

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Baldwin-Whitehall School District

Cook up some reading and math success

What simple daily activity involves reading and math? Cooking! And it's something you and your child can do together.

When you prepare a dish:

- **Take turns reading the recipe.** Ask your child to read the list of ingredients aloud, for example, while you collect them.
- **Let your child measure.** Set out measuring cups and spoons and teach your child how to use them.
- **Use math terms.** Say things like, "We need to *add* sugar," "Let's *divide* that into *quarters*" or "That's *half* of what we need."
- **Make more—or less.** Take an uncomplicated recipe and double—or halve—it. Do the math together. How many people will it serve?



"The greatest gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind."

—Elizabeth Hardwick

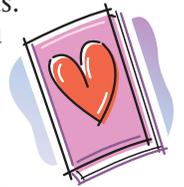
Descriptive words make your child's writing more interesting

People, places and things come alive when writers use descriptive words. Here's a fun way to give your child practice writing interesting sentences:

1. **Write several short sentences** on a piece of paper. For example: "The dog ran to get the ball." "The cat lay on the window sill."
2. **Ask your child to enhance** each sentence by adding some adjectives and adverbs. Encourage her to use a thesaurus to replace some words, too.
3. **Have your child read** her new sentences out loud. For example: "The *huge yellow* dog ran *quickly* to *fetch* the *red* ball." "The *fat striped* cat *lounged* on the *large sunny* window sill."

Ask questions about what your child is reading

To show your support and interest in reading, ask your child questions about the things he reads. Ask, "What page are you on?" "Who's the main character?" "How did you pick that book?" Pay attention to his answers. Does he seem to be enjoying the book? Does it sound like he understands it? Find ways to help if needed.



Sound effects increase attention

Here's an engaging way to help your child think about stories you read aloud: Make an audiobook, and have her add sound effects. While you record the story, your child can create thunder or wail like a siren.

Listening carefully will help her add the right noises—and later, she'll have fun hearing the results!



Make words meaningful to help your child recall information

To help your child remember what he reads, show him how to make words memorable.

Encourage your child to:

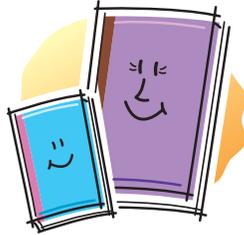
- **Draw pictures** that represent new or difficult words.
- **Use mnemonic devices** to remember lists or spelling words.
- **Add excitement.** If he's learning about another country, suggest he learn a traditional song from that country.



Make the most of your library visits

Encourage your child to take full advantage of all that the library has to offer. Try some of these activities during your next trip to the library:

- **Have a scavenger hunt.** Write down a list of facts that your child should look up, such as Thomas Jefferson's birthday, the tallest mountain in the world and the capital of Thailand. Help your child learn to navigate the reference section of the library.
- **Check out the news.** Grab a newspaper and an atlas. Locate the places where news events are happening around the world.
- **Explore different resources.** Does your library have a genealogy room? What about a special section with information on your town's history? Check out these parts of the library together.



Have your child read a wide variety of books

Encourage your child to read about different people, places and things. And tell him not to worry: He doesn't have to finish a book if he doesn't like it.

Reading different kinds of books will help your child discover new interests and ideas. And he'll be strengthening his reading skills in the process!



Introduce your child to the world of poetry

There are countless types of poetry. Explore several of them with your child!

First, read a few books of poetry together. Notice elements of each poem such as the rhythm of words, repetition or the location of line breaks.

Then, experiment with reading and writing different types of poems, including:

- **Haiku.** This Japanese form of poetry consists of three lines, with a specific number of syllables on each line.
- **Song lyrics.** Have your child write down the lyrics to a favorite song, then compare the structure of the lyrics to that of some of the poems she's read.



For lower elementary readers:

- **Looking at Lincoln** by Maira Kalman (Nancy Paulsen Books). Follow along as a young girl researches Abraham Lincoln's early life, political career and more.
- **I Stink!** by Kate and Jim McMullan (Weston Woods). In this audiobook, listen to the sounds of jazz and the city as a garbage truck eats trash while people sleep.



For upper elementary readers:

- **Black and White** by David Macaulay (HMH Books for Young Readers). Four different stories are interwoven in this story—or are they? Can your child make sense of this unusual book?
- **Fort** by Cynthia DeFelice (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Two friends spend a summer building a fort and protecting a boy from bullies.



Q: My first-grader's teacher says I should not worry about misspelled words in writing homework. Won't that affect my child's ability to write—and read—well later on?

A: When children first begin to write, they use *invented spelling*. They write words the way they sound.

When they don't have to worry about spelling, kids are more likely to write freely and think writing is fun. As children get older, learning to spell correctly is important. In the meantime, continue to practice reading correctly spelled words with your child.

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

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The 2017–2018

BUILDING READERS

Book List

Recommended Books for Elementary School Children

The Misadventures of Sweetie Pie by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). A hamster's adventures begin when he is taken home from the pet store. Sweetie Pie experiences a number of different owners and homes before he is taken to a school, where even more new things occur. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Robot Zot! by Jon Scieszka (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers). When Robot Zot finds himself in a kitchen on Earth, he must fend off various machines and robots—such as the blender and the toaster. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

President of the Whole Fifth Grade by Sherri Winston (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers). Brianna Justice is determined that the only way she will achieve her dreams is to become the president of her class at Orchard Park Elementary. She sets to work tirelessly ... until a new girl comes to school and challenges Brianna in the election. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Dear Tabby by Carolyn Crimi (HarperCollins). Tabby D. Cat is an advice columnist who helps other pets in need. Tabby offers advice to animals everywhere, from a spoiled cat whose owners continually dote on him to a hamster who is stuck on a hamster wheel. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

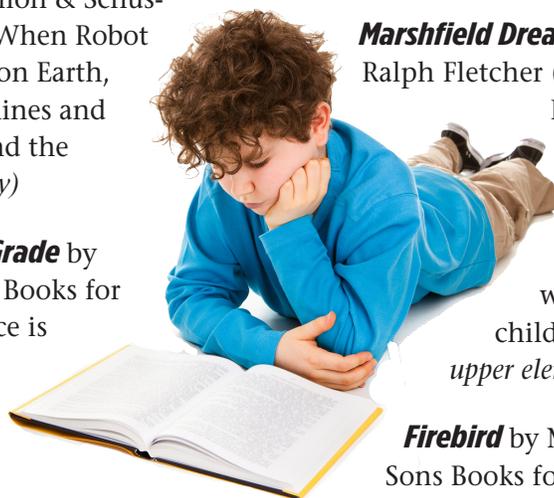
Teddy & Co. by Cynthia Voigt (Alfred A. Knopf). Teddy and the rest of a group of toys live together and take care of each other. As he wakes each morning, Teddy looks out the window and dreams of living outside. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Sector 7 by David Wiesner (Clarion Books). While visiting the Empire State Building, a boy befriends a cloud, who takes him on a journey to see where clouds are made. There, the boy devises some unique clouds. Readers can add their own interpretations to this award-winning wordless picture book. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Marshfield Dreams: When I Was a Kid by Ralph Fletcher (Square Fish). Author Ralph Fletcher grew up in Marshfield, Massachusetts, as the oldest of nine children. In this poignant memoir, he tells funny, sad and heart-warming stories about his childhood adventures. (*biography, upper elementary*)

Firebird by Misty Copeland (G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers). In this book based on her own life, ballerina Misty Copeland speaks to a young African American ballet student, offering encouragement and motivation in a difficult field. The advice given by Copeland reflects the famous ballet by Igor Stravinsky, *The Firebird*. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Blackie: The Horse Who Stood Still by Christopher Cerf (Welcome Books). Although Blackie did not run around with the other horses, he managed to make himself quite useful and well known—he had a career as a rodeo horse, he lived at Yosemite National Park, and more. What Blackie enjoyed most, however, was stopping to take in all that was around him. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)



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Crunch by Leslie Connor (Katherine Tegen Books). Dewey’s parents leave him and his siblings in charge of the family store, The Bike Barn, while they’re away. But when circumstances delay his parents’ return, Dewey’s responsibility to his family is greater than ever. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

Meow: Cat Stories from Around the World by Jane Yolen (HarperCollins Publishers). Cats are found in folktales and fables worldwide. This collection includes “The King of the Cats” from Germany and Britain, “Why Tiger is Angry at Cat” from Burma and “Rambé and Ambé,” from Tibet (*folktale, lower elementary*)

The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors by Drew Daywalt (Balzar + Bray). Ever wonder about the origins of the game Rock Paper Scissors? In this hilarious book, readers will learn the true story of the legendary characters behind the game. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

The Potato Chip Puzzles: The Puzzling World of Winston Breen by Eric Berlin (Puffin Books). Winston Breen is a puzzle expert. When he and his friends are invited to a puzzle contest at a local factory, Winston sets out to prove he’s the champion of puzzling. Readers will enjoy solving the puzzles along with Winston. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

One Giant Leap by Robert Burleigh (Philomel Books). In July of 1969, the spaceships *Eagle* and *Columbia* set out into outer space. While the command module *Columbia* orbited around, the *Eagle* was headed for the moon. Illustrated with beautiful paintings, this book offers a step-by-step look as the first astronauts set foot on the moon. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)

Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie and Radium by Carla Killough McClafferty (Farrar Straus and Giroux). From her youth in Poland in the late 1800s through her years learning at the Sorbonne in Paris, Marie Curie constantly impressed those around her with her brilliance. This biography chronicles her life’s accomplishments, particularly her discovery of radium and polonium. (*biography, upper elementary*)

Punctuations Take a Vacation by Robin Pulver (Holiday House). What happens when punctuation marks are tired of being ignored? The periods, question marks and the rest of the crew are tired of being forgotten or misused by the writers in Mr. Wright’s class, so they decide to take a trip. The young authors soon learn just how important those punctuation marks are. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

Liberty Porter, First Daughter by Julia DeVillers (Aladdin). When Liberty’s dad is sworn in as president of the United States, she prepares herself for life in the White House. As excited as she is for the new adventure, she is nervous about the responsibility that she’s about to take on. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

National Geographic Readers: Seed to Plant by Kristin Baird Rattini (National Geographic Society). Young scientists will enjoy the detailed photographs and facts about the transformation of seeds into plants. This book includes everything from what a plant needs to grow to fun facts about plants and silly jokes about plants. (*nonfiction, lower elementary*)

Iggy Peck, Architect by Andrea Beaty (Abrams Books for Young Readers). As far back as anyone could remember, Iggy Peck built extraordinary structures. Iggy used whatever he had on hand to express himself. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

