

# QUICK NOTES

## May 10, 2011

Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
3120 West Green Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53221

414-304-6800  
414-304-6815 Main Fax  
414-304-3884 HS Fax

[www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/wcll](http://www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/wcll)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

### DATE

Scholastic BOGO Book Fair	May 16 <sup>th</sup> - May 19 <sup>th</sup>
Botanical Gardens Field Trip 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	May 17 <sup>th</sup> 10:00am - 11:30am
Mummies of the World Field Trip Rm. 12	May 18 <sup>th</sup> 10:00am - 2:30pm
Urban Eco Center Field Trip Rm. 21	May 19 <sup>th</sup> 9:00am - 12:00pm
<b>BANKING DAY CANCELED - STUDENT ATTENDENCE DAY</b>	<b>May 20<sup>th</sup></b>
PROM - Italian Community Center	May 20 <sup>th</sup> 8:00pm - Midnight
Brewer Game Incentive Field Trip	May 25 <sup>th</sup> 10:30am - 3:15pm
Staff vs. Student Basketball Game - HS Gym	May 26 <sup>th</sup> 2:30pm
<b>MEMORIAL DAY - NO SCHOOL</b>	<b>May 30<sup>th</sup></b>
HS Awards Breakfast - HS Gym	June 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8:30am
Zoo Field Trip - K4 & K5	June 3 <sup>rd</sup> 9:30am - 1:45pm
Senior Action Territory Field Trip	June 3 <sup>rd</sup> 9:30am - 3:00pm
HS Graduation Italian Community Center	June 9 <sup>th</sup> 7:00pm
Elem Awards Ceremony - HS Gym	June 15 <sup>th</sup> 1:30pm
K5 Graduation Ceremony - HS Gym	June 16 <sup>th</sup> 2:00pm
Alumni Rematch Basketball Game - HS Gym	June 16 <sup>th</sup> 6:45pm
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Ceremony - HS Gym	June 17 <sup>th</sup> 10:00am
<b>ALL SCHOOL CARNIVAL - STUDENT LAST DAY</b>	<b>June 21<sup>st</sup></b>

### SUPERINTENDENT'S BLOG AND GUIDES FOR PARENTS

Dr. Thornton has a blog that includes a reference to the document that lists all the changes to MPS' roster of schools for next year. You can view that blog at <http://www.superintendentthornton.blogspot.com/>.

The Board has begun deliberations on the FY12 budget proposal submitted last week. Please use the Companion Guide for Parents at [http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/doc/78704/Companion\\_Guide\\_FY12\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/doc/78704/Companion_Guide_FY12_ENGLISH.pdf). The Guide contains a comment form that parents can use to send in their thoughts or concerns regarding the budget.

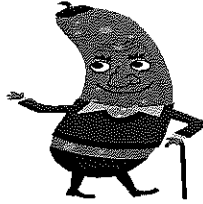
### SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

WCLL is having a Spring Fling Scholastic Book Fair, May 16<sup>th</sup> - May 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a "Buy One Get One Free (BOGO)" book fair, so please have your child(ren) take advantage of some great deals on his/her favorite books!

We are looking for parent volunteers to help out with the book fair. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Murphy @ 414-304-6800.

### STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH

WCLL staff voted this month to recognize Ms. Donna Palkowski, special education teacher and Mr. Chris Taylor, fifth grade teacher for their efforts with children. They both received a gift card to Starbucks and lunch at Jimmy Johns. Thanks to the both of you for your dedication to your job and your students!



### WICKLE PICKLE

Congratulations to our outstanding students who earned Pickles for their good deeds: Christiyanna Beene, Jaleel Brown, Antanique McAfee, Jettlee Moua, Armani Crittenden and Jason Jackson Jr.

### STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Congratulations to the following students who were Students of the Week:

**Week Mar. 28<sup>th</sup> thru Apr. 1<sup>st</sup>:** Mystique Treywick, Isaiah Roman, Jada Perez, Jocqese Carter, Jasmine Posey, Bryanna Hubbard, Keyshawn Evans, Danielle Krzeminski, Osyrus Terrell, Alexis Roman, Keziah Carter, Maryam Muhammad, Trevell Mason and Corey Smith.

**Week Apr. 26<sup>th</sup> thru Apr. 29<sup>th</sup>:** Mystique Treywick, Liana Glosson, Jada Perez, Cheyenne Smith, Shamyia Gray, Jettlee Moua, Tyra Legister, Trelin Barnett, Osyrus Terrell, Charlotte Douangmala, Jailen Jenkins-Yates, Kayla Cassidy and Skylar Smith.

### PRINCIPAL'S CLUB

Congratulations to the following students who have shown excellence in attendance, citizenship, class work and homework and have earned Principal's Club for the month of March: Sienna Spriewka, Bryann Banks, Leilanie Romero, Melanie Yang, Juwon Jones, Kong Meng Moua, Jasmine Posey, Ronae Hicks, Brianna Hubbard, Darrien Lewis, Lorenzo Siharath, Jayden Patterson, Janessa Ortiz, Jovani Yang, Shamarr Wilder-Thompson, Osyrus Terrell, Plaski Vue, Abigail Rodriguez, DaJarrie Tomlinson-Mathis, Guadalupe Beene, Travon Williams, Jailen Jenkins-Yates, Evalise Moreno and Mollinee Niemczyk.

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL MS. SALLIE A. BROWN

It is with mixed feelings that I announce my retirement as well as the retirement of Ms. Roseann Lococo. This has been an incredible experience for both of us, and we have enjoyed every moment good and bad. We hope that we have served our families well, and we look forward to continuing to serve children of Milwaukee in some capacity. Thank you for your continuous support.

#### *Principal Selection Process*

The Superintendent has put together a selection process for my predecessor, which consists of 2 parents, 2 teachers, 1 special education teacher, 1 support staff and a community representative. Three parents served on our team which represented each level, and followed a strict process with the assistance of Human Resources. We look forward to announcing the new Principal in the next Quick Notes.

### ATTACHMENTS

THORNTON 4/28 LETTER TO FAMILIES  
LITERACY ADVICE FOR FAMILIES  
PARENT INFORMATION SESSION  
FAMILIES FIRST  
OUR CHILDRENT DESERVE HEALTHY FUTURES  
TEACH A KID TO COOK  
READING CONNECTION  
MIDDLE YEARS



**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GN

April 28, 2011

Dear MPS Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. I know that the week after spring break is an adjustment for parents as well as for students. The children had a high energy level when they returned to us this past Tuesday, and we have been smiling to see how the little ones burn off some of that energy at recess!

Elements of our budget proposal for next year are becoming clearer. We are still receiving new information and double-checking everything. You already know that we face an historic amount of cuts proposed by the state, (now estimated at \$81 million) and the loss of \$95.5 million in stimulus funds we had the past two years.


We are preparing a new *Companion Guide for Parents* to help explain the budget proposal to our families and students. I anticipate it will be ready for publication early next week. We will be certain to ask our principals to share it with our families. It will also be available on our web site. Also next week Tuesday (May 3) at 6:30 p.m. in Central Services Auditorium is the Board committee meeting at which we will discuss the proposed budget and hear public input.

Here's an update on summer school. We had to reduce the summer school budget. That means we will offer summer school for elementary grade students at *fewer* locations. But we feel we are tripling the value at those locations because we placed the grade school summer classes in sites that also feature the summer meals program and MPS Recreation activities. The Grade 8 Promotional Program and the Grade 12 program for credit recovery *stay the same* as they were last year.

Here is my advice to you: If you are interested in summer school for your child, sign up quickly. You can sign up through any MPS school or come to Central Services to apply. You can also apply online. We feature a link to summer school information on the MPS homepage.

Thank you for your continued support. Please stay involved in your child's school. We like seeing you.

Sincerely,

  
Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

# Literacy advice for families

## Literacy tips for early readers

- Point out print in the child's environment: on cereal boxes, food labels, toys, restaurants, and traffic signs.
- Sing songs, say short poems or nursery rhymes, and play rhyming words games with your child.
- Tell stories to your child.
- Read aloud to your child. Point to the words on the page as you read.
- Read a short passage several times to your child until your child can read it with you. Then encourage your child to read the passage to you.
- Encourage older children to read with younger children.
- Encourage your child to read (or pretend read) to you. Make this reading enjoyable. Don't worry if your child does not read all of the words correctly but, rather, applaud your child's efforts to read.
- Go to the library together.
- Have books, magazines, and newspapers around the house. Let your child see you reading.
- Encourage your child to write messages such as grocery lists, to-do lists, postcards, or short messages to family members or friends. Don't worry about conventional spelling at this point but, rather, encourage your child's first efforts at authorship.
- When watching television, have the captioning feature enabled so that the children view the words while hearing them performed aloud.

## Literacy tips for more advanced readers

- Talk to your child about what he or she is reading. Ask open-ended questions such as "What do you think about that story?" "What would you have done if you were that character?"
- Make reading and writing a regular part of your daily home activities. Let your child see you using reading and writing for real purposes.
- Visit the public library. Help your child to get his or her own library card.
- Read to your child regularly, even after your child is able to read some books independently.
- Listen to your child read. Use strategies to help your child with tricky words. For example, when your child comes to an unfamiliar word, you might say, "Skip it and read to the end of the sentence. Now try again - what makes sense and looks like the word that you see?"
- Praise your child's efforts at reading.
- Play word games such as thinking of different words to describe the same things.
- Support your child's writing. Have writing materials such as paper, markers, and pencils available. Read what your child writes.
- Set reasonable limits for television viewing.

Adapted from Mraz, Padak, & Baycich (2002).



# I AM AN INFORMED PARENT!

## Parent Information Session



### Mark Your Calendar

**When:** Saturday, May 14, 2011, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.  
Session begins promptly at 9:00 a.m.

**Where:** Parkview Elementary School  
10825 West Villard Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53225

*\*A bus will be available at the MPS Central Services building, 5225 W. Vliet Street for transportation to Parkview at 8:00 a.m. Please indicate on the registration form if transportation is needed. The bus will return to the MPS Central Services Building at approximately 4:00 p.m.*

**Who:** Parents/guardians and adults who care for or work with children

**Topics:**

- ❖ Childhood obesity, juvenile diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure & other health problems that affect student learning
- ❖ Gang prevention/awareness (cyber bullying)
- ❖ Drugs, what to do if you think your child is using drugs
- ❖ Mental health, how to manage stress and how to work with, and care for children with mental health issues

**Cost:**



Includes program and resource materials, snacks, lunch & surprises!  
**PLEASE PRE-REGISTER BY Wednesday, May 11, 2011**

**How to Register:**

**Three Ways to Register:**

- Complete attached form and fax to (414) 773-9828 (preferred)
- E-mail Patricia Kirby at [kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us), or
- Call in registrations to Patricia Kirby at (414) 773-9827, Kathy Witkowiak at (414) 475-8607, or Monica Dickerson-Gordon at (414) 773-9824.

Please include all necessary information in emails and phone messages. For additional information call the above numbers.

**interpreters will be available**



**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WELLNESS AND PREVENTION OFFICE



**I AM AN INFORMED PARENT!**  
**Parent Information Workshop**  
**Saturday, May 14, 2011**  
**9:00 a. m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Registration Form**

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.  
Session begins promptly at 9:00 a.m.

Parkview Elementary School  
10825 West Villard Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53225

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address/City/Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I am planning to attend the Informed Parent Workshop on Saturday, May 14, 2011  
Number of Adults \_\_\_\_\_

Childcare will be provided for children ages 2 and older  
Number of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of Children \_\_\_\_\_

School(s) Children Attend \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number where you can be reached \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I will take the bus from Central Services \_\_\_\_\_, Number of people taking the bus \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Pre-register by Wednesday, May 11, 2011**

**Three Ways to Register:**

- Complete attached form and fax to (414) 773-9828 (preferred)
- E-mail Patricia Kirby at [kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us), or
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**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
WELLNESS AND PREVENTION OFFICE



# ¡SOY UN PADRE INFORMADO!

## Sesión de Información para Padres



### Marque su calendario

**Cuándo:** Sábado 14 de mayo de 2011, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
El registro comienza a las 8:30 a.m.  
La sesión comienza puntualmente a las 9:00 .m.

**Dónde:** Escuela Primaria Parkview  
10825 West Villard Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53225

*\*Habrá un autobús disponible en la oficina central de MPS, en el 5225 W. Vliet Street para transporte a Parkview a las 8:00 a.m. Indique en el formulario de inscripción si necesita de transporte. El autobús regresará a la oficina central de MPS aproximadamente a las 4:00 p.m.*

**Quién:** Padres/tutores legales y adultos que cuidan o trabajan con los niños

**Temas:**

- ❖ Obesidad infantil, diabetes juvenil, asma, hipertensión y otros problemas de salud que afectan el aprendizaje estudiantil
- ❖ Prevención/detección de pandillas (acoso cibernético)
- ❖ Qué hacer si usted cree que su hijo consume drogas
- ❖ Salud mental, cómo manejar el estrés y como trabajar y cuidar de niños con problemas de salud mental

**Costo:** ¡GRATIS! Incluye programa y material de apoyo, merienda, almuerzo y ¡sorpresas! **PREINSCÍBASE ANTES DEL miércoles 11 de mayo de 2011**

**Cómo inscribirse:** Tres maneras de inscribirse:

- Llene el formulario adjunto y envíe por fax al (414) 773-9828 (preferible)
- Envíe un e-mail a Patricia Kirby a [kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us), o
- Llame para inscribirse a Patricia Kirby al (414) 773-9827, a Kathy Witkowiak al (414) 475-8607, o a Monica Dickerson-Gordon al (414) 773-9824.

Incluya la información necesaria en los e-mails y mensajes telefónicos. Para más información, llame a los números anteriores.

**Habrán intérpretes disponibles**



**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
WELLNESS AND PREVENTION OFFICE



**¡SOY UN PADRE INFORMADO!**  
**Taller de información para padres**  
**Sábado 14 de mayo de 2011**  
**9:00 a. m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Formulario de inscripción**

El registro comienza a las 8:30 a.m.  
La sesión comienza puntualmente a las 9:00 a.m.

Escuela primaria Parkview  
10825 West Villard Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53225

Nombre (en letra de imprenta) \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección/Ciudad/Código postal \_\_\_\_\_

Sí, pienso asistir al taller de padres el sábado 14 de mayo de 2011  
Número de adultos \_\_\_\_\_

Habrán servicios de guardería para niños mayores de 2 años  
Número de niños \_\_\_\_\_

Edad de los niños \_\_\_\_\_

Escuelas a las que asiste el niño \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono al cual se le puede llamar \_\_\_\_\_

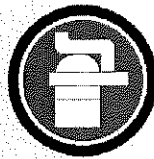
Sí, tomaré el autobús en la oficina central \_\_\_\_\_, Personas que toman el autobús \_\_\_\_\_

**Preinscríbese antes del 11 de mayo de 2011**

**Tres maneras de inscribirse:**

- Llene el formulario y envíe por fax a (414) 773-9828 (preferible)
- Envíe un e-mail a Patricia Kirby al [kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirbypm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us), o
- Llame para inscribirse a Patricia Kirby al (414) 773-9827, a Kathy Witkowiak al (414) 475-8607 o a Monica Dickerson-Gordon al (414) 773-9824





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PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# **Families First**

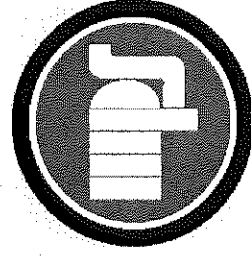
## ***Technology Resources for Parents***

**May 18, 2011  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Central Services  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
5225 W. Vliet Street**

**RSVP TO (414) 475-8467**

**Light dinner and childcare will be provided  
(for children ages 3 and older)**



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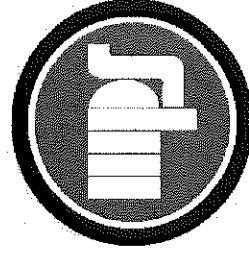
# Familias Primero

## Recursos de Tecnología para Padres

**18 de mayo de 2011  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Oficina Central  
Escuelas Públicas de Milwaukee  
5225 W. Vliet Street  
Confirme su asistencia llamando al (414) 475-8467**

Se servirá una cena ligera y habrá servicios de guardería (niños mayores de 3 años).



**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Our Children Deserve  
Healthy Futures

# Protect Their Only Childhood



**Awareness to Action** is focused on preventing child sexual abuse by helping adults and communities take action to protect children.

**Stewards of Children** is a FREE, 2.5 hour training and a CALL TO ACTION for all adults. The purpose of the training is to provide you with tools to help prevent the sexual abuse of children. The training uses video, workbook, and group discussion. Community resources are provided.

Learn more about how to help protect all our children through education, awareness, prevention, advocacy, and action.

**Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 9:00-11:30 AM**

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?** Youth workers, teachers, social workers, coaches, clergy, counselors, childcare providers, parents....any adult who cares about children!

**REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED** Contact Ruth: 414/671-5575 -or- [rmiller@theparentingnetwork.org](mailto:rmiller@theparentingnetwork.org) no later than May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**LOCATION:** The Parenting Network, 7516 W. Burleigh, Milwaukee  
Refreshments will be served. Certificates of completion will be provided to participants.



**Unable to attend?  
Please call to schedule a  
training for your group.**



*The Parenting Network is the lead agency for Awareness to Action Milwaukee. Awareness to Action is a program of Children's Services Society of Wisconsin with funding provided by the Children's Hospital & Health System's Child Abuse Prevention Fund and Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund. Protect Their Only Childhood and Stewards of Children are registered trademarks of Darkness to Light and are used with permission.*

# Teach a kid to cook, and he eats for life

## A teen's view

Griffin Smith's passions are playing the guitar and writing.

But the high school junior, 16, says he's also a pretty good cook — a guy who can navigate a recipe and the grocery store and turn out a decent vegetarian chili, bean burger, salad and pizza.

He owes it to his mother, food writer and pastry chef Sandy Smith. She told him it was time to master at least a few meat-free dishes when, for ethical reasons, he became the family's sole vegetarian two years ago.

"She's been a good teacher," he says. "I've only burned myself once."

The cooking lessons mean he is more "self-sufficient" now, Griffin says. And he enjoys cooking with family and friends.

"It's good common ground," he says. "Everybody needs to eat."

To suggest a column topic or make a comment about raising teenagers and young adults, e-mail [kpainter@usatoday.com](mailto:kpainter@usatoday.com). On Twitter, follow [@KimiPainter](https://twitter.com/KimiPainter).

**E**lizabeth Pivonka's son, 17, and daughter, 15, have told her that some of their friends "don't know how to boil water."

They are not kidding, she says: "They say their friends will stand in front of the pot and say 'How do you know when it's ready?'"

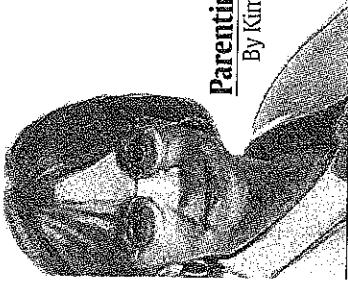
Pivonka has saved her own children from such a fate. The president of the Produce for Better Health Foundation had her kids peeling the tubers for their own beloved mashed potatoes by age 6 and using the stove independently by 13 or so.

But it's no surprise that many teens and young adults are clueless in the kitchen. "A lot of them grew up in really busy households, with people relying on frozen and fast foods and not doing a lot of cooking," says Maris Callahan, 26, a writer whose website, [ingoodtasteblog.net](http://ingoodtasteblog.net), features recipes for novices.

Too many otherwise well-educated young people end up like many of her friends, she says, with refrigerators "that are empty except for some beer and take-out leftovers."

It doesn't have to be that way. If you are the parent of a teen or a young adult living at home, you still have time to pass on one of life's most useful and rewarding skills. Teaching your kids to cook is like teaching them to balance a checkbook or keep enough gas in the car, says Sandy Smith, a food writer and pastry chef in Saugerties, N.Y. "It's a survival skill."

It's a basic health tool, too, says Ed



## Parenting: Part II

By Kim Painter

*Kim Painter has written about health and wellness for USA TODAY since 1987. She is the mother of two teen boys.*

Bruske, a personal chef, kids' cooking teacher and food activist (blogging at [theslowcook.com](http://theslowcook.com)) in Washington, D.C. "When you cook, you learn about real food" that doesn't come in a box or through a takeout window, he says. "Anything you cook is bound to be healthier."

Kids who leave home as cooks also will save money, especially if they've also learned to shop for groceries and stick to a budget, Pivonka says.

But one of the best reasons for teaching teens to cook may be that it's a fun way to spend time together, Smith says. She says she and her daughter, 14, have always enjoyed baking together. But she got her son, Griffin, 16, in the kitchen just two years ago, after he became a vegetarian and she insisted he learn to make some of his own food.

He took up the challenge, and "it's been a way to connect with him that I wouldn't have had otherwise," Smith says. When friends come over and get drawn into the kitchen, "it's also a way to connect with his friends. And that's not always easy."

A few tips on how to cook up some lessons for your kids:

▶ **Learn together.** If your own skills are rusty, or you just want to learn something new, take some classes together.

▶ **Be safe.** Whether you are starting with a 6- or 16-year-old, teach safety first. Knife skills are key (and a teen should be ready to use a real chef's knife, Bruske says). So is hand-washing, knowing how to handle raw meat and knowing why real chefs always wear shoes (think of those knives).

▶ **Teach the language of recipes.** "Kids may not know what it means to 'sauté spinach' or 'blanch the broccoli' or even 'peel a potato,'" Pivonka says.

▶ **Arm them with a few crowd-pleasing favorites.** "They can dazzle their friends with a real macaroni-and-cheese," Bruske says.

▶ **Teach clean-up skills, too.** It will make them better roommates someday. "They don't love it," Smith says, but it reinforces the lesson that cooking isn't just about pleasing yourself, "it's also about doing things for others."

Smith suggests one other practical reason to teach kids to cook: "If you know how to cook, you can always find a job."

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

May 2011

Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning

## Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *Flat Stanley*

In Jeff Brown's classic tale, a little boy is flattened by a bulletin board. At first, Stanley's unusual problem leads to adventure—he travels through the mail in an envelope and can even fly. But what happens when Stanley gets tired of being flat? (Also available in Spanish.)



### ■ *All the World*

A family enjoys a busy summer day together in this rhyming story by Liz Garton Scanlon. As you read, your child will recognize familiar experiences like a playful morning at the beach, a shopping trip to a farmers' market, and a summer rainstorm.

### ■ *The Story of America's Birthday*



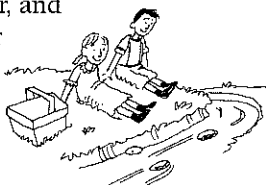
Why do we celebrate Independence Day?

Patricia Pingry's nonfiction book

explains how the United States became a country. Your youngster will get an introduction to the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence, and he'll read about traditions like fireworks and parades.

### ■ *Summertime in the Big Woods*

This story for little readers is part of a series adapted from Laura Ingalls Wilder's original Little House books. Young Laura is growing up in a 19th-century pioneer family. School's out for the summer, and she spends her days playing outside and helping with chores.



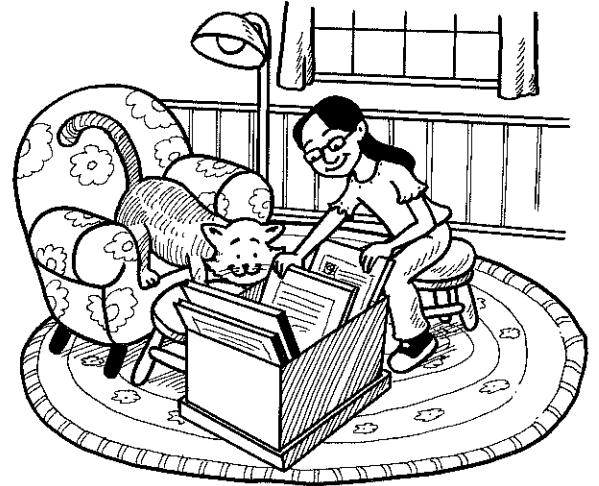
## What should I read?

Sofia loves stories about princesses and dogs. Aaron wants to read more books by David Shannon and Mercer Mayer. These children have discovered strategies for picking out books—an important step toward becoming a lifelong reader. Try these hints to help your youngster find stories she'll enjoy, too.

### Choose a book by its cover.

Your child may be drawn to a book because of its title and the picture on the front. Encourage her to go with her instinct and pick it up. She can look at the first few pages of a story to get a better idea of whether she might enjoy it.

**Ask an expert.** Encourage your youngster to talk to a librarian, a bookseller, or her teacher. Your child might ask which books they liked when they were little, or what books are popular with kids her age now. She'll see that talking with other book lovers is a wonderful way to get suggestions.



**Use an online bookstore.** Help your youngster search for favorite books at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com). When she clicks on a title, the site will show similar books that customers purchased—and she might find titles she would like to try. Your child can also click on an author's name to find more books by that person.

**Tip:** Let your youngster keep a box or basket with several books in the order she plans to read them. As she finishes a story, she can add another to the back of the stack. ♥

## Reading buddies

The next time your child invites a friend over, encourage him to make it a "reading playdate" with these ideas:

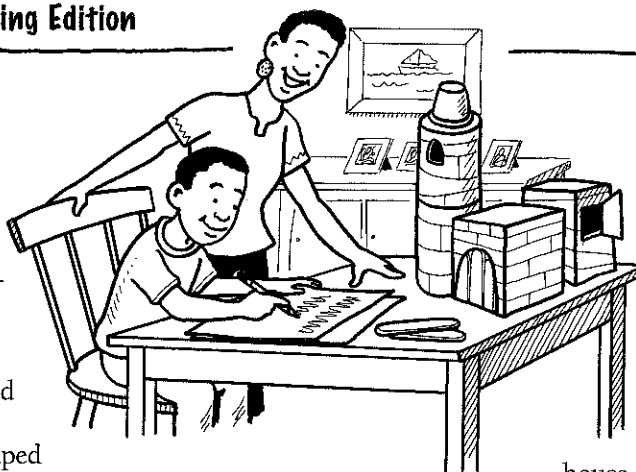
- Have him ask his friend to bring over a few books. Then, your youngster can pick out several of his own to share.
- As they read, suggest that they try using a different voice for each character. For instance, a frog might speak in a croaking voice, or a snake could exaggerate the "s" sound. This will help your youngster learn to read with expression.
- Let the children try different ways of reading together. First, they might take turns reading aloud to each other. For the next book, they could alternate pages or read in unison. That way, they'll both get a chance to participate. ♥



# Fairy tale fun

Once upon a time, there was a child who loved to read, write, and play. He discovered that fairy tales gave him fun opportunities to do all three. Your youngster can be this child... here's how!

- Make a game using words from fairy tales. First, let your child write "Start" and "Finish" in opposite corners of a poster board. Then, draw a two-inch-wide S-shaped path connecting the corners, and mark off spaces along the path. Help your youngster write a "fairy tale word"



(beanstalk, magic, wolf) in each space. To play, roll a die and move a marker the number of spaces shown. As you land on each space, read the word and tell how it's used in a fairy tale. Continue until all players reach "Finish."

- Design a fairy tale house. Read several stories to your child, and have him choose a building (Rapunzel's tower, a house from "The Three Little Pigs"). Ask him to find details in the story that tell what the house looks like, and help him list "construction supplies" he'll need (oatmeal canister, craft sticks, tape). After he builds, have him write or dictate his own version of the fairy tale. He can tape his story to the house.♥

## Fun with Words Compound words

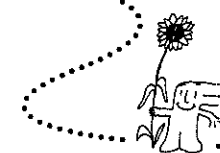
If your child learns the words *pan* and *cake*, she'll be able to read *pancake*—a compound word. This game will encourage her to read short words and combine them to read longer ones.

1. Introduce your youngster to compound words. Ask, "If you put together *sun* and *flower*, what do you have?" (*sunflower*) Then, help her brainstorm a list of 10 compound words. If she's stuck, say a word (*book*), and ask her to think of compound words that include that word (*bookcase*, *bookmark*).



2. Have her write the two words in each compound word on separate index cards. Lay them facedown in four rows of five cards.

3. Take turns flipping over two cards and saying the words. Ask your child if the two words together sound like a real word. ("Is there such a thing as a *bookflower*?") If they make a compound word, keep the cards and take another turn. If not, turn the cards back over, and your turn ends. Keep playing until all the matches are made.♥



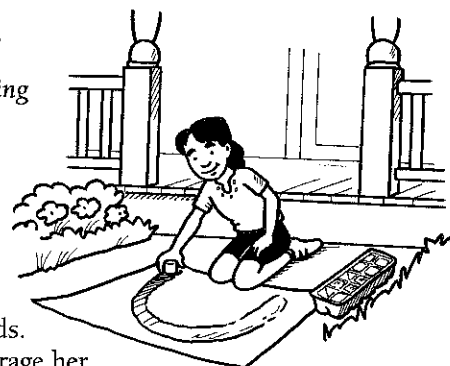
## Q&A Stronger hands

**Q** My daughter doesn't like writing or using scissors—she says her hands get tired. How can I help her?

**A** Try some outdoor activities that will let your daughter enjoy summer weather while she strengthens her hand muscles.

For instance, playing in a sandbox or digging in the dirt is good exercise for little hands. Give your child a pail and shovel, and encourage her to dig and scoop.

Or let her make ice-cube watercolors! Have her add a few drops of food coloring to a cup of water and pour the water into an ice-cube tray. When it freezes, she can use the cubes to paint on paper. Another idea is to let her "paint" the sidewalk with just a bucket of water and paintbrushes. She may also like to use sidewalk chalk to draw pictures, write words, or make a hopscotch board.♥

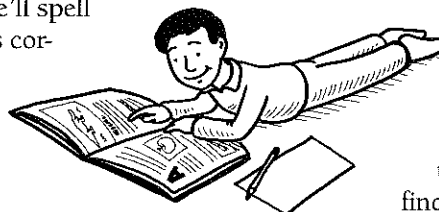


## Parent to Parent Learning to spell

I was concerned because my son Quinn spells words like they sound instead of the correct way. When I asked his teacher about this, her answer surprised me. She said "invented spelling" is normal for his age! As Quinn gets older, she said, he'll spell more and more words correctly. In the meantime, she gave me some ideas for ways to help him become a better speller.

First, she suggested that I have Quinn post a list of words he's learning how to spell on his bedroom wall. He can use it for reference when he's writing.

Then, she recommended that I get him a children's dictionary. That way, if he asks me how to spell a word, I can help him look it up. She explained that once he's comfortable using the dictionary, he'll be able to find words on his own.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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# Middle Years

Working together for school success

## Short Stops



### "I'm on it!"

Teach your youngster to be proactive when tackling his to-do list. For example, suggest that he plan early review sessions for exams so he doesn't put off studying. Or if he hopes to earn money this summer, he could talk to neighbors now about his services (lawn mowing, window washing).

### Family memories

Use "together time" to make scrapbooks that will capture your family's memories. You can brainstorm themes (spring break, family reunion). Then, gather photos and household supplies (glue, ribbon, illustrations from greeting cards), and pick up a binder and stickers at a craft shop. *Idea:* Have a family scrapbooking night each week.

### College ahead?

Middle school is a good time for your child to start considering college. Point out jobs held by family, friends, or community members, and talk about the education required. Then, encourage her to think about what she might like to do one day. She can chat with her school counselor about the schooling she would need.

### Worth quoting

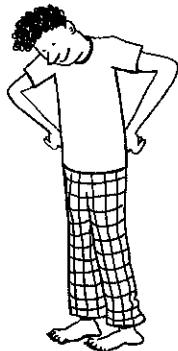
"There is nothing like a dream to create the future."

*Victor Hugo*

### Just for fun

**Aunt Mary:** Have you grown another foot since the last time I saw you?

**Jack:** No. I still have just two.



## Stretch your child's learning

You know that the time your child spends in school helps her learn. But did you know that activities over the summer can help her learn, too?

Engage your middle grader in learning with these ideas.

### Reading and writing

Suggest that she try reading and writing in new settings. She might invite neighborhood children to a weekly story time or help them write short plays they can perform for parents. She could also take advantage of the nice weather by reading in your backyard or writing poems in a park.

### Math

Numbers are everywhere, and you can help your youngster find chances to use them. Does she like to cook? She could convert recipes into smaller or larger serving sizes (for single servings or parties) and record them for reference. Or give her early



practice in tracking her finances. She might help you balance your checkbook or follow your online banking transactions.

### Science

Your child can practice science skills at home, too. Challenge her to create a kite with paper, sticks, and twine. Encourage her to make more than one and experiment to see which one flies highest. Or she could research the types of butterflies in your area and use a magnifying glass to study them. Suggest that she carry a notebook, colored pencils, and a field guide so she can sketch pictures and try to identify the butterflies. 👍

## It's a wrap!

Soon your child's final report card will arrive. Use it to celebrate his successes and pinpoint where he could do better next year.

■ Go over grades. Offer a high five for solid grades or those that have gone up. If he got any disappointing grades, discuss ways to improve in the next school year. He might do extra reading on the topic, review his notes and handouts daily, or find a friend who can help him study.

■ Review numbers of absences and tardies, check behavior marks, and read teacher comments. You'll want to praise good attendance and conduct. But if your youngster struggled anywhere, set goals for the fall and discuss how to achieve them (wake up 10 minutes earlier, don't chat in class). 👍



# Summer safety

What's the forecast for your middle grader's summer? Sunny with a chance of downtime! Your child can safely enjoy warm-weather months if you set guidelines ahead of time. Consider rules for when your child is:

**...active outside.** Sports and outdoor activities can provide hours of entertainment, and a few simple precautions can keep injuries at bay. Check that your middle schooler has a bike helmet that fits properly (snugly on the top of his head with a strap that pulls tight). Then, be sure he wears the helmet—and protective gear like knee pads and wrist guards—while biking,



skating, skateboarding, or riding a scooter. Also, have him use sunscreen and reapply it after sweating or taking a swim. *Tip:* To help him remember, keep sunscreen near your front door and in pool bags.

**...on his own.** Your child may be able to spend time unsupervised if he's trustworthy and feels comfortable being alone. Arrange for him to check in at certain times throughout the day, and post names and numbers of neighbors who can help. Go over steps for emergencies, and review rules (whether friends are allowed, which appliances he can use). Finally, if he goes out, he should let you know where he's going and who he will be with. 👍



## Vocabulary fun

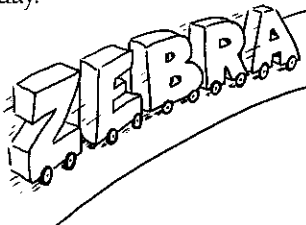
Whether running errands or taking a road trip, your family is probably in the car a lot. Turn travel time into vocabulary time with these two games.

### Sounds alike

Create a sentence using alliteration—a writing technique where each word begins with the same sound. Have one person say a word. Then, take turns adding a word using alliteration until a complete sentence is formed. *Examples:* "Silly Sandy sat sideways." "Tom's terribly touchy today."

### Z-E-B-R-A

Work together to spell the longest word possible—without making another word first! One person says a letter (S). The next person adds a letter, attempting to keep the word going (P would continue the word, O would end it). If a player ends a word, he loses the round, earning a Z for the first letter in Z-E-B-R-A. Keep playing until someone loses by getting all five letters. 👍

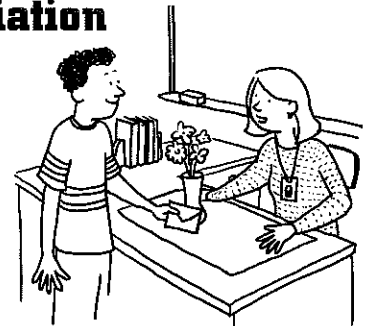


## Q & A Teacher appreciation

**Q** I would like my son to thank his teachers at the end of the school year. What are some nice gifts that are free or very low-cost?

**A** Your child can show gratitude with a simple, heartfelt thank-you. Teachers say that personal, handwritten letters or thank-you cards mean a lot. Your son might write about how much he enjoyed a class or mention ways that a teacher helped or inspired him. To add a special touch, he could include a nice quotation about teachers (he can search for "teacher appreciation quotes" online).

For teachers who made his year extra special, your child might frame a photo or handmade piece of art, gather a bouquet of flowers from the family garden, or record classmates saying "thanks" in a video. Or he could give a coupon for help cleaning up the classroom or organizing supplies the last week of school. 👍



## Parent to Parent Making friends

When my daughter Avery started middle school this year, she had lots of friends from elementary school. But as the year went on, I noticed that she was by herself more. When I talked to her about it, she said her old friends had made new friends, and she wasn't part of their crowd anymore.

I told her the same thing had happened to me when I was her age. Then, we talked about ways she might feel comfortable making new friends. She

decided to try inviting one or two classmates over so she could build friendships without the pressure of the cafeteria or hallway scene.

Avery also liked the idea of joining activities where people would share her interests. She signed up for the school newspaper and ended up making a couple of good friends. Now she has summer plans with her new friends—and she's looking forward to being on the newspaper with them again in the fall. 👍



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