a castle. But when he goes in search of it, the treasure is not there. Where will he find it in the end?



Playing with ABCs

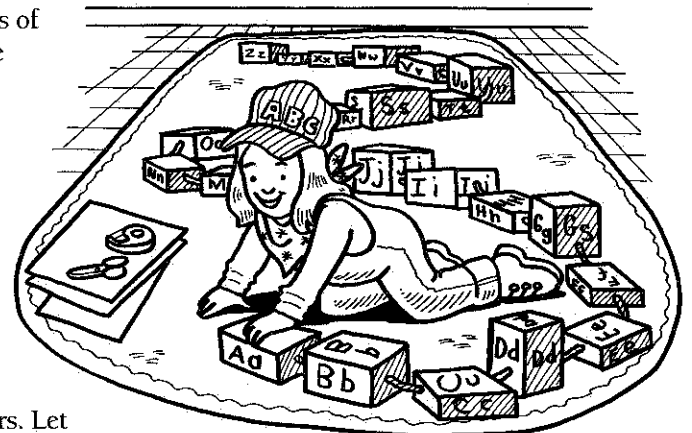
Recognizing the letters of the alphabet is one of the first stepping-stones on the exciting path to becoming an independent reader. Try these activities as your child learns her ABCs.

Alphabet train

All aboard! This playtime project encourages your youngster to write and play with letters. Let her collect small cardboard boxes. She can cover each one with construction paper and label it with a different letter of the alphabet (uppercase and lowercase). Then, punch holes in the boxes, and use yarn to string them together like cars in a train.

Alpha-doodles

Calling your child's attention to loops, lines, and curves helps her tell similar letters apart. Pick two lowercase letters, perhaps *p* and *q* or *v* and *w*. Have her print a big version of each letter and turn them into doodles. She might draw a



smiley face in the loop of the *p* and make the straight line into a ponytail by drawing a ribbon around it.

Letter search

Choose a word, and see if your youngster can find its letters on signs or labels. She'll learn to recognize letters with different fonts, which will help her read the print in various books. Before dinner, you could say, "We're having tacos. Go find *t-a-c-o-s*." Maybe she'll spot *t* on the package of tortillas, *a* on a jar of salsa, and so on. ♥

I found a poem!

A pile of books next to your youngster's bed or at the library could inspire him to write a "found poem."

A found poem uses words your child finds in print—in this case, on book spines. Have him choose several books with fun titles and stack them so he can see all the spines. For example, his stack might include *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault) and *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin!* (Lloyd Moss).

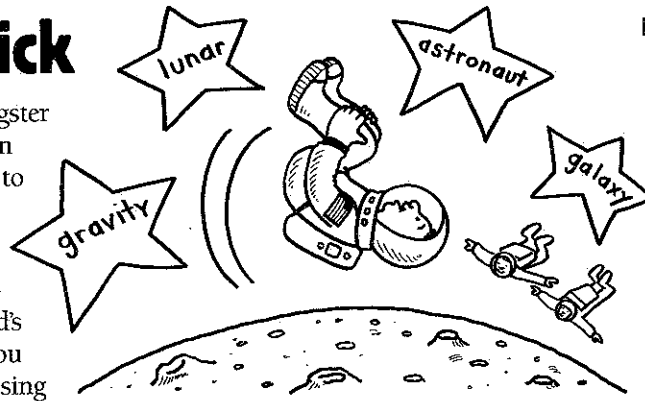
Now he can use the words to write a poem. It's fine for him to add words of his own, too. His poem might begin: "Chicka chicka zin zin / I like to play the violin." ♥



Make words stick

To truly learn new words, your youngster needs to use them over and over again in different situations. Use these strategies to make new words a permanent part of his vocabulary.

See. Attaching words to something concrete helps to cement them in your child's memory. When you're out and about, you might point out construction workers using a *crane* to lift a load, or say the wind is *blustery* because it's blowing hard.



Explain. Ask your youngster to teach his little sister or his grandpa a word he learned today. Example: "Prefer means you like something better than something else. I prefer blue to red." Explaining the definition in his own words helps him make sense of it in a way that works for him.

Repeat. Look for opportunities to use new words in various contexts. For instance, if your child learned *gravity* while reading about space, you could take turns naming something that might happen if we didn't have gravity. ("Without gravity, it would be really easy to do flips in the air!")♥



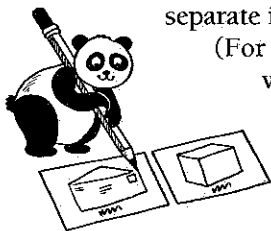
Compound combos

Thanks + giving = Thanksgiving! Here's an idea that lets your child learn about compound words, or longer words made up of two smaller words.

Make cards

Together, think of a dozen compound words (*mailbox*, *playground*). Have her write and illustrate the two words from each compound word on separate index cards.

(For *suitcase*, she would write *suit* on one card and *case* on another.)



Mix and match

Ask your youngster to form other compound words. She might think, "A *housefly* is a *fly* in the *house*. I could make *firefly* by using *fire* from *campfire* and *fly* from *housefly*." Or maybe she'll form *sunflower* by putting together *sun* from *sunrise* and *flower* from *flowerpot*. How many combinations can she find?♥

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Getting the most out of audiobooks

My daughters love audiobooks. I mentioned this to one of their teachers and asked if listening to them counts as "real" reading. Mr. Jackson said audiobooks are great for readers of any age. Then he gave me an idea for using them to build the girls' comprehension skills.

Mr. Jackson suggested that I listen to audiobooks with my daughters. We could follow along in a print version so they make the connection between the words they hear and the words they see. He also recommended that we stop sometimes to talk about the book—just like we would if I were reading it aloud. We might discuss the characters, predict the ending, or go over a confusing part, he said.

Since then, the girls and I have checked out several audiobooks from the library, and I think they're helping them become stronger readers.♥



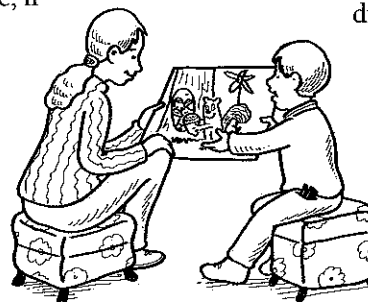
Q&A Tell me about your drawing

Q While volunteering in my son's classroom, I noticed the teacher asking students to tell stories about pictures they drew. What's the purpose of this?

A Drawing a picture is one way your son tells a story. For instance, if he draws a squirrel with its cheeks full of nuts, he's communicating that the squirrel is collecting nuts. Describing the picture out loud encourages him to think it through and perhaps add more information.

After he finishes telling you about a picture, take the conversation a step further by asking questions. For example, you might say, "Where will the squirrel hide the nuts?" Or maybe you'll ask about the process that went into his drawing: "How did you choose the colors?"

Tip: Suggest that he write a story about his drawing—or offer to write down his story as he dictates it to you.♥



Reading Connection

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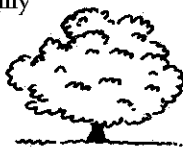
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Book Picks

■ *Wishtree* (Katherine Applegate)

Meet Red, a thoughtful and wise giant oak tree—and the narrator of this story. Red has a lot of rings (which means she's very old) and knows all the people and animals in her neighborhood. When a new family moves in, she helps two children become friends, despite their differences.



■ *Indy Cars* (Carrie A. Braulick)

Readers, start your engines, and learn all about Indy race cars! This nonfiction book offers an in-depth look at Indy car races, how the cars are built, what pit crews do, and more. Includes colorful photographs and a glossary. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Two Dogs in a Trench Coat Go to School* (Julie Falatko)

Stewart's dogs Sassy and Waldo spend all day protecting their house. One day, they decide to sneak into Stewart's school to "protect" him. When they dress in disguise, the students think they have a new classmate. This funny story is the first in the Two Dogs series.



■ *...If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620* (Ann McGovern)

What did the pilgrims eat on the Mayflower? What did they do for fun? Each chapter in this nonfiction book answers a question about the pilgrims, from the reasons for their voyage to what daily life was like after they reached their destination.

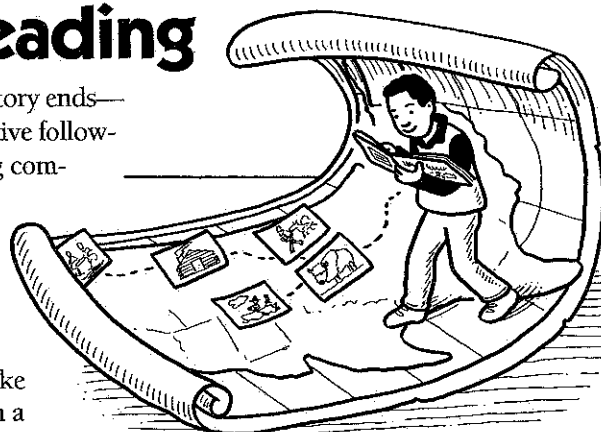


Dig into reading

The fun isn't over when a story ends—it's just beginning! These creative follow-up activities build key reading comprehension skills your youngster needs, including visualizing, predicting, and summarizing.

Map the setting

Encourage your child to take an imaginary journey through a story's setting by sketching each place mentioned. His map will let him visualize the characters' surroundings and better understand their actions. For instance, he might draw the route a character takes across the country or illustrate the forest where the animals live.



Write a prequel or sequel

What happened before the story started? What happens after it ends? Have your youngster explore the possibilities by adding a chapter to the beginning or end. He might write about how the characters met, or the next challenge they face. Suggest that he refer to the original tale to help him imagine past events or predict future ones.

Build a story pyramid

Help your child learn to focus on a story's most important details and zero in on the main idea. He can practice summarizing by drawing a pyramid and filling it with these five lines:

Line 1: The main character's name

Line 2: Two words describing that character

Line 3: Three words describing the setting

Line 4: Four words explaining the problem

Line 5: Five words telling the conclusion

Foolproof proofreading

Spell-check is a useful tool, but it's not a substitute for your child's careful eyes. Share these tips for spotting missing or misused words when she types a paper:

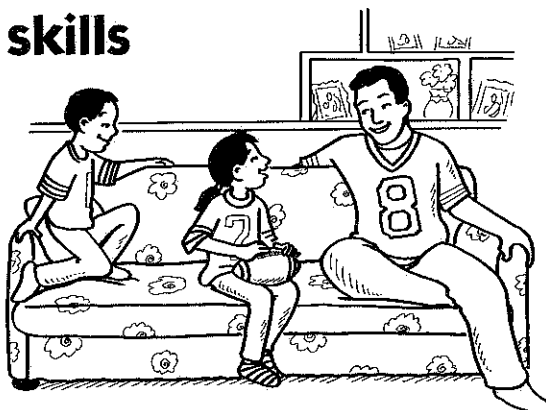


- Take a break between writing and proofreading. A fresh look will let your youngster see mistakes more easily.
- Print it out. Checking it in two formats (paper and screen) might help her find errors she'd otherwise miss.
- List problem words (*your/you're, its/it's*). Have her scan her paper for them and double-check their use.
- Read it out loud. To concentrate on each word, your child can hold a piece of paper under each line.

Boost conversation skills

Can something as simple as talking with your child help her in school? You bet! Good conversation skills let her take part in group discussions and listen to other people's ideas. Use these strategies.

Choose a topic. Take turns thinking of subjects that appeal to everyone so nobody feels left out of the conversation. Some possibilities: favorite books, hobbies, sports teams, family history.



Practice listening. Help your youngster pay attention to what others are saying. Suggest that she listen closely and respond to what the other person says. If her brother says, "I had pizza for lunch today," she might reply, "What kind did you get? I had pizza, too, mine was pepperoni."

Keep it going. Encourage your child to ask questions that will keep a conversation going. She can think of question words (*who, what, when, where, why, how*) as prompts. Say your family is discussing football. She could ask, "Who do you think will make the playoffs?" or "Where is this year's Super Bowl?"

Fun with Words Humorous homophones

Boost your youngster's vocabulary with this silly homophone activity. Start by talking to him about what homophones are, and end by writing sentences that pair the words in ways that make everyone laugh out loud.



Homophones are words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings, such as *night/knight, peek/peak, hare/hair, and their/there*. Work together to list as many homophones as possible. You might look for them in books or online.

Now, take turns writing silly sentences using several pairs of homophones. *Examples:* "Have I told you the *tale* of my *dear* dog who chases his *tail* every time he sees a *deer*?" "Do you *see* the *aisle* in the *sea*? It's between that *isle* and the other *isle*!" Read your sentences aloud, and vote for the funniest one!



Parent & Parent Read around the world

I thought our town's multicultural fair would be fun for our family, but I had no idea it would also lead to research and reading for my daughter Ellie.

After sampling foods and hearing different languages and styles of music, Ellie wanted to learn more about other cultures. So during our next library visit, we checked out books of games, recipes, crafts, and folktales from around the world.

Ellie read the instructions for *Luksong baka*, a game from the Philippines, and taught us how to play. Then, she read a recipe for Greek *tiropita* (feta cheese pie), and we made it for dinner. Finally, we took turns reading folktales to each other. We were surprised to find a version of "Little Red Riding Hood" from China and "The Tortoise and the Hare" from Ghana. Now Ellie is looking forward to going back to the library and researching other countries!



A writer's notebook

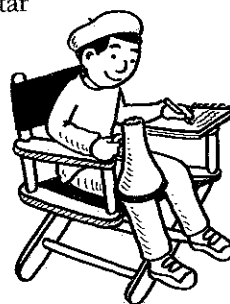
Spark your child's creativity by having him collect story ideas in his own "Author's Notebook." Here are some entries he might start with.

All about me

Imagine someone is making a movie of your life. Who would star in it? What would the first scene be?

The perfect meal

Write a menu for your ideal meal. List your special dinner guests, and create an invitation.



Sweet dreams

Record notes about vivid or interesting dreams you have. Use your imagination to write an adventure story or a mystery about them.

My favorite things

List treasured possessions (baseball medal, family quilt) or favorite places (local waterfall, Grandma's house). Build stories about what they mean to you.

Your youngster can add ideas as he thinks of them. When he's ready to write, he'll have lots of choices to pick from!

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