

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2019

Oxford Public Schools

Title I

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites



■ **My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks: And Other Funny Family Portraits** (Hanoch Piven)  
A little girl decides that the portrait she drew in school doesn't show how special her family is, so she gets creative. See how she shows her dad is "as fun as a party favor" and her baby brother is "as sweet as candy."



■ **About Birds: A Guide for Children/ Sobre los pájaros: Una guía para niños** (Cathryn Sill)



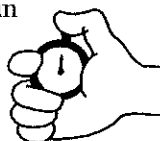
Most birds fly, but others swim or run. This nonfiction picture book, with both English and Spanish text, lets readers discover the lives of different birds. It's also a handy field guide for identifying birds.

■ **Pedro, First-Grade Hero** (Fran Manushkin)

First grade is full of fun for Pedro. These four short stories describe Pedro's exploits as he collects bugs for science, competes to become a soccer goalie, starts a mystery club, and runs for class president. The first book in the Pedro series.

■ **Me Counting Time: From Seconds to Centuries** (Joan Sweeney)

In one second, your child could blink her eyes. And in one minute, she might be able to write a party invitation. This book presents examples that tie measurements of time to concepts that young readers will understand. Your youngster can follow along as the narrator describes ways she measures time.



## A love of nonfiction!

Where can your child explore favorite topics like animals and outer space, find fascinating facts, and learn new vocabulary? In the pages of nonfiction books! Try these ideas.

### Compare fiction and nonfiction

Together, read a nonfiction book about a storybook character your youngster loves (say, a sloth). Then, ask her which parts of the story are realistic or unrealistic, based on what she learned from the nonfiction book. She might say that real sloths do look like they're smiling, but she couldn't actually have one as a pet like the girl in the story does.

### Collect facts

"A day on Venus is longer than a year on Venus!" Suggest that your child fill a special binder with interesting facts like this from nonfiction books. She could label



each page with a topic ("Outer space," "Sports"). As she reads more nonfiction, she'll add more and more facts.

### Discover new words

As you read nonfiction with your youngster, she'll find words that are fun to say—and build background knowledge in history, science, and other subjects. Point out unfamiliar words like *galaxy*, *pueblo*, or *vertex*, and encourage her to say them aloud and try to figure out what they mean.♥

## Pasta punctuation

A macaroni noodle makes a cute comma, and a penne noodle plus a wagon wheel is a good exclamation point! Use this pasta-licious activity to help your youngster practice using punctuation correctly.

On a big strip of paper, write a sentence for your child in giant letters, leaving out the punctuation (I love macaroni and cheese said Sam). Now have him glue uncooked noodles where the punctuation marks should go. He could use one macaroni noodle for the comma after "cheese," two pairs of ziti noodles for the quotation marks before "I" and after "cheese," and a wagon wheel for the period following "Sam."♥



# Write stories together

When you and your child write stories together, that's called *interactive writing*. It's also called fun! Try these two suggestions. They'll help him write more complex stories and use bigger words than he might by himself.

**1. Create a board game.** Ask your youngster to call out random events (meet a robot, find a treasure, visit a farm). Write each one on a separate sticky note, and let him arrange the notes to make a game board path. Take turns rolling a die and moving a token along the path—using the events you land on to write a story. (“Once upon a time, Kevin met a tall green robot.” “The robot led him to a secret

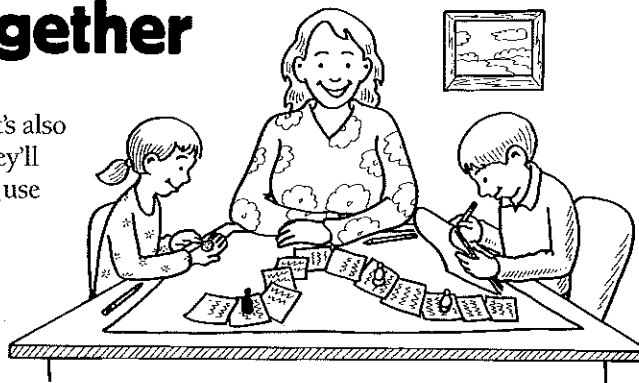


photo shows a toy pirate ship, your child could write, “Nate the pirate set sail with his purple parrot.” If the next picture is of a lemon, you might add, “They landed on a beautiful island with lemon trees.” Finish the story using the last picture.♥

treasure.”) Have your child write down the story as you go and then read it to you!

## 2. Hang a story string.

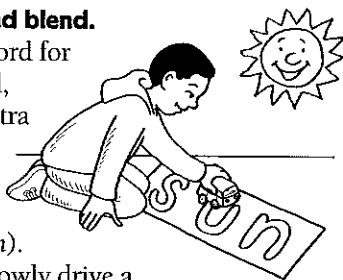
Help your youngster cut a dozen photos from magazines, catalogs, and advertising circulars. Hang a piece of string along a wall, and have him tape the pictures to it. Now make up a story based on the photos. If the first

## What's that word?

Breaking words into sounds and putting them back together is one strategy your youngster can use to decode words. Help him practice with these tips.

### • Drive and blend.

Write a word for your child, leaving extra space between the letters (s u n). Let him slowly drive a toy car across the word, stopping on each letter to say its sound (“s-uh-n”). Next, have him race the car across the word, blending the sounds as he goes (“sun”).



**• Listen and write.** Say each individual letter sound in a word. For flag, you would say “fl,” “a,” and “g.” Your youngster can write each letter as he hears its sound. Can he blend the sounds of the letters he has written and figure out your word? Now swap roles.♥

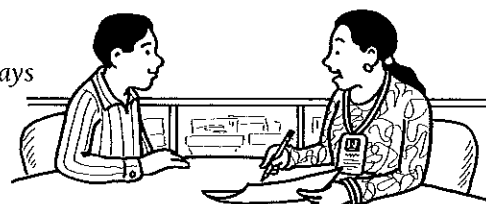
## Q&A Is it dyslexia?

**Q** My kindergartner often says *aminal instead of animal, or pasghetti for spaghetti. My friend says that's a symptom of dyslexia. What should I do?*

**A** Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that leads to reading difficulties. Struggling with spoken language, such as mixing up syllables in longer words, can be an early symptom of dyslexia that shows up before a child learns to read. But it could also be a normal part of your child's language development.

Tell her teacher what you've noticed, and ask whether your youngster has other symptoms of dyslexia. These include difficulty with rhyming, learning the alphabet, and making the connection between letters and sounds.

Also let the teacher know if you have a family history of dyslexia, since the condition is sometimes inherited. If the teacher is concerned, she will refer your child to the school's speech-language pathologist or another appropriate specialist on the staff.♥



## Fun with Words Over, under, and through

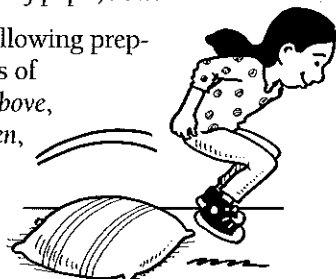
Play this game of Simon Says to help your child understand common prepositions like *over*, *under*, and *through*.

**Materials:** pencil, slips of paper, bowl

Together, write the following prepositions on separate slips of paper: *around*, *against*, *above*, *behind*, *on*, *beside*, *between*, *over*, *under*, *inside*, *outside*, *with*, *up*, *down*, and *through*. Mix up the slips in a bowl.

Pull slips from the bowl, one at a time, and use them to tell your youngster how to move. Say “Simon says” before some instructions. *Examples:* “Simon says, ‘Hold your right knee *with* your left hand’” or “Simon says, ‘Jump *over* the pillow.’”

The round ends when you run out of slips or your child does something Simon didn't say to do (“Put your hands *between* your knees”). Then, return the slips to the bowl, and let her be Simon.♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5648

# Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

February 2019

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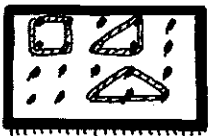


## TOOLS & TIDBITS

### Geoboard geometry

Explore shapes with this homemade geoboard.

Help your child press pushpins into a bulletin board in evenly spaced rows and columns, perhaps 5 x 5 or 10 x 10. She can wrap colorful yarn around the pins to make geometric shapes, perhaps four pins to make a square or three for a triangle.



### An engineering journal

Inspire your child to think like an engineer. In a notebook, he could draw or write project ideas. Explain that engineers aim to solve problems like how to keep people warmer in winter (say, by designing better coats). Maybe he'll draw a puffy coat with gloves attached, for example.

### Web picks

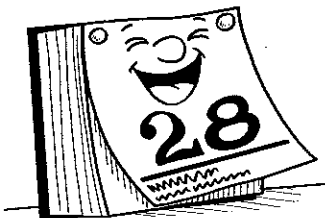
At [ictgames.com/resources.html](http://ictgames.com/resources.html), your youngster can put leaves in order for a caterpillar to munch on, save odd- and even-numbered dragon eggs, and more.

Your child will find experiments like growing edible crystals, creating bubbles in liquid, and making fossils at [scholastic.com/kids/books/the-magic-school-bus/](http://scholastic.com/kids/books/the-magic-school-bus/).

## Just for fun

**Q:** Which month has 28 days?

**A:** All of them!



## Groundhog Day fun

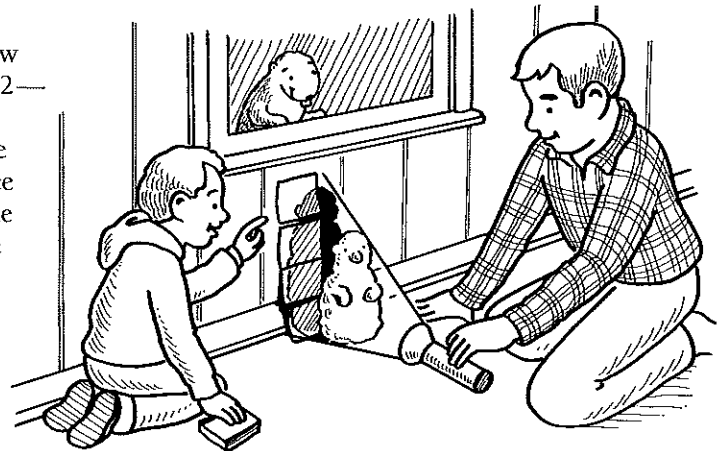
A groundhog named Phil looks for his shadow every year on February 2—but your child can find shadows any day! These activities let him practice measurement skills as he learns about the science of shadows.

### Blocking light

Help your youngster understand what makes a shadow by testing different types of objects. Let him hold a book, sunglasses, and a clear glass under a bright lamp. What does he notice about the shadows they cast (or don't)? He'll see a dark shadow from the book, a dim one from the sunglasses, and no shadow from the glass. The answer? Solid objects block light—and make the best shadows!


### A growing shadow

Encourage your child to sculpt a play dough groundhog and measure its shadow. In a dark room, shine a flashlight on the groundhog while your youngster lines up a column of sticky notes on its shadow. Have him count the



notes. How could he make the shadow taller or shorter? Suggest that he experiment by moving the groundhog closer to the flashlight (the shadow grows taller) and farther away (it gets shorter).


### Human sundial

Does your youngster know that shadows helped ancient people tell time? On a sunny day, he can find out how. Each hour through the day, have him stand in the same spot while you trace around his shadow with chalk and he marks the time. At the end of the day he'll have a clock formed by his shadow appearing in different locations as the Earth turned. 

## Floating fruit

Fruit is a handy tool for exploring *density*. Here's how. Have your youngster fill a large bowl with water. Then, she can examine different fruits (apple, orange, lemon, banana, strawberry, grape) and predict which ones will float.

Let your child test her predictions by putting the fruits in the water, one at a time. She may be surprised that a heavy apple floats while a lightweight grape sinks!

Explain that fruits that are *porous* (contain air pockets), such as apples, float because they're less *dense* (the *molecules*, or tiny particles, inside are more loosely packed together). Fruits without air pockets, like grapes, sink because they're *denser* (the molecules are more tightly packed). 

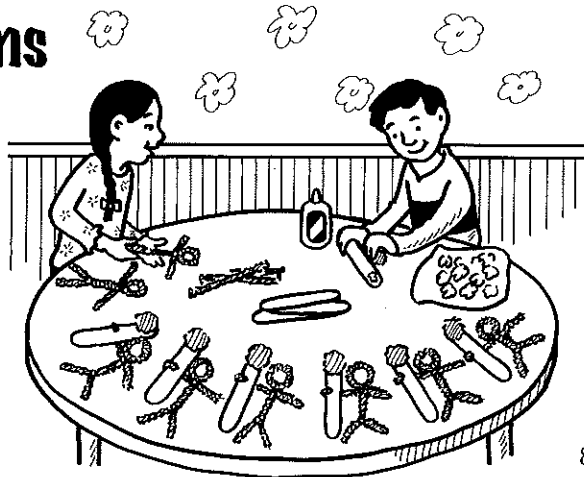


# Artsy story problems

Arts and crafts projects are a great way to help your child visualize—and solve—story problems. Try these.

- Seven bluebirds perched on a rooftop. Three redbirds joined them. How many birds were there in all?

Let your youngster make a mini book by cutting a sheet of paper into fourths and stapling the pieces together. She can write a title on the cover (“Birds on the Roof”) and draw one step of the problem on each page (7 bluebirds on a roof on the first page, 3 redbirds beside them on the next page). The last



make 6 balloons by gluing pompoms to craft sticks. Help her match one balloon to each kid—she’ll see that the clown needs 2 more balloons ( $8 - 6 = 2$ ).

page is for the number sentence:  $7 + 3 = 10$ . Now invite her to “read” her book to you.

- A clown had six balloons. Eight kids wanted a balloon. How many more balloons does the clown need?

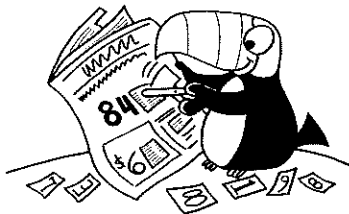
Suggest that your child use craft supplies for this problem. Perhaps she’ll twist pipe cleaners to create 8 stick figures representing the children. Then, she could



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Newspaper math

When my son Marcus was putting newspapers into the recycling bin, he began reading numbers in the sports headlines. I mentioned this to my sister, who is a teacher, and she gave me ideas for using the newspaper to help Marcus build more math skills.



First, she said Marcus might cut numbers from the newspaper and glue them in order on poster board. So far he has found numbers in news articles, the weather report, and the movie listings. My sister also said Marcus could cut out words containing different numbers of letters (3, 4, 5) and glue them onto separate pages labeled with the numbers.

Marcus is having a great time with his newspaper activities, and I’m glad he’s practicing what he’s learning in school!

## MATH CORNER

### Greater than, less than

Your youngster will build number sense by creating and playing this game to explore *greater than* and *less than*.

Have her make two sets of index cards, each with stickers or drawings representing the numbers 1–12. Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.

To start each round, players take a card without looking at it. On “Go,” everyone flips over their cards onto a table and tries to slap the card that has the most stickers. The person who slaps the correct card first takes all the cards. For example, if one player turns over a card with 8 stickers, another flips one with 6, and a third player’s card has 4, everyone would try to slap the 8 card. If there’s a tie, skip that turn and play again. The player with the most cards at the end wins. Then, play again—but this time, slap the cards with fewest stickers.



## SCIENCE LAB

### Plant a sponge garden

This indoor garden experiment lets your child observe the effect of sunlight on plants.

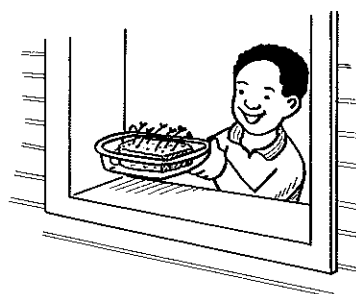
**You’ll need:** tablespoon, grass or other fast-growing seeds, two shallow containers, measuring cup, water, two sponges

**Here’s how:** Have your youngster spoon 1 tbsp. of seeds into each container. He should soak them in warm water overnight and drain off the water in the morning. Ask him to put a sponge in

each container, wet each sponge with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water, and divide the seeds equally on top. Now he can set one container in a sunny window and the other in a dark cabinet, and water both daily.

**What happens?** In a few days, tiny sprouts emerge on the sponges. The sprouts in the sun keep growing, but the ones in the dark will die.

**Why?** Plants use sunlight to make their food. While seeds can sprout without the sun, they need light to grow and become mature plants.



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www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1942-910X