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# News from the Nest!

## Contact Information:

Ms. Thompson: [Thompson.lauren@north-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:Thompson.lauren@north-haven.k12.ct.us)

Mrs. Carew: [Carew.kim@north-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:Carew.kim@north-haven.k12.ct.us)

Mrs. Levenduski: [Levenduski.brittany@north-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:Levenduski.brittany@north-haven.k12.ct.us)

Ms. Jahn: [Jahn.elizabeth@north-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:Jahn.elizabeth@north-haven.k12.ct.us)

## "5 Ways to Help Your Kids Not Stink at Math"

In a New York Times article, Elizabeth Green discusses ways to support your child's mathematics skills and understanding that they need for the 21st century.

- Have your child explain her or his thinking and listen to what mistakes your child is making rather than correcting mistakes.
- Do the everyday math you do out loud so that your child can hear your think and see how math is used in the real world.
- Use pictures to represent the problems including using dot representations of arrays to help develop the understanding behind the algorithms.
- Combine memorization and understanding, making each one stronger.
- Introduce complex ideas earlier by asking questions to promote thinking. For more about how to support your child's learning, read the full article at <http://mobile.nytimes.com/blogs/parenting/2014/07/23/5-ways-to-help-yourkid-not-stink-at-math/?referrer=>



Look what is happening! HOOT, HOOT, Hooray!



THE MORE THAT YOU READ,  
THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW  
THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN,  
THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL GO.  
--Dr. Seuss

## How to Help Your Primary Student Practice Sight Words @ Home...

- Toss: Write words on cards/paper plates and have your child throw a bean bag and read the word where it lands.
- Go Fish!
- Tic-Tac-Toe with sight words instead of X's and O's
- Go on a 'Word Hunt', looking your sight words around the house or in books.
- Play, "Who am I?"
- Spell words with playdough, in shaving cream, with chalk...
- Word-O: Follow the rules for BINGO, but use the sight words instead.
- Flashcards

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## Get Your Kids Writing at Home!

**Narrative Writing:** Narrative writing can be broadly defined as story writing – a piece of writing characterized by a main character in a setting who encounters a problem or engages in an interesting, significant or entertaining activity or experience.

- After doing something fun with the family, write a small moment story about what you just did!
- Think of any memory and write about it.
- Create a character and write a series about that character.
- Point to any object....challenge! Write a poem or a song about that object.

**Informational Writing:** Informational writing comes in a variety of forms, but, in general it is factual writing for the purpose of informing others.

- Write how-to books, making directions for how to use/do different things in the house.
- After reading a non-fiction book, write a chapter book teaching about the topic.
- Do a science experiment and write a lab report.

**Opinion Writing:** Opinion writing is when the writer has an opinion and uses evidence and examples to support their opinion.

- Write a book review after reading a favorite book.
- Have a debate! Then write about the side you believe in, providing evidence and examples! Challenge!...Write trying to convince people about the opposing side too!
- Think about a problem in the world, and write a piece explaining the problem and how it can be fixed.

## Pumpkin Math!

PBS has great ideas to use pumpkins to discuss mathematics with you child. Whether you are baking a pie or carving a jack-'o'-lantern, check out these great ideas for Pumpkin Math Family Time.

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/math/activities/first-second-grade/pumpkin-math/>



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**THANK YOU** to the Quinnipiac Future Teacher's Organization for their 'Fall into Reading' activity in our first grade classrooms.



**THANK YOU** to our Senior Literacy Volunteers for their ongoing support of our students in grades K-3.

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## Opening a Book, Opens a World of Literacy!

There have been many changes in education over the years but the one thing that remains constant is that a lifetime of literacy begins at a very young age. The following tips can help you and your child at any age:



1. Encourage your child to take part in the selection of things to read. Whether it be a play, a poem, a lullaby, chapter book or a comic book all are great when sharing the experience together.
2. Read at different times of the day for different reasons. Encourage reading while in waiting rooms, before the game, traffic jams or bathtubs.
3. Be prepared to read and re-read favorite stories at any age.
4. Before you begin to read a book, tell your child the name of the author and illustrator. Talk about the cover and pictures.
5. As you read, move your finger from left to right, following the words. This helps children make the connection between written and spoken language.
6. Use your voice to bring the characters to life and act out what is being read. It may seem silly at first but your child will love it and remember it.
7. Incorporate your child's reactions and questions throughout the story. Make brief positive comments and then continue.
8. Once your child is familiar with a story, encourage s/he to "read" it to you. Enjoy their creativity and imagination.
9. Keep a good pace through the story but give your child time to enjoy the illustrations. Talk about the clues that are in pictures. Continue reading with your child long after s/he is able to read independently.
10. Review the story when you have finished reading. Talk about the experiences the characters had and how they may be similar to those you or your child may have had.

Continue reading with your child long after s/he is able to read independently. Literacy is reading, writing, listening and speaking. Literacy is power!

## Library Buzz

### Looking for a new book or series to start? Here's what some of our students suggest:

"I really like the Dino-Sports series. Each one is about a different sport, and the pictures are really colorful and silly." ~Mackenzie (1<sup>st</sup> grade)

"The Pet Charms books are really good. The girl (the main character) is really nice. In the puppy one, the girl finds a lost dog and tries to find it a home. There is one about a kitty, and another one about a bunny. The kitty one is my favorite." ~Samantha (Kindergarten)

"I'd recommend the Mr. Terupt Series. The first book is about a teacher and his class. There is an accident and someone ends up getting hurt. The story is interesting because it keeps you wondering what is going to happen next." ~Kaley (5<sup>th</sup> Grade)

"Judy Moody is a silly series. Judy gets in trouble and has to try to find ways to get out of trouble. She also has a little brother named Stink, who annoys her." ~Abrielle (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)

**Don't forget to check out our new books on the online library catalog. The online catalog can be accessed from the library section of the school website.**

## Turning a Family Favorite into Family Math Time!

War is a classic game children have played for generations. Below are a few adaptations of this classic game to reinforce math skills for children in grades 3 through 5. All you need is a regular deck of cards. Deal out the cards evenly between game participants. Aces represent one and face cards are ten. Play one of these versions:

- **Addition War:** Follow the directions for War with each player turning over two cards and finding the sum of the two cards. The biggest sum wins. Encourage addition strategies including counting up, tens partners, and using turn around facts.
- **Subtraction War:** Follow the directions for War with each player turning over two cards and finding the difference between them. The biggest difference wins. Encourage subtraction strategies including counting up, making tens, and using addition facts.
- **Multiplication Double War:** Follow the directions for War with each player turning over two cards at a time. Multiply the two numbers and the largest product wins. For a student just learning multiplication facts, use two decks of cards and start with the easiest fact families first, gradually adding the larger numbers.
- **Fraction War:** Each player turns over 2 cards at once and tries to make the largest fraction by laying the cards vertically. For example with a 3 and 5, you can make  $\frac{3}{5}$  or  $\frac{5}{3}$ ; if the other person has a 2 and 8, the fraction could be  $\frac{2}{8}$  or  $\frac{8}{2}$ . Variations: only allow fractions less than one or use three cards at a time and create mixed numerals



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## Talking with Your Child about what they are Learning in School...

Sometimes it is hard to find out what your child is learning about in school. Try not to ask questions that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no'.

Try some of the following...

- What was the most interesting thing you did today?
- What are you reading in school?
- What kinds of things are you learning in (subject)?
- What is the easiest thing in school for you?
- What is the hardest thing in school for you?
- What would you like to learn more about? Why?



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