

# Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

September 2020



Doniphan R-I School District

Chera Dean, Title Director

## Book Picks

### ■ *Crazy About Cats* (Owen Davey)

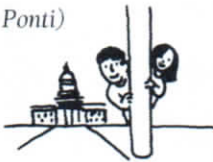
From wild cats like ocelots and pumas to house cats, this nonfiction book from the About Animals series teaches readers all about cats. Your child will discover where cats live, what they eat, and the special features they have.



(Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Framed!* (James Ponti)

Twelve-year-old Florian Bates is no ordinary middle schooler. When his family moves to Washington, DC, he starts his own spy agency with the help of his new friend Margaret. Follow along in this spy adventure as the young sleuths help the FBI solve a big case.



### ■ *The House That Lou Built* (Mae Respicio)

Lou loves her woodshop class, and for a school project, she's planning to build her own tiny house on a piece of land she's inherited. But she quickly realizes that building a new structure isn't as simple as it seems. Determined, Lou finds creative solutions to the many roadblocks she faces along the way.



### ■ *Go Figure! Big Questions About Numbers* (Johnny Ball)

Your youngster can learn about ancient numbers, explore "magic" numbers, and imagine a newspaper with no numbers in this nonfiction book. He'll also see how numbers are used in all aspects of life. Includes quiz questions and answers.

## Strategies for a new year

As your youngster reads more complex stories and textbooks, she'll need new strategies for understanding and remembering new material. Help her start the year off right with these activities.

### Fill a "thinking cap"

When your child needs to tackle a challenging chapter, have her get a baseball cap. Each time she finds a new fact or unfamiliar word, she can write it on a slip of paper and put the slip in the hat. After she finishes reading, she should reread everything in her thinking cap and look up definitions of words she doesn't know. Writing and reviewing the information will help her learn it.



### Draw a comic strip

Suggest that your youngster create a comic strip about what she's studying (stick figures are okay!). Say she's reading about the water cycle in her science book. She could draw one panel with a character boiling a pot of water and explaining evaporation, and another panel with someone walking in the rain

and talking about precipitation. This is a fun way for her to visualize the material.

### Take a "commercial break"

Your child can pretend there's a commercial break at the end of each chapter in a novel she's reading. Her job is to write a "teaser"—a question to encourage the audience to stay tuned. If she's reading *Bunnicula* (Deborah and James Howe), she might write, "Will Bunnicula get caught in the vegetable garden?" Then, have her predict the answer. Asking questions and checking predictions let her monitor how well she understands a story. ■

## Fact or opinion?

"It's the best toothpaste for your family!" When your child reads a sentence like this in an advertisement, does he understand that it's an opinion? Distinguishing fact from opinion is an important reading skill. Suggest that he ask himself these questions to tell the difference:

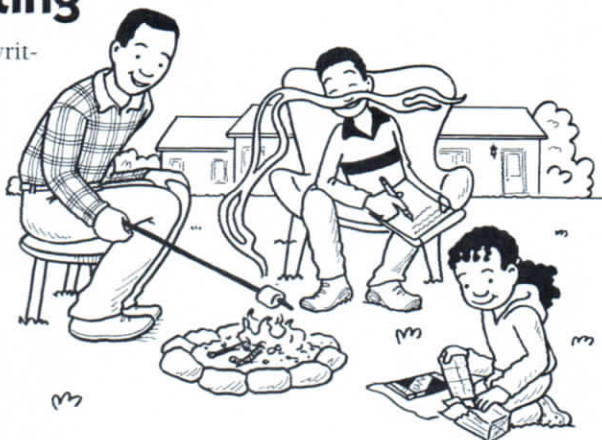
- "Would most people agree?" A fact is true regardless of who wrote it ("Trees are plants"), while an opinion reflects the writer's feelings or beliefs ("Trees shouldn't be cut down").
- "Does it rely on adjectives?" Descriptive words ("Apple pie with ice cream is the perfect dessert") frequently indicate opinions, while facts are more likely to stand alone ("Apples are harvested in autumn"). ■



## Add details to writing

Vivid details make your youngster's writing come alive. And getting a firsthand look at something he's describing can help him be more specific. Share these ideas to use when he writes stories.

**Specific verbs.** Suggest that your child think of active verbs that illustrate what he sees rather than using bland verbs like *was* or *went*. When he's outside, he might notice how a tractor moves along a road. Later, he can incorporate the details



into a story about a boy living on a farm: "The tractor crept slowly along the dirt road" (instead of "The tractor went down the road").

**My five senses.** Have your youngster use at least one of his senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) in his description. If he's writing about making s'mores, you could toast marshmallows together so he can notice how

they smell and look. That may lead him to write, "A sweet, toasty scent filled the air as my marshmallow turned golden brown." ▮

## Q&A Is my child on track?

**Q** As the school year gets underway, how can I tell if my daughter is on track with reading and writing or if she needs help?

**A** The best way is to stay involved with what your child is doing in school. Go through her backpack with her daily, and look over her work. Review the teacher's comments on her assignments or tests, and monitor the grades she's receiving.



Also, notice what she's reading for pleasure—or if she's reading for pleasure. Take turns reading aloud to each other, and when it's her turn, listen for whether she reads smoothly or seems to stumble over words.

If you're concerned, contact your daughter's teacher. He can let you know if your child is on track, and if she's not, he'll work with you to provide help. ▮

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Better listening = better learning

Good listening skills help your child learn information from lessons, class presentations, and videos. Encourage him to become a better listener with these challenges.

● **What's different?** Read a paragraph from a newspaper or magazine to your youngster. Then read it again, but switch a few details. For example, you might change the name of a person or a city. It's your child's job to listen closely and tell you what's different the second time around.

● **Listen and answer.** Together, listen to a podcast or an audiobook for five minutes. Each of you can jot down a question the other person should be able to answer—if you listened carefully. Then trade questions, and answer them. Replay the audio to check if you heard right. ▮



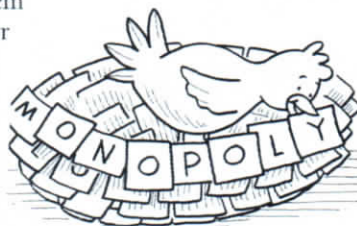
## Fun with Words Build a word

The word-making possibilities are almost endless in this vocabulary game.

Have your youngster write each letter, A–Z, on separate slips of paper and scatter them in a bowl. For each round, draw three letters, lay them faceup, and set a timer for three minutes. Each person writes words that contain all three letters in any order. The goal is for players to come up with

the most words that no one else thought of *and* the longest possible word they can define. For M, L, and P, a player might write *monopoly* or *planetarium*.

When time's up, read your words aloud to each other. Earn one point for every word that no one else wrote—and a bonus point for giving the correct definition of your longest word. *Tip:* Keep a dictionary on hand to check answers. ▮



# Unlocking New Words

Your child is cruising through a book when she suddenly comes to an unfamiliar word. It's like an obstacle in the road, causing her to slow down or stop. Use the ideas in this guide to give her a plan of attack for reading and understanding new words and getting back on track.



## Sound it out

Suggest that your youngster start by saying each syllable of a word separately. Then, have him blend the sounds together by saying the word aloud slowly. This might help him realize that he knows it after all. ("Dis-in-fec-tant. Oh, *disinfectant*, like a cleaner!")

## Use a similar word

Does the unfamiliar word remind your child of a word she knows? If she reads, "The doctor told Maya to *elevate* her broken foot," she might notice that *elevate* sounds similar to *elevator*. Because elevators go up and down, she might realize that *elevate* means "to raise."

## Think about the topic

Your youngster's knowledge of a subject can help him unlock mystery words. For example, if he's reading about the solar system and gets stuck on a word

that begins with *a*, he might think of a words that have something to do with outer space (*astronaut*, *astronomy*, *asteroid*). Would one of them make sense in the sentence?

## Find a definition

Instead of stopping when she sees a tricky word, encourage your child to read on and come back to it. Sometimes the author will state the definition directly, especially in a textbook or other nonfiction book. *Example*: "A tree's *circumference* can help scientists determine its age. They measure the distance around the trunk. For some trees, 1 inch equals 1 year." (*Circumference* means "distance around.")

*continued*



## Taking words apart

Prefixes, suffixes, and roots can all provide clues to a word's meaning. Suggest that your child try these steps to break words into parts and discover their meanings.

**1.** When your youngster comes to a tricky word that has a prefix, have her write the word on paper and cover the prefix with a sticky note. (Common prefixes include *ir-*, *im-*, *il-*, *in-*, *re-*, *un-*, and *dis-*.) Then, she can write the meaning of the prefix on the note. For

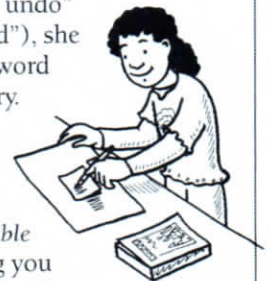
*irreversible*, she would cover up *ir* and write *not* on the sticky note.

**2.** If the word has a suffix, have your child cover it up, too. (Frequently used suffixes are *-ing*, *-es*, *-able*, *-ed*, *-ly*, and *-ful*.) For example, she could cover up *ible* in *irreversible* and write *able to* on the sticky note. *Note*: Some words, like *carefully*, have more than one suffix.

**3.** Once your child has covered the prefix and suffix, only the root (*reverse*)

will be visible. (*Note*: The last letter might be cut off.) If she doesn't know the definition ("to undo" or "to go backward"), she can look the root word up in the dictionary.

**4.** Finally, your youngster can put all three parts together. (*Irreversible* means "something you are not able to undo.")





### Try context clues

Your youngster can use clues in the sentence to figure out what a word means. Have him read the sentence, leaving out the unknown word. If he's stuck on *vicinity*, he would read, "Since Charlie lived in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the mall, we agreed to pick him up on our way." Next, have him try a word that would make sense in the blank: "Since Charlie lived in the *area* of the mall, we agreed to pick him up on our way." (*Vicinity* means "area.")

### Search for other uses

Sometimes your child can skip ahead in a paragraph or chapter to see if the word appears again. For instance, the meaning of *migration* isn't clear from a sentence like, "Students tracked the butterflies' *migration*." But the next time the word is used, she might be able to figure it out: "The butterflies will fly thousands of miles during their *migration* from Canada to Mexico." (*Migration* means "journey.")

### Go beyond words

Textbooks and novels sometimes include maps, drawings, charts, or photographs that can help your youngster sort out the meaning of a new word. If he gets stuck, suggest that he look through the page for clues to the word. For instance, he might wonder what a mine shaft is. He can use a diagram of a mine to learn that the shaft is a tunnel that miners travel through.

### Look it up

Suppose that your child tries several strategies and still can't understand a section because she doesn't know a word. Have her look it up in a dictionary and reread the passage with understanding. If she can make sense of the section without knowing the word's meaning, she might put a sticky note on the word and look it up when she finishes reading. That way, she won't get frustrated by having to stop and start.



## Vocabulary games

The more words your youngster recognizes at a glance, the fewer roadblocks he'll encounter when he reads. Try these activities to encourage him to learn new words.

### Synonyms

Choose a word, such as *hungry*, and take turns saying synonyms for it (*starving*, *famished*, *ravenous*). Continue until no one can think of a new synonym. Then, check a thesaurus to see if you missed any before picking a new word to try.

### Beginnings and endings

Call out any two letters (*j* and *t*). Ask your child to make a list of words that

begin with the first letter and end with the second. *Examples: jet, judgment, jolt, jubilant.* When he runs out of ideas, he can look in a dictionary for more.

### Definitions

Open the dictionary to a random page and choose a word you think your



youngster won't know (*revive*). If he can tell you the definition (bring back to life), he gets to try to stump you. If he doesn't know what the word means, use the dictionary entry to give him clues until he guesses ("Revive includes the root word *vive*, which means to live").

























### Headlines

Have your child look through the newspaper for a word with five or more letters (*bicycle*). Encourage him to write his own headline in which each word starts with a letter, in order, from the chosen word ("Baby Iguanas Can Yodel,' Cries Leading Expert").

**Note to Parents:** Fill in the month and dates, and post this calendar on your refrigerator. Then, encourage your child to do an activity a day.

# Daily Reading & Writing Calendar







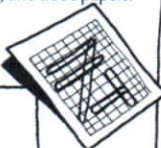



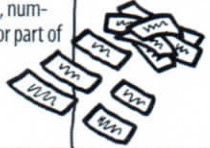
















(INTERMEDIATE EDITION)

MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>List four types of reading that begin with different letters of the alphabet (autobiography, chapter book, field guide, mystery). Read one a week this month.</p> 	<p>Ask someone to give you five random nouns (sailboat, bear, guitar, house, pumpkin). Can you write a story that includes every word?</p> 	<p>Write a message for a family member on a dry-erase board or a notepad. ("Thanks for dinner, Mom." "Good luck on your test, Matt!")</p>	<p>Take turns making up lines of a family story that begins, "Remember when we . . . (got lost, built our tree house)." Use dramatic voices and act out exciting parts.</p> 	<p>Illustrate a pair of rhyming words for someone to guess. For instance, you might draw rain falling on blossoms (flower shower).</p> 	<p>Set up a magazine swap with a friend.</p> <p>Borrow an issue from each other, and return it when you finish reading.</p> 	
<p>Pretend you're famous, and write an encyclopedia entry about yourself. <i>Example:</i> "Jon Jones set a world record for scoring the most goals in a soccer game. . ."</p> 	<p>Use a photo to practice inferring (reading between the lines). What are the people in the picture thinking? How can you tell?</p> 	<p>Take turns thinking of a book and drawing clues to help other players guess it. <i>Example:</i> rabbit and teacup for <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> (Lewis Carroll).</p>	<p>Practice your spelling words using American Sign Language. Search for the alphabet online, or find it in a book (try <i>Sign Language for Kids</i> by Lora Heller).</p> 	<p>Celebrate one writer's birthday by reading a book written by that person. Search online to learn which authors were born this month.</p> 	<p>Write a letter to a company that makes a product you use (baseball glove, modeling clay). Explain why you like it or what could be better.</p> 	
<p>Invent descriptive names for your favorite colors. <i>Examples:</i> traffic cone orange, evening sky blue, snowball white.</p> 	<p>Use a photo to practice inferring (reading between the lines). What are the people in the picture thinking? How can you tell?</p> 	<p>Practice being a ventriloquist. Read from a joke book, and use a sock puppet to say the punch lines without moving your lips.</p>	<p>Find five acronyms in a newspaper, and try to figure out what the letters stand for. <i>Example:</i> NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration.</p> 	<p>Play book charades. Act out the words in a book title or the action in the book. Whoever guesses correctly acts out a book for you.</p> 	<p>Write down names of 10 items you see (thermostat, computer, pillow), and have a friend do the same. Look at each other's lists for one minute, and try to write the words from memory.</p>	
<p>Look through a library book of quotations, and fill a poster board with your favorites. <i>Example:</i> "Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one." (Dr. Seuss)</p> 	<p>To remember <i>their</i> or <i>there</i>, point out that "there" has the word "here" inside it. Suggest he use the phrase, "here or there" to help him remember that "there" is for places.</p> 	<p>At the grocery store, take turns pointing out foods with three or more syllables (celery, macaroni, tomato). Who can find the product with the most syllables?</p>	<p>List friends' birthdays in a small notebook. Use your birthday book to remind yourself to make cards for your friends on their special days.</p> 	<p>Play book charades. Act out the words in a book title or the action in the book. Whoever guesses correctly acts out a book for you.</p> 	<p>Cover a shoebox with construction paper, cut a slit in the lid, and write "Family Suggestion Box" on top. Invite suggestions, and read them at dinner once a week.</p> 	
<p>Lay eight Scrabble tiles faceup. Using pencil and paper, see who can make the longest word using only those letters.</p> 	<p>Jot down new words while reading and look them up in a dictionary. Then, use different color markers to write them in a "cloud"—vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.</p> 	<p>Make a list of things you can do every day to help the environment (take shorter showers, walk to school). Post your list on the refrigerator.</p> 	<p>Read a newspaper article about another country. Tell someone three things you learned about that country (name of a city, the climate).</p> 	<p>Think of a place (Mars) for a friend to guess. Give clues (red, rocky) until he figures it out. Then, trade roles.</p> 		

**Note to Parents:** Fill in the month and dates, and post this calendar on your refrigerator. Then, encourage your child to do an activity a day.

# Daily Reading & Writing Calendar

## (INTERMEDIATE EDITION)

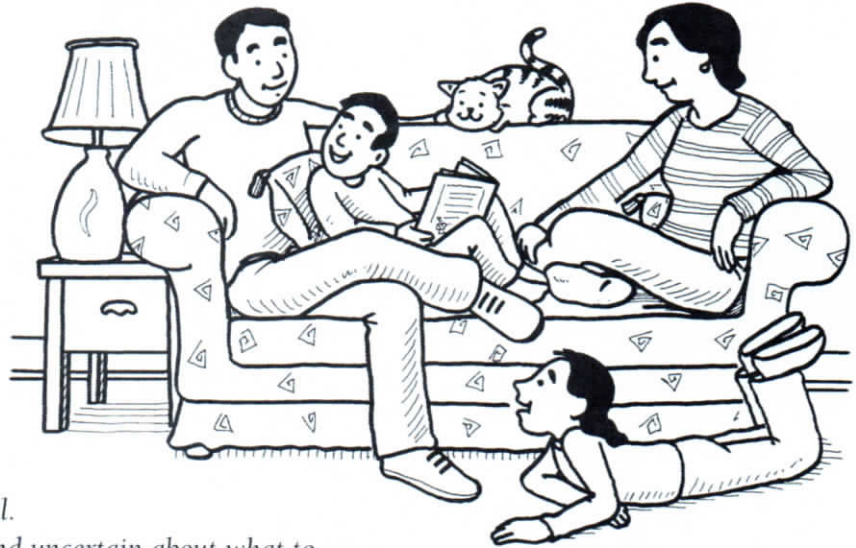
MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Make up a short story about a famous painting. You can find paintings in library books or at art museum websites (<i>metmuseum.org</i>, <i>nga.gov</i>). Or look for paintings hanging on the wall when you're in the bank or a doctor's office.</p> 	<p>Collect recipes featuring your favorite food (strawberry salad, strawberry smoothie, strawberry cheesecake). Read cooking magazines, websites, and cookbooks to find new recipes.</p> 	<p>Open a dictionary at random, and count the number of words that you recognize on the page. Learn three new words.</p> 	<p>Think of a business you'd like to start. Design a business card with your slogan. <i>Example:</i> "Pete's Pet Sitting Service. We sit. You go!"</p> 	<p>Imagine that you are making a movie of your favorite book. Choose an actor to play each character based on the descriptions in the book.</p> 	<p>Write vocabulary words on sticky notes and place them on random spaces of a board game. If you land on a word and use it correctly in a sentence, you get an extra turn.</p> 	
<p>Make a word-search puzzle on graph paper by hiding your vocabulary words among random letters. Ask a friend to make one for you, and trade papers.</p> 	<p>Play a word game like Scrabble, Boggle, or UpWords. Keep a dictionary handy to look up words if you challenge another player.</p> 	<p>Choose a chapter book for you and a friend to read. Plan to meet in two weeks to discuss it, and then get reading!</p> 	<p>Pretend to visit the setting of a favorite story. Make a postcard that tells what you saw there. ("Today I went to Terebithia. The castle was huge!")</p> 	<p>Write vocabulary words on separate slips of paper. Then, sort the words in different ways (by vowel sound, number of syllables, or part of speech).</p> 		
<p>Place a jar in a central location and have your family fill it with jokes written on slips of paper. When you need a laugh, draw a slip and read it aloud!</p> 	<p>Write words that end with each letter of the alphabet (<i>area, cab, optimistic</i>). How many ending letters can you use?</p> 	<p>Make a story mural. Paint three scenes from a book: one from the beginning, another from the middle, and a third from the end. Use your mural to tell someone the story.</p> 	<p>Create a rebus story (told with both words and pictures). For a spooky tale, you might replace the words <i>moon, owl, and house</i> with drawings.</p> 	<p>Misspell a word (<i>trampoline</i>), and ask a friend to spell it correctly (<i>trampoline</i>). Then, let her misspell a word for you to fix.</p> 		
<p>Read a how-to guide such as <i>Yo-Yo World Trick Book</i> by Harry Baier or <i>Magic Tricks with Coins, Cards, and Everyday Objects</i> by Jake Banfield. Show someone what you learn.</p> 	<p>Write instructions for a craft you're familiar with (friendship bracelet, craft stick house). Read over your directions to be sure the steps make sense and are in the correct order.</p> 	<p>Think of people your family calls regularly (grandmother, best friends). Make a list of their phone numbers and hang it on the refrigerator.</p> 	<p>What does your name mean? Look it up in a book of names. Then, look up friends' and relatives' names.</p> 	<p>Write a short comic. Cut several pictures of people or animals from old magazines, and glue them on a strip of paper. Draw balloons above each character, and add dialogue.</p> 	<p>Save bottle caps or look for bingo chips at a dollar store. Print the alphabet on them, and arrange the letters to spell words.</p> 	
<p>Research your state tree, flower, and bird in an encyclopedia or online at <i>50states.com</i>. Draw and label a picture of each one.</p> 	<p>Read a wordless picture book such as <i>Flotsam</i> by David Wiesner or <i>The Red Book</i> by Barbara Lehman. Make up a story to go with the pictures.</p> 	<p>Write a short review to convince a friend to read a book you enjoyed. Summarize the story, and explain why you liked it—but don't give away the ending!</p> 	<p>Check out a poetry book from the library. Toss two dice and read the poem on that page number (<i>example:</i> roll 2 and 5 and read page 25). Repeat to read more poems.</p> 	<p>Combine two fairy tales to create your own. For instance, you might write "Snow White and the Seven Pigs" or "Goldilocks and Gretel."</p> 		

COVID-19 SPECIAL EDITION:

# Support for Parents and Children

Your children's world has changed dramatically over the course of just a few weeks. They're home from school, missing their friends and activities, worried about what's happening in the news—and unsure of when life will return to normal.

As a parent, you may feel overwhelmed and uncertain about what to do. Use this guide as a starting point for supporting your youngsters emotionally and academically during the coronavirus pandemic.



**Editor's note:** Guidelines are changing rapidly. Make sure to follow all local, state, and federal laws and recommendations on social distancing and other practices when using these ideas.

## Boost well-being

Your children are likely experiencing conflicting emotions. They're probably happy to be home with you—but bored because they can't go anywhere or have anyone over. Here are ways to keep life as close to normal as possible.

**Find the positives.** Look for bright moments each day. For instance, maybe you're not commuting to your job right now, so you have time before work to snuggle up and read with your youngster. Or perhaps a family birthday party was canceled, but now even people who live far away can celebrate with you ... via video chat.

**Stay physically active.** Go for runs or bike rides, and play backyard games. Have everyone put on comfortable clothes and gather in front of the TV or computer for a free fitness class. Try a site like [youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga](https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga) or [lesmills.com/us/workouts/youth-training/](https://www.lesmills.com/us/workouts/youth-training/). Your child's dance or martial arts classes may even be continuing online.

**Encourage play.** Children need plenty of time to play—and this is especially true in difficult circumstances. Pull out old toys they may not have played with in a while. It'll be like getting brand-new toys! They can also turn household items into toys. A cardboard box could become a bear cave, a school bus, or an art studio



(they can color the inside with crayons or markers). A blanket might be a cape, a tent, or an island.

**Enjoy the great outdoors.** Spending time in nature is a proven stress reliever. Take family walks and observe animals, trees, and flowers along the way. Plant a garden. Try stargazing at night or bird-watching in the daytime. Have picnics in the backyard or on your balcony.



### Do for others.

Thinking of others gets your children outside of thinking about the situation they're in. They might make cards for people who are working hard to help us, such as nurses, doctors, and paramedics. They could also use chalk to draw pictures and leave uplifting messages on the sidewalk for delivery truck drivers and mail carriers.

**Manage family time.** Being together 24/7 and unable to leave your home can cause tension among family members. Encourage siblings to play separately when they've had enough of each other's company. Also, it's healthy for parents to have some time to themselves, so relax with a cup of coffee before your child wakes up, or plan at-home date nights with your spouse.

*continued*

## Reduce anxiety

It's normal for youngsters—and adults—to feel stressed when their schedules change or life is unpredictable. Consider this advice for helping your children cope.

**Provide reassurance.** Having some control over a situation can limit anxiety. Talk to your child about what your family is doing to stay safe—and to help others be safe.



Examples include washing hands often, staying at home, and social distancing (staying at least six feet away from people who don't live with you).

**Stick to routines.** Stick to your youngster's regular bedtime and wake-up times. Also, encourage her to dress in regular clothes. If she asks to stay in pajamas, consider setting aside a special PJs day

each week. Wearing daytime clothes on other days will contribute to a sense of normalcy. And plan regular mealtimes rather than letting everyone snack all day.

**Limit access to news.** It's important to stay informed, but news coverage can make children feel anxious. Keep the news off, and set certain times each day to check for updates. If you have a young child, you might consider tuning in only after he goes to bed.

## Keep reading!

Reading every day is one of the best ways for your child to keep up skills in all subjects. Try these ideas:

- Set aside time each day to read with your youngster. You could enjoy favorites from your bookshelves and also download e-books from the public library. Encourage him to choose a variety—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, biographies, how-to books, and more. Let him pick books he can read on his own as well as more challenging ones for you to read aloud to him.

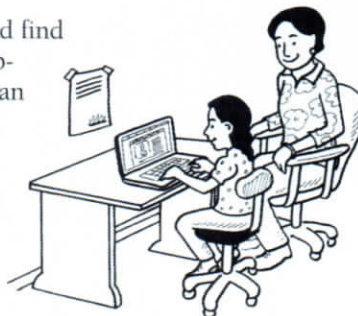


- Together, watch authors, teachers, and librarians read aloud online. (Try [storylineonline.net](http://storylineonline.net) or search YouTube for "read alouds.") Then, suggest that your child make her own story-time videos—complete with props or puppets.

## Learning and working from home

When your children do schoolwork at home, you may wonder what your role is, especially if you're working remotely, too. Keep in mind that teachers don't expect you to homeschool your youngsters—but you can offer support and encouragement, just as you would with regular homework. Here's how.

**Get set up.** Have your child find "office space" and gather supplies. She'll need to work in an area without background noise and where she won't disturb you if you're working, too. If she's participating in classes online, make sure she logs in on time—a few minutes early is ideal in case there's a glitch. She should close browser windows and tabs and put away devices she's not using for school.



**Create office hours.** Help your youngster make a schedule that includes class time and independent work time. If you're working from home, let him know what your hours are. Schedule a lunch break and a snack break so you can eat together. *Fun idea:* Ask your child to make and decorate signs with office hours for each of you. He'll be proud of his signs and may pay more attention to the "posted hours."

**Offer assistance.** Try to be available in case your youngster gets stuck with her work. If she needs help during your office hours, she could write you a note. Then, provide help when you can take a few minutes away. *Tip:* Show interest by asking what she's learning and looking over her work.

## Stay in touch

Combat social isolation while you are social distancing. Use these suggestions for staying in touch with family and friends via Skype, FaceTime, or other video-chat platforms.

**Spend time with relatives.** Invite grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins to participate in family game nights. It's fun—and it helps to reduce loneliness, especially for people who live alone. Play charades, Pictionary, or name-that-tune.

**Hang out with friends.** Encourage your child to plan online get-togethers. It will feel great for classmates to see each other in real time! They could perform a concert by singing or playing instruments. Or they might make up dance routines. Another idea is to hold a craft party—they can chat while crafting (making jewelry, knitting) and share their works-in-progress with each other.

## Home & School CONNECTION®



COVID-19 SPECIAL EDITION:

# Learning Activities for Children

While your children are at home with you, you want to spend time with them, support their learning, and get your own work done. This guide will help you do all three. Below, you'll find at-home activities they'll enjoy. And page 2 features a fun bingo card—they can check off the items as they complete them.



**Editor's note:** Guidelines are changing rapidly. Make sure to follow all local, state, and federal laws and recommendations on social distancing and other practices when using these ideas.

## Vocabulary art

Tap into your child's creative side while she studies her vocabulary words with these two projects.

**Word collage.** Ask your youngster to write a word and its definition at the top of a page. Then, let her cut out pictures from magazines that go with the word. For instance, if she's studying simple machines in science, she could find pictures of levers (seesaw, scissors) or *inclined planes* (wheelchair ramp, playground slide). Have her glue them on her paper and write a sentence to go with each one.



**Rainbow words.** Suggest that your child sort her words by writing them with different-colored pencils in the shape of a rainbow. Perhaps she could use a red pencil for nouns, a yellow one for verbs, and a blue one for adjectives.

## Junk-drawer creativity

Look no further than your kitchen junk drawer to give your youngster's creative thinking a boost. Try these ideas.



### Reuse

Suggest that your child come up with different uses for objects in the drawer. He could use rubber bands to make a ball or turn a cork into a pincushion, for example. Take turns thinking of ways to reuse a bottle cap, a handheld mirror, and other junk-drawer items.

### Sort

Let your youngster sort items according to a secret criterion, and you try to figure out his rule. Say he puts a paper clip and a key in one group, and a coupon and a gift bag in another. You might guess that he's sorting by materials (metal, paper). Next, you sort objects into piles, and have him determine your rule.

## Homemade scale

"My paperweight is heavier than my gymnastics medal!" This balance scale lets your child explore measurement by comparing weights.

### Make a scale

Have your youngster tape two small paper cups to opposite ends of a ruler. Next, she should tape a toilet paper tube to a table (horizontally). Now ask her to balance the ruler on the tube.



### Weigh objects













What does your child want to weigh? Suggest that she gather small items like a toothbrush, a leaf, and a pencil. She can choose two at a time, predict which is heavier, and put one in each cup to find out. The object in the cup that drops down toward the table is heavier than the one in the cup that goes up. If the scale balances, their weights are equal.

*Idea:* As she tests the items, she could line them up from lightest to heaviest.

*continued*



**Instructions:** Do the activities on this bingo card in any order you choose. When you get five in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally), you've earned BINGO. Keep going until you've completed the entire card—that's Super BINGO!

<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>
<p>Read a book and create a model of its setting in a shoe-box. Suggestions: Use blocks for buildings, foil for bodies of water, and pom-poms for trees.</p>	<p>Estimate everything! How many steps are on the staircase? Keys on a computer keyboard? Count the steps or keys to check your estimates.</p> 	<p>Start a "list journal," or a notebook full of lists. A few ideas for entries: stuffed animals in your home, songs you can sing, sports you've played.</p>	<p>Gather small toys like a rubber duck and a superhero figurine. Use a flashlight to cast their shadows on paper. Trace around the shadows, then color in the outlines.</p> 	<p>Choose several board games, and mix and match the boards and playing pieces to invent a new game. Write down the rules, and teach family members to play. Be sure to return pieces to their original boxes.</p>
<p>Engineering challenge: Build the longest bridge you can between two stacks of books. Use supplies like index cards, plastic cups, and craft sticks.</p> 	<p>Write letters to friends, relatives, and teachers. You might include drawings, jokes, or even a favorite snack recipe.</p>	<p>Use a 4-ft. piece of yarn to form various shapes (hexagon, square, triangle). Arrange playing cards inside so no cards overlap. Which shape holds the most playing cards?</p> 	<p>Cut out pictures of objects from magazines and catalogs. Glue each one on a separate sheet of paper and staple the pages together to make a picture book. Write a story to go with the pictures.</p>	<p>Study your reflection in a mirror, and draw a self-portrait. Display your portrait on the fridge, and encourage family members to add their own.</p> 
<p>Solve this math puzzle:                  ● + ● = 10                  ● + ♥ = 8                  ♥ + ★ = 4                  ● + ★ = ?                  Now make up more puzzles like this for family members to solve.</p> <p><i>Answer: 6</i></p>	<p>There are more than 400 words in the word <i>recreation</i>. How many can you list? (Use the letters in any order.) Examples: <i>cat, trainer, race.</i></p>	<p><b>FREE SPACE</b></p> 	<p>Make an audio or video recording of yourself reading books aloud. If you use video, be sure to show your audience the pictures in the books. Share your read-alouds with friends and relatives.</p>	<p>Line up 8 water glasses. Measure 1 oz. water into the first glass, 2 oz. into the second, and so on. Now lightly tap the glasses with a spoon to play a tune. Use two spoons to make harmonies!</p> 
<p>Pitch a reading tent. Drape sheets over chairs, and get books, pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals. Then, snuggle up inside to read.</p> 	<p>Set up a chain reaction. Arrange household objects like dominoes, books, plastic bottles, and balls. Can you make the reaction last for one minute? Three minutes?</p>	<p>Write an acrostic poem for each family member. Each line begins with a letter in the person's name. So the first line of a poem for CAROL might be, "Cheerful like a sunny day."</p>	<p>Create your own museum. Choose a theme, perhaps Legos or nature. Arrange exhibits on a table, and label each one using a sticky note or an index card. Now give someone a tour.</p> 	<p>Use a "pointer" like a chopstick or ruler to read words around the house. Look on food packages, book covers, game boxes, clothing, and more.</p> 
<p>Write a joke book. Cut sheets of paper in half. On each piece, write and illustrate a joke that you know. Then, staple the pages together. After dinner, read your jokes aloud to your family.</p>	<p>Find one item in your home that starts with each letter of the alphabet—from <u>a</u>pple to zipper. Make a list of the objects you found.</p> 	<p>Look out a window, and graph what you see. You might count trees, bushes, birds, squirrels, cars, and houses. Make a column for each category and draw the items in even rows. What did you see the most of?</p> 	<p>Turn empty cardboard tubes into cute critters like butterflies, elephants, and penguins. Glue on yarn for hair or fur, googly eyes, pom-pom noses, and pipe cleaners for ears or antennae.</p>	<p>Create your own bingo board! Fill it with favorite activities that you can do all by yourself or that your family can do together.</p>

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