

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Baldwin-Whitehall School District

Promote reading as a summer activity

To keep your child reading over the summer, treat it like a fun summer activity. Let it be something she can do whenever she feels like it. Show her that reading is fun—and never make it feel like homework.

To encourage reading:

- **Connect books** with summer activities—sports books for a summer league player, for instance, or camping books for a camper.
- **Let your child stay up** past bedtime when a book is just too good to put down.
- **Help your child find** a series of fiction or thriller books. These page-turners hook kids into a reading habit.
- **Share favorite books** and magazines with your child.
- **Encourage a change** of venue. Read books at the beach or pool, in a tent or at the park.
- **Watch a movie** based on a children's book. Then read the book together and discuss the differences between the two.



Reading can lead to test success

Students often have to tackle multiple-choice questions on tests. Putting their reading skills to work can help. Share these tips with your child:

- **Read each question carefully.** Your child should notice key words, such as *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*. He should also pay attention to tricky words like *not* and *except*.
- **Think about the answer.** Before looking at the choices, your child should put the answer in his own words. Then, he can see if an option matches what he was thinking.
- **Read every choice.** If your child thinks he sees the answer immediately, he should still consider all the possibilities. One answer may be more complete than another.
- **Eliminate wrong answers.** Even if your child doesn't know the right answer, he may recognize wrong answers. He should cross them off to boost his chances of guessing correctly among the remaining answers.

Build thinking skills with analogies

Expand your child's thinking skills by practicing *analogies*, comparisons between pairs of words that have a relationship with each other—like *dog is to fur as bird is to feather*.

Have your child fill in the missing word in these analogies:

- *Sand is to beach as _____ is to the North Pole. (snow)*
- *Fly is to airplane as _____ is to car. (drive)*
- *Good is to wonderful as _____ is to terrible. (bad)*



Conversations strengthen vocabulary

Talk with your child as you do your daily activities together. Ask her questions. It's one of the most important ways to help her build a strong vocabulary. And that's part of building a strong reader!



Set goals for summer reading

As summer approaches, encourage your entire family to set some reading goals. Family members could:

- **Read a certain number** of books each week.
- **Read all the books** by a favorite author.
- **Read to learn** a new skill.
- **Read for a certain amount of time** each day.



Encourage your child to keep a summer log

Summer is a great time for your child to start keeping a log. All she needs is an empty notebook and a few ideas to get started. Here are some suggestions:

- **A research log.** Have your child pick a subject she loves, such as skateboarding. Over the summer, she can research and write about it. What are some cool skateboard tricks? Who holds records for skateboarding?
- **A travel log.** Each time she goes somewhere special—whether it's far away or close to home—your child can keep a record by taking photos, drawing or journaling. What did she see? Who did she meet? What did she think about what she saw?
- **An observation log.** Suggest that your child observe something over a period of time, such as a summer vegetable as it grows. Or, she can pick something to describe in detail, such as a bug or an animal.



Use the five W's to ask questions

When you discuss a story with your child, ask him about the Five W's: Who? What? When? Where? Why? These questions help readers focus when they read and retell a story.

For example, ask: *Who* is the main character? *What* is the story about? *When* does it take place? *Where* does it happen? *Why* did the characters make certain choices?



For lower elementary readers:

- ***Uh-oh, Cleo*** by Jessica Harper (Putnam). Uh-oh! A minor accident sends eight-year-old Cleo to the doctor for stitches. This amusing story is a good introduction to chapter books.

- ***Ike's Incredible Ink*** by Brianne Farley (Candlewick). Ike sits down to write a story and decides to make his own ink. But before he can make it, he'll have to collect just the right ingredients.



For upper elementary readers:

- ***Running Shoes*** by Frederick Lipp (Charlesbridge). Sophy receives the most wonderful gift—a pair of running shoes—and is inspired to do great things.
- ***Storyteller*** by Patricia Reilly Giff (Wendy Lamb Books). When young Elizabeth goes to live with her aunt and uncle, she discovers fascinating stories about the past.

A storytelling game develops imagination

When children tell stories, they practice using their imaginations. They learn to play with words and structure their thoughts. As a family, try this storytelling game:

1. **Select five words** that have no connection to each other, such as *dragon, song, tree, happy* and *confused*.
2. **Write the words down** and post them for all to see.
3. **Have each player** create a story that includes all the selected words. The story must make sense but it can take any form—drama, comedy, fairy tale, etc. Make sure each player includes a title and conclusion.
4. **Have family members** tell their stories, then vote for the best one.



Q: My child gets frustrated when she can't read unfamiliar words. What can I do?

A: When your child comes across an unfamiliar word, have her read it slowly to identify the sounds of the word. Then ask, "What word would make sense in the story?" A guess based on context may be correct.

Giving her time to figure it out lets her feel more in control of her reading process. Be available for your child when she needs help.

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

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The 2017–2018

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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*)

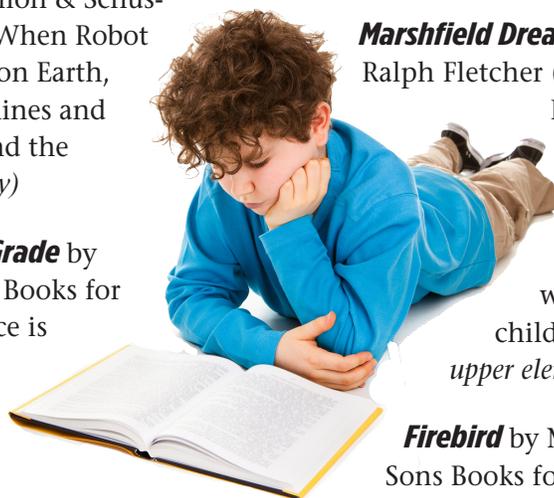
Teddy & Co. by Cynthia Voigt (Alfred A. Knopf). Teddy and the rest of a group of toys live together and take care of each other. As he wakes each morning, Teddy looks out the window and dreams of living outside. (*fiction, upper elementary*)

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*)

