

April 24, 2020

WWW. SPRINGBLUFFPIRATES.COM

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Pirate News

Spring Bluff Parents & Students,

At home learning began on March 24 and will continue through May 15. This school year is certainly one like no other. We began in August with the typical academic calendar of 174 student attendance days. Sadly, due to inclement weather and COVID-19 school closure, students' seat time has been limited to 125 days this year.

As required through DESE, at home learning must continue through our regularly scheduled last attendance day to be forgiven for the days we have not be in session. More importantly though student learning has to continue to ensure students are better prepared for the next school year. This has certainly been a challenging time for everyone with a huge learning curve. in regards to at home learning for all involved. Classroom teachers and I appreciate parent support and patience to continue learning in this unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable format.

There are still so many unknowns at this time. I will continue to monitor Franklin County's response to reopening and reschedule kindergarten and 8th grade graduations when we are able to do so, safely. Information will be shared as soon as we have guidance from local and state officials. Again, when guidance is made available we will be releasing information on how students can retrieve personal belongings from school as well as return devices, textbooks, etc.

Your continued support and at home guidance to continue learning is critical. Thank you all so much for what you are doing to support our students, staff, and community.

Sincerely,
J. Jenkins

Meal Pick Up & Delivery

We are providing curbside pick up only on Monday's and Wednesday's from 10-12 in order to limit our volunteers' exposure. Meal sacks will have multiple days worth of meals in them. Please contact the school office or Mr. League at mleague@springbluffpirates.com if you have any questions. Thank you!

[Check springbluffpirates.com often for schedule updates!!](http://springbluffpirates.com)

This Week's Attachments:

- ◆ Home & School Connection
- ◆ Middle Years
- ◆ Nutrition Nuggets
- ◆ Reading Connection

Ways to Stay Informed this Year:



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Website: <http://www.springbluffpirates.com>

Pirate News

Spring Bluff Pirates



Message from American Heart Association:

Hello families. We are so grateful to all our Kids Heart Challenge Supporters and are working around the clock to ensure we're able to fully acknowledge all of their efforts. With schools across the country closed, we at AHA have made the difficult decision to delay our mailing of any thank you gifts for the time being. It is so important to us that we are able to recognize the hard work of our students and we don't want any items to get lost in the mail during this challenging time.

As schools reopen we will be in close contact with our program coordinators to determine the best timing to get our gifts to the schools. We absolutely want to recognize all our amazing students who have worked so hard to support our important mission.

With Heart,
The Kids Heart Challenge / AHA

Last Call for Raffle Tickets!!

Drawing May 7, 8 a.m.

Tickets and raffle money can be dropped at school between 8-2 p.m. on the following days: April 27 & 29, May 4 & 6.

The Educational Foundation will be raffling a Pit Boss Pro Series 1322 sq. in. Mahogany Pellet Smoker. Students who sell \$50 worth of raffle tickets will jump for bucks at a later date.

Donated by: Harmon Truck Service & Spring Bluff Bus Drivers.

April 7 Election Postponed!



Due to the COVID-19, pandemic, the April 7 election has been postponed until June 2.

The current Board of Education members will remain in place until the election occurs and the board reorganizes in June.

Please contact Pam Schlueter, Board of Education Secretary, if you have any questions.



School Board Candidate Filing

School board candidate filing ended, January 21. There are 5 candidates running for 3 open positions on the Spring Bluff R-XV School Board. The election will be held June 2.

Candidate are listed in order of filing.

1. Kurtis Reed
2. Jill Wagner, incumbent and current School Board President
3. Melissa Herron
4. Bradley Newman
5. David Schatz

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

April 2020



SHORT NOTES

Parents: Join the club!

It's never too late to get involved with the PTA or PTO at your youngster's school. You might sign up to help with a spring event, such as a car wash fundraiser or a teacher-student basketball game. You could also pitch in over the summer to help plan back-to-school activities for the fall.

Dealing with perfectionism

Some kids become frustrated if their work doesn't turn out "perfectly" on the first try. If this happens to your child, encourage him to think of his worksheet or drawing as a work in progress. He can go back and edit answers or tweak parts until he feels proud of his work.

DID YOU KNOW?

Waiting lists for popular library books can be long, so now's a good time for your youngster to start thinking about summer reading. Let her list books she'd like to read. Then, visit the library or help her check its website to see if any of the books have waiting lists and add her name to them now.

Worth quoting

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." *Winston Churchill*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What goes up but never comes down?

A: Your age!



Spring Bluff R-XV School
Mrs. Jeannie Jenkins, Superintendent

A sprinkle of kindness

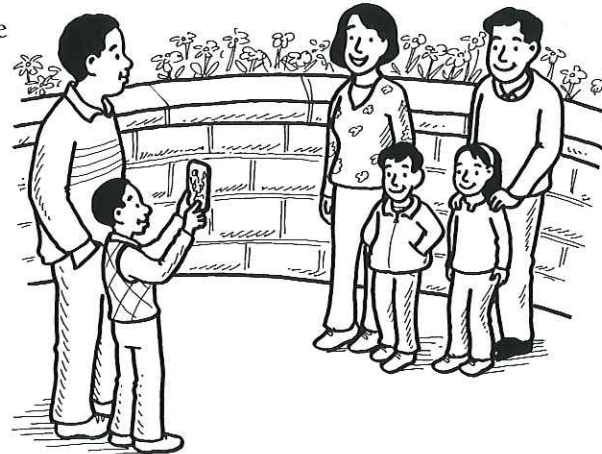
Kindness makes every place a better place, whether your child is in school, at home, or out and about. Inspire him to be kind with these ideas.

Be there for others

Is there a student in your youngster's class who seems lonely or an elderly neighbor who doesn't get out much? Suggest that your child seek out his classmate on the playground or in the cafeteria. Or you and your youngster could find out which board games the neighbor likes and invite him over to play one.

Pass it on

Teach your child about "paying it forward." When someone is kind to you (say, another driver pays your toll), tell your child about it. Then, ask him to think of ways to keep the kindness going by doing a kind act for another person. If the two of you notice people trying to



take their own photo, your youngster could offer to snap the picture.

Surprise with gifts

Giving handmade gifts to others "just because" is a sure way to brighten someone's day. Ask your child to come up with gifts he could make for someone else. He might create paper flowers for his aunt, design a bookmark for his brother, or write a poem for his grandpa. Then, help him follow through by delivering his gifts in person or mailing them.♥

Seven ways to ask about school

Want to get your child to talk about her day at school? Try asking questions that encourage more than a yes-or-no answer. Here are seven to start with.

1. What do you think I would have liked best about school today?
2. How would you describe your day to a pet?
3. What's your favorite paper in your backpack, and why?
4. Who did you play or work with today, and what did you do together?
5. What was the easiest thing you did today? The hardest?
6. What healthy foods did you eat at lunch?
7. What new words did you hear or read, and what do they mean?♥



Collect and learn

Whether your child has postcards on her bulletin board, a bucket of rocks on the patio, or a jar of sea-shells on her dresser, she's a collector! Encourage her to use her collection as a learning tool with these suggestions.

Writing. Let your youngster start a log to keep track of her collection. She can write a description of each item: "Uncle Phil sent me a postcard from his trip to St. Louis, Missouri. It has a picture of the Gateway Arch, the world's tallest arch."



her postcards. Or she might visit a geology website to identify rocks or read a children's encyclopedia to learn about sea animals with shells.♥

Math and science. Ask your child math questions about her collection. How many rocks does she have? How many more does she need before she has 10, 25, or 100? She could also classify the items, perhaps organizing sea-shells by color, texture, or size.

Research. Your youngster can learn more about the objects she collects by reading library books or kid-friendly websites. She could use an atlas to discover more about states or countries on

Playing on my own

No friends or siblings around to play with? No problem! Playing alone teaches your youngster to entertain himself, solve problems independently, and use his imagination. Consider these tips for helping him make the most of solo play:

- Have your child put together a basket of toys that he can play with alone. Good options include play dough, building blocks, jigsaw puzzles, and single-player games like Simon or Rush Hour.



- Share solo activities you enjoyed at his age. You might teach your youngster to play Solitaire, do yo-yo tricks, or make paper airplanes.

- Provide props for imaginary play, such as old clothes and accessories for dressing up, or take-out menus and catalogs for playing restaurant or store. Your child will have to be creative to play multiple roles—maybe he'll use two different hats and pretend he's two construction workers deciding how to dig a tunnel.♥



Staying safe online

Q: My daughter loves to download new apps and play online games. How can I make sure she stays safe?

A: One of the best ways to keep your daughter safe online is to be involved in her activities.

If she wants to use a new app, explore it together first. Is there a setting that prevents strangers from contacting her? Are there ads, and if so, are they ones you're okay with her seeing?

Once you approve an app, have your child choose a username that doesn't reveal her name, location, or age. For instance, PizzaFan123 is safer than ChicagoKid2011. If she needs a profile picture, help her find a cute animal photo or another image she likes rather than her own picture.

Then, create a rule that she may only play with people she knows in real life. And finally, set screen time limits so your youngster has plenty of opportunities to play and talk with people in real life.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Poetry month

April brings showers—and poems! Your youngster can celebrate National Poetry Month with these activities that encourage him to write and read poems.

Shared poems

Participate in Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 30—or any day. Let your youngster look in books and online for poems he'd like to carry with him and share with others. He could copy poems onto



index cards or write his own. He might read them to friends on the school bus, in the cafeteria, or on the playground.

Sidewalk verses

Have your child use chalk to write his own poems on the sidewalk. He could draw inspiration from spring, perhaps describing buzzing bees, blooming flowers, or chirping birds. He can leave his poem there for others to enjoy—until the rain washes it away.♥

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Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

Where in the world?

Sleuthing skills can help your child explore geography and current events. When a city, state, or country comes up in the news, challenge him to dig for little-known facts about it in books or online. He might be fascinated to find, for instance, that Minnesota's Mall of America is the size of 78 football fields.

Digital moods

Tweens may not be aware of how electronic devices affect their moods. Encourage your middle grader to notice how she feels when she's online. For instance, a virtual pottery-making app might be relaxing. But a drama-filled group chat could stress her out. Suggest that she stick to activities that make her feel good—online and in real life.

DID YOU KNOW?

April 22 is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

Your family can celebrate by adopting new planet-friendly habits. You could pack snacks in reusable containers and take regular silverware rather than plastic. Or save gas by having your tween walk or bike to school or friends' houses if possible.

Worth quoting

"If there is a book you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it." *Toni Morrison*

Just for fun

Q: How do you get a squirrel to like you?

A: Act like a nut!



Nonfiction reading: The real deal

What can your tween learn from nonfiction?

- A. Information to use in school
- B. How to reach personal goals
- C. Ways to handle tough situations
- D. All of the above

The answer? D! Here's how your child can take advantage of what nonfiction has to offer.

Explore school subjects

Suggest that your middle grader check out nonfiction library books related to topics she studies in school. She might find a travel guide to a place she's learning about in history or a book of fun chemistry experiments to try at home. Reading these books will put facts in context and deepen her understanding of the topics.

Learn new skills

Maybe your tween dreams of becoming a singer or wants to learn how to quilt. Visit the library, and let her find how-to books that will help. She could discover vocal exercises to improve her range or step-by-step quilting instructions with photos.



Gain perspective

A friendship dilemma, a divorce, the loss of a pet ... no matter what your child goes through, there's likely a book that can make a difference. Search the library database together, or ask a librarian for recommendations. Your child might read a self-help book for tweens or a biography of a famous person who faced a similar situation.

Bonus: Reading nonfiction will give your tween plenty of new things to talk about during conversations. 👍

Respect on-the-go

Being respectful in public teaches your child to interact with people in all parts of his life. Point out these ways to show respect:

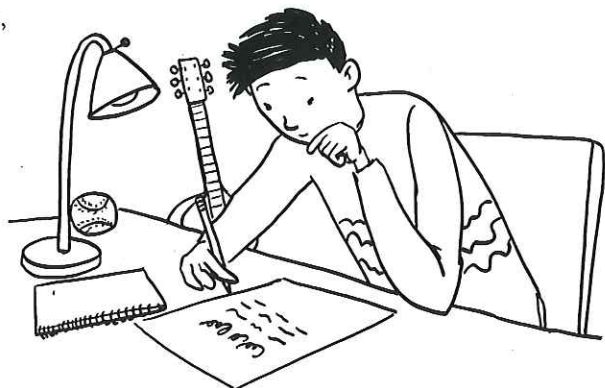
- When a server, cashier, or barber speaks to your middle grader, he should make eye contact and listen. Remind him to politely answer questions, such as whether he'd like water, rather than shrugging or saying, "I don't care."
- Encourage your tween to use mobile phones respectfully. If he must take a call in public, have him keep it quiet and quick, stepping outside if possible. Set an example by putting away your phone when you're out together. 👍



Problem-solving strategies

When your child faces a problem, is his first instinct to get upset—or to search for solutions? Give him tools to handle challenging situations with these three ideas.

1. Write a problem statement. Suggest that your tween describe the problem he's having, who it affects, and the benefits of solving it. ("I'm sometimes late to swim practice. This affects me,



my coach, and my teammates. By being on time, I won't get in trouble or let people down.") The written statement will give him something specific to focus on as he considers solutions.

2. Use a sounding board.

Discussing ideas with others may spark ideas your middle grader wouldn't think of alone. Friends or trusted adults might point out pros and cons of alternatives based on how they've solved similar problems.

3. Sleep on it. While your tween sleeps, his brain is busy organizing information. When he wakes up, he may be surprised that the answer is much clearer. If he's struggling to find a solution and the situation can wait, encourage him to go back to it a day or two later. 👍

Q & A Dangers of vaping

Q A couple of my friends recently found their kids vaping. How can I keep my daughter from trying e-cigarettes?

A Vaping has been on an alarming upswing among young people. Start by asking your tween what she has heard about vaping. Has anyone she knows tried it?

Then, tell your child that buying or using a vaping device is dangerous, as well as illegal for anyone under 21. Also, explain that e-cigarettes get young people hooked on nicotine. In fact, kids who try e-cigarettes are four times more likely to end up trying regular cigarettes.



Finally, keep an eye out for signs that your tween may be vaping. Devices often look like pens or flash drives, and they can be packaged to resemble snacks, candy, or juice boxes. Also, kids may carry them concealed in specially designed backpacks, hoodies, or phone cases. 👍



Parent to Parent Stay focused in spring

My son Sebastian has trouble doing school-work on nice days. I sometimes struggle to concentrate at work when I'd rather be outside, too, so I thought planning ways to enjoy the sunshine might help us both stay focused.

During the week, Sebastian does homework on the patio or at a picnic table in the park. For my part, I've held a few "walking meetings" with colleagues. We talk through projects while getting exercise outdoors.

Also, my son and I try to go outside more on the weekends. Sebastian and his friends played badminton in the backyard last Sunday. Then, he and I sat outside together—he worked on his engineering project while I caught up on work.

It's surprising the difference a little fresh air can make. We don't feel like we're missing out on nice weather, so we're able to buckle down and get our work done. 👍



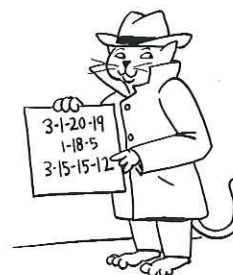
Brush up on spelling

Wordplay makes your tween a better speller, and it's fun! Have her grab a word list from class or a dictionary and try these activities.

Mix and match. Choose 10 long words to break into syllables. Write each syllable on a separate index card, and mix up all the cards. How many words can you create using syllables from different words? For instance, combine parts of *re-con-sti-tute* and *de-ac-ti-vate* to make

re-ac-ti-vate. Then, put the cards back together to spell the original words.

Crack the code. Assign a number to each letter of the alphabet (A = 1, B = 2, and so on, all the way to Z = 26). Have each person secretly write a word in "code," swapping numbers for letters. What does 19-15-22-5-18-5-9-7-14 spell? (Answer: *sovereign*.) Trade papers, and decode each other's words. *Bonus:* Can your child read the cat's message in the illustration to the left? 👍



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BEST BITES

Better ballpark choices

Baseball season is here! If you take your child out to a ball game, look for healthier concession-stand options. Examples include plain popcorn, grilled chicken strips



dipped in mustard, fresh fruit, and veggie wraps. Watching the game at home?

Let your youngster set up his own nutritious snack bar. *Tip:* Drink water rather than soda.

Take a homework break

When your child does homework, encourage her to take active breaks. A younger child may need a break every 20 minutes, while an older one might work for 45 minutes at a time. She could set a timer to remind herself. When the timer goes off, she can march in place, do jumping jacks, or walk up and down the stairs.

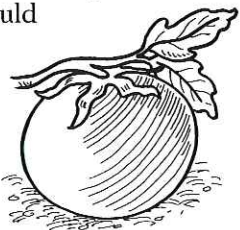
DID YOU KNOW?

Rhubarb is in season now, and it contains a lot of calcium and vitamin C. Since rhubarb is naturally tart, your child may enjoy it roasted and sweetened. Remove the leaves, cut into bite-sized pieces, drizzle with honey, and roast 5 minutes at 450°. Chill, then serve with strawberries.

Just for fun

Q: Why is a tomato round and red?

A: Because if it were long and green, it would be a cucumber!



Whole grains for health

Whole grains provide zinc, magnesium, B vitamins, and fiber—nutrients your growing child needs. Plus, they add many flavors and textures to meals. Get more whole grains into her diet with these ideas.

Track your grains

Help your youngster make half of her grains whole. Have her draw a slice of bread on brown paper, cut it out, and draw a line down the middle. She can label one half “Whole” and the other “Not whole.” Each time she eats a grain serving (one slice of bread or one cup of rice or pasta, for example), she lists it on the correct side. At the end of the day, have her count her grains.

Revamp recipes

Together, create new recipes for foods your child likes—swapping in whole grains. If she loves pizza, she could write a recipe for mini pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins. Her recipe for chicken nuggets might include crushed whole-grain cereal for the breading.



Now let her help you make the recipes for family meals.

Eat something new

Has your youngster ever had farro? How about barley or quinoa? Trying a new whole grain as a family—and incorporating it into something familiar—may make her more likely to eat it. For example, add farro to soups, toss cooked barley into salads, or put cooked quinoa into burritos. 🍌

Food-related field trips

Your youngster can learn about food—and get more steps in while walking around—with these family outings.

● **Visit a garden center.** Let your child pick seeds to plant in containers or a garden. Talk about how you can use the vegetables or herbs he'll grow. (“We could make yummy pasta sauce with fresh basil.”)

● **Attend a food festival.** Try a “taste of the town” event where you can sample many different foods. Or look for a festival dedicated to a specific food like watermelon or potatoes—your youngster will see the various ways it can be served. Maybe you'll find an international fair where you could eat foods from Scandinavia or Guatemala, for instance, and expose your child to other cultures. 🍌



Winning ways to support young athletes

Organized sports keep kids active and teach teamwork. But what is a parent's role? Use these three tips to help your child succeed in sports.

1. Be there. Attend your youngster's games or events as often as possible. Cheer on his efforts with encouraging words. Aside from snapping the occasional photo, try to avoid using your phone—your child will see that he has your full attention.



2. Encourage healthy eating.

Help your child pick out healthy snacks to keep in his gym bag. Good choices include oranges and whole-wheat crackers with hummus. Don't forget a water bottle! Also, the night before a game or meet, let him decide which lean protein, whole grain, and vegetable to have for dinner so he eats a nutritious, satisfying meal.

3. Focus on effort. Certainly congratulate your youngster when he succeeds (perhaps if he "sticks" his gymnastics floor routine or sinks a three-pointer in basketball). If he falls during a routine or misses a shot, you could say something like "I'm proud of you for bouncing back and trying hard until the end." ●

PARENT TO PARENT "Invent" a healthy cereal

It seemed like every week my son Juan would ask for a new cereal he saw advertised on TV. The boxes looked like fun, with cartoon or video-game characters, but they were full of sugary ingredients like marshmallows and chocolate chips.

I asked Juan which ingredients he thought a healthy cereal would have. He said maybe oats, fruit, and nuts. That gave me an idea. I suggested that he invent his own cereal and make a commercial for it. Juan wrote a script for an ad promoting a cereal he called Monkey's Banana Crunch. It included nutritious ingredients like raisins and baked banana chips.

After Juan practiced a few times, I filmed his commercial for him. He had a blast pretending to be a rain-forest ranger encouraging his family to eat the cereal. Now my plan is to keep helping Juan look past what's on a package and consider whether the food inside is actually good for him. ●



ACTIVITY CORNER Fruit and veggie games

Celebrate colorful produce with these games that encourage your child to run, hop, and throw.

Color Match. Let your child tape squares of different-colored construction paper to separate buckets. Then, have her write names of fruits and vegetables on 12 index cards. Take turns drawing a card (such as pumpkin) and tossing a beanbag into the matching bucket (orange). Score a point for each correct shot—high score wins.

Red Pepper, Green Pepper, Yellow Pepper. Play this version of Red Light, Green Light. Players stand at the start line, and you call out commands. ("Green pepper" = run toward the finish line, "red pepper" = stop, and "yellow pepper" = hop forward.) If they move the wrong way, they return to the start. The first player to cross the finish line wins. ●



IN THE KITCHEN Tasty picnic sides

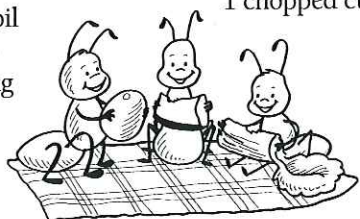
For your next picnic, skip the high-fat mayonnaise-based salads, and try these healthier options.

● **Waldorf fruit salad.** Stir together ½ cup plain Greek yogurt, 1 tbsp. honey, and 1 tbsp. orange juice. Mix with 1 chopped apple, 1 cup halved grapes, 1 cup diced celery, and 1 cup chopped walnuts.

● **Sesame noodles.** Boil 6 oz. whole-wheat spaghetti noodles according to package directions, drain, and set aside. In a blender, mix ½ cup creamy peanut

or sunflower seed butter, 1 tsp. minced ginger, 2 tbsp. rice vinegar, 2 tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce, 1 tbsp. sesame oil, 1 minced garlic clove, and 1 tsp. sweet chili sauce. Toss noodles with sauce.

● **Stuffed tomato salad.** Slice the tops off of 4 large tomatoes. Hollow them out, and mix the insides (seeds removed) with 1 cup cooked corn, 1 chopped cucumber (peeled), and 1 cubed avocado. Divide the mixture evenly among the tomatoes, drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with chopped fresh cilantro. ●



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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.
ISSN 1935-4630

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

April 2020

Spring Bluff Elementary School
Mrs. Jeannie Jenkins, Superintendent

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Bots: The Most Annoying Robots in the Universe* (Russ Bolts)

What happens when a pair of robots discover a camera that Earth launched into space and forgot about? They become reality stars and broadcast their lives, of course! Your youngster will laugh at their funny adventures in this graphic novel. The first book in the Bots series.

■ *Girl Running*

(Annette Bay Pimentel)

In 1966, women weren't allowed to run in the Boston Marathon. Men said women weren't strong enough to finish the long race. But that only made Bobbi Gibb more determined to prove them wrong. This picture book biography portrays the determination of the first woman to run the race.

■ *The Lost Stone (The Kingdom of Wrenly)* (Jordan Quinn)

Clara and Lucas are unlikely friends who live in the magical kingdom of Wrenly. When the queen's emerald goes missing, the pair embark on a journey and meet everybody from fairies to wizards along the way. Book one in the Kingdom of Wrenly series.

■ *Skip Through the Seasons* (Stella Blackstone)

This nonfiction book shows children enjoying the outdoors in each season. They ice skate in winter, play in spring rain, build sand castles in summer, and rake autumn leaves. The final pages are filled with facts about the calendar and seasonal changes. (Also available in Spanish.)



Mix up family reading time

Enjoying books as a family every day can help your child grow as a reader. Try these suggestions for adding variety to reading time—and maximizing his learning.

Vary the format

Give your youngster chances to read aloud, listen to others read, and read independently. Some days, take turns reading books to each other. Other times, listen to an audiobook together, or have everyone read on their own. *Idea:* Include extended family by inviting them over to read or arranging a video chat.

Discover different materials

Expose your child to a wide variety of reading material with this idea. Make a “bingo” card by dividing a sheet of paper into five rows and five columns. In each square, help your youngster write the name of something to read. *Examples:* fairy tale, poem, recipe, biography, graphic novel, cereal box, newspaper, magazine. Each time your family



reads something on the card, your child gets to color the square.

Explore in depth

Reading several related books lets your youngster dig deeper into a topic or notice similarities between books by the same author. Brainstorm a list of themes like Science Saturday or Roald Dahl Week. Take your list to the library and check out books to match. As you read each book, compare it to the ones you read before.♥

On-the-go storytelling

Boost your youngster's language skills and creativity by telling stories while you run errands. Use these ideas for inspiration:

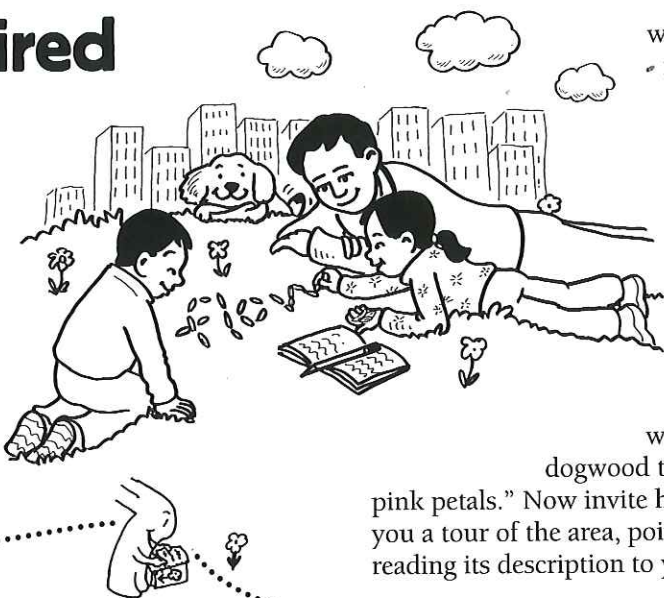
- Ask your child to choose a person or an animal who would make an interesting main character in a story. At the pet store, she might begin a story starring a colorful fish in an aquarium. She can give him a name and describe an adventure that he and his tankmates go on.
- Stuck in line at the post office or bank? Use it as the setting for a story you tell together. You might say, “Once upon a time, a little girl visited the post office.” Your youngster could add, “She wanted to mail herself to Grandpa, but there weren't enough stamps.”♥



Writing inspired by nature

Spring is perfect for a walk in the park or a romp in the backyard. While your youngster explores the great outdoors, encourage her to practice writing, too. Here's how.

Use natural objects. Help your child gather pebbles, flower petals, twigs, and other items from the ground. She can "write"



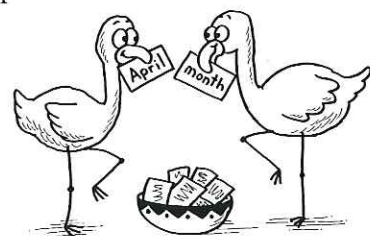
words by arranging the objects to form letters. She might write her name with blades of grass, use twigs and stones to form her spelling words, or create a message for you using flower petals. ("I love you!") Let her "save" her writing by taking a picture of it.

Make a field guide. In a small notebook, have your youngster draw and color plants or animals she sees outside. Then, she could write about each one. *Example:* "Our dogwood tree blooms in the spring. It has pink petals." Now invite her to use her field guide to give you a tour of the area, pointing out each plant or animal and reading its description to you.♥

Fun with Words Proper nouns

This game will help your youngster identify proper nouns—names of people, places, and things that are always capitalized.

On 10 separate slips of paper, have your child write proper nouns (*Jack, Maryland, April*). Then, he should make 10 more slips, each with a common noun (*boy, state, month*) to match each proper one.



Mix up all 20 slips in a bowl, and take turns drawing two. If they match (*Chicago and city, Mrs. Jones and teacher*), keep both, and set them aside. If not, keep either one, and return the other slip to the bowl. As you draw more slips, you may also keep any noun that matches one you previously saved.

When all the slips have been drawn, the player with the most pairs of nouns wins.♥

OUR PURPOSE

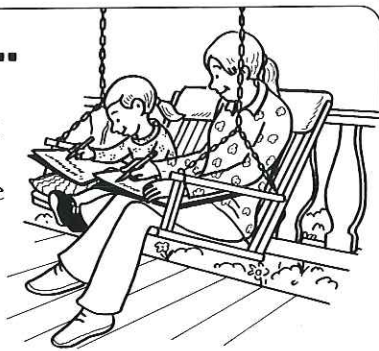
To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.
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Parent to Parent I like it because ...

My granddaughter Danielle was given a writing assignment that inspired the two of us to learn more about each other. She was asked to write one thing she liked and one thing she didn't, then explain her opinions. I knew she loved unicorns, but I had no idea she didn't like the color orange.

So I suggested that we each list five things we like and five things we don't, and write our reasons. We traded lists and took turns reading them aloud. I discovered that Danielle enjoys rainy days because they're cozy, and she learned that I've loved rock music ever since I started playing the drums in my teens.

This was a good way for Danielle to practice opinion writing and for us to bond. Now when she visits, I know not to put marshmallows in her hot chocolate—but cinnamon is just fine!♥



Q&A Questions for better comprehension

Q I want to talk to my son about the books he reads. What kinds of questions should I ask him?

A Asking your child questions about books gets him thinking about what he reads, improving his comprehension skills. Try choosing questions that require more than a one-word answer. For example, rather than "Who is the main character?" you could ask, "What lesson did the main character learn?"

Also, encourage your youngster to dig deeper by asking questions with answers that aren't in the book. *Examples:* "What did you like best about the book?" "What would you have done differently if you were the king?"

Finally, suggest that your son pose his own questions. He could get your opinion of a book or ask about a part that confused him. Your answers will give him new perspectives and help him understand what he reads.♥



Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

April 2020

Spring Bluff Elementary School
Mrs. Jeannie Jenkins, Superintendent

Book Picks



■ Sparks! (Ian Boothby)

Charlie and August are two cats who are anything but ordinary. Every day, they hide inside a mechanical dog while they save lives. Join them in this graphic-novel adventure as they try to stop an alien named Princess from taking over the world.



■ Inventions That Could Have Changed the World ... But Didn't!

(Joe Rhatigan)

This nonfiction book gives readers a glimpse into some of the wacky inventions people request patents for. Imagine a TV you can smell, an alarm clock that lunges you out of bed, and a screeching doll, to name a few. Find out what could have been in this hilarious read.



■ Stella Diaz Has Something to Say

(Angela Dominguez)

Stella has a lot to say, but she's still learning English and is nervous about speaking in front of her classmates. This year in school she wants to make a new friend and compete in the spelling bee, and she has to give an oral presentation. Follow along as Stella gains courage and finds her voice.

■ Poetry for Kids: William Shakespeare

(William Shakespeare, edited by Marguerite Tassi)

Introduce youngsters to Shakespeare in this illustrated volume. The book includes excerpts from 35 well-known poems, verses, and sonnets, with definitions and explanations.



Writing warm-ups

Creative writing is like any other skill—it gets easier with practice. Your child can limber up her imagination and stretch her writing muscles with these fun ideas.

Collect characters

Let your youngster cut pictures of people from old magazines and newspapers. Then, she can glue each one onto an index card and write a “character sketch” (description) on the back. Suggest that she include lots of details: the person’s name, his personality traits, and what’s important to him. She’ll have a cast of characters to use in her creative writing assignments.



Ask questions

This exercise is good for brainstorming plot twists. Give your child a small notebook, and encourage her to jot down “What if?” questions whenever they strike her. For example, while working on her science fair project, she might think, “What if a science experiment made the whole school invisible?” She can use her questions as inspiration for stories.

Pick a point of view

Have your youngster keep a list of story starters from different points of view. She might imagine how a ballerina feels before a recital—and how her ballet slippers might feel. (“We were nervous as we warmed up for the big performance.”) *Tip:* Suggest that your child write the same story from a different object’s or character’s point of view. How does the story change? ■

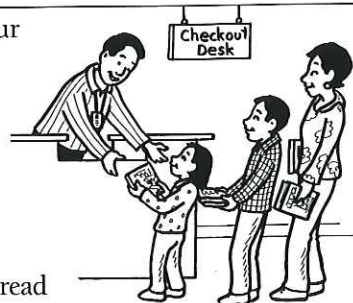
Use your library

Tap into your hometown library to foster your youngster’s love of reading and find free family activities. Consider these ways to put library trips into your regular routine.

1. Make time. Pick a day that works for your family. You might visit on the third Saturday of each month or every other Friday afternoon.

2. Make each trip different. Your child might read magazines on one trip and explore music or videos on another. Ask your youngster what he would like to dig into each time.

3. Make it a family affair. Check the library bulletin board or website for events your whole family would enjoy. Keep an eye out for club meetings, storytelling, concerts, and movies. ■



Reading + community service

Encourage your child to share his love of reading with others, and he'll learn valuable lessons in generosity and compassion. Try book-related community service projects like these:

- Ask your youngster to decorate cardboard-box "donation stations" where people can drop off gently used books. He can ask businesses or places of worship to



display the boxes. Together, collect the books and donate them to a homeless shelter.

- Your child might invite friends along to read to seniors at a nearby assisted-living home. *Note:* Make sure an adult can chaperone.
- Turn outgrown picture books into audiobooks for younger children. Have your youngster record a story and give the tape and book to a day care center.

- Host a different kind of birthday party. Ask guests to bring children's books for your child to donate to the pediatric floor of your local hospital. 📖

How many words?

Good writers vary the lengths of their sentences so the writing is more interesting and flows well. By making a simple graph, your youngster can see how her sentences stack up. Here's how.

1. Have her choose two or three paragraphs from one of her stories, reports, or essays. Let your child draw a bar graph showing the length of each sentence. If the first sentence has five words, she would draw a bar that is five squares tall.
2. Your youngster can compare the bars to analyze her writing.



If they are all about the same height, suggest that she edit her paragraph. She might use conjunctions (*and, but, or*) to combine two short sentences. Or she could break a long sentence into two shorter ones.

3. She can graph her revised paragraphs to see the difference—and then read the before and after versions to hear the improvement! 📖



Fun with Words

Singular to plural

Does your youngster get confused about how to make some words plural? Play this card game to help her remember.

Together, think of 20 words with tricky plurals (*fungus/fungi, shelf/shelves, deer/deer, potato/potatoes*). *Tip:* You can find lists of irregular plurals online.

Have your child write each singular word on one side of an index card and its plural on the other. Shuffle the cards and lay them out in rows on a table with the singular words faceup.

To play, take turns reading a card and, without looking, spell the plural version of the word. If you're right, keep the card, and go again. If not, return the card to the table, and it's the other person's turn. When all the cards have been collected, the winner is the player with the most. 📖



Parent 2 Parent

Series books build comprehension

As a child, I read all of the books in my favorite science fiction series. So when my son David showed an interest in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* books, I encouraged him to keep on reading. Every time he finishes a book, we stop by the library or a bookstore for the next one.

Although I knew I loved my books, I didn't know at the time that series books help readers build confidence and

comprehension skills. The familiar characters and words are helping my son become a faster reader, and he feels successful when he finishes each one.

I've also discovered some terrific adult series, and David and I are enjoying reading our books side by side. He says that after he finishes the first series, he's going to get started on the *Secret Coders* series by Gene Luen Yang. 📖



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