



WARDLAW + HARTRIDGE
LOWER SCHOOL



Summer Home-to-School Connections

June 2026

Rising Third Grade

Dear Second Grade Families,

It has been a wonderful year full of learning and fun! Our students have worked incredibly hard and have grown tremendously as learners. We are proud of all of the progress they made during the 2025-2026 school year.

As the school year winds down, we encourage you to plan for a summer of reading, writing, and mathematics with your children. It is so important that we continue to expose our youngest learners to quality literature, and mathematical thinking while modeling a love for reading, writing, and mathematics, even when school is not in session!

Of course, the summer is a time for vacations, camping, and pursuing new interests. However, we do encourage you to make time to read aloud with your child, write stories, and play educational games.

We respect your vacation time and the need for children to play in the summer is paramount. The activities and suggestions on the following pages are recommended, yet they remain optional.

Have a safe, healthy, and happy summer,

Mrs. Jennifer Molloy

Summer Home-to-School Connections

In the following pages, you will find activities and guidance for academically supporting your child over the summer months.

READING ACTIVITIES:

- Rising 3rd Grade Summer Read
- Reading at Home Tips
- Choosing the Right Book
- Engaging Young Readers with Questioning
- Sight Word Tips
- Sight Word Games
- Responding to Reading
- Suggested Reading List

WRITING ACTIVITIES:

- Summer Themed Writing Prompts
- Summer Postcards

MATHEMATICS ACTIVITIES:

- Math Practice

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Educational Apps to Support Learning
- Self-Help, Self-Control, and Routines
- Guidance to Support the Related Arts

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL...PLAY.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Rising 2nd - 5th Grade Summer Read

Present second grade students rising to third grade will be receiving a copy of the book, *Lemonade Wars* by Jacqueline Davies. We ask that you read it together over the summer. We ask you to take the time so that your family can participate in this special activity. There is significant importance in reading aloud at home. A growing body of research describes the complex and permanent effects of reading aloud. Reading aloud at home is valuable because it better prepares your child to be an effective reader, and it is also a fun, worthwhile family activity. Children who are ready to learn to read more easily and become better readers. Literacy skills provide the basis for a lifetime of learning and productivity.

We will discuss this book when we return to school in September as a class.

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Reading at Home Tips

Read, read, read! Read aloud to your child each day in addition to their own independent reading. Being read to is one of the best ways to begin to develop as a reader. Read his/her favorite stories and have him/her read to you. Take your child to the library to let him/her choose books to read, but also choose some yourself.

This is an exciting time for your child as a reader. We have a long summer to relax, so it is important that beginning readers continue to practice their reading skills every day to keep them sharp. As your child grows as a reader, it is also important to make sure that they understand what they are reading.

- Children should continue to read out loud to you for 10-15 minutes per day from a “just right” book. A “just right” book should be a book that your child can read comfortably and understand with only a little help from you. They should additionally begin to read to themselves for the same amount of time per day.
- Continue to read aloud to your child from a variety of different genres and from books on a variety of different topics. You never know what will spark interest.
- Choose a series together to read over the summer and follow the same character through different adventures.
- Encourage your child to reread for fluency or “reread until you sound like you are talking.”
- Explore audiobooks! Listening to a book (while following along in print, or just listening) is a great option if a selected book is too challenging for the reader.
- Read, and reread! Picture books are great ones to repeat to allow your child to see the words and connect them to what they hear.
- Ask questions before, during, and after reading. As you read together, ask your child questions about the story. These questions will help them develop strong reading comprehension skills, and at the same time, will help you monitor their comprehension. On the next page, find examples of questioning techniques.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Choosing the Just Right Book

Children become good readers one book at a time. But, how do you help a child choose the right books? You don't have to be an expert to guide your child to books that are a good fit for them: entertaining, enlightening, and challenging (but, not overwhelming).

You may be accustomed to choosing books for your child. But, did you know that selecting a book is a useful skill that children should fine tune at this age? Choosing a book independently teaches a child that we seek out books for different reasons. With the following easy strategies, you can coach your child to make this important decision for him/herself.

□ WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

Introduce the idea that everyone reads with a purpose in mind, even if that purpose is pure enjoyment/entertainment.

Ask him/her:

- What type of book are you looking for today? Why?
- Are you looking for fiction or non-fiction?
- Tell me a little bit about why you picked this one.

□ SAY YES!

Give your child agency when choosing books. Say yes to their choice as often as you are able to. A book your child wants to read is the one you want to take home. Don't worry if you feel a book seems too short or too easy. All of those things are perfectly acceptable for leisure/pleasure reading.

□ USE THE FIVE FINGER RULE

A great rule of thumb is the Five Finger Rule. Open the book to a random page and have your child show one hand. Have your child read the page aloud to you. For each word, they are not able to decode or count on a finger. If all five fingers are counted before the start of the next page, the book is most likely too challenging for the child to read independently.

□ TOO CHALLENGING?

If you find a book is too challenging for your child to read independently, do not worry. This is a great book for you to read together. Another great option is to pair the book with the audiobook. Listening to words read and following along with the text also helps readers grow.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Engaging Young Readers with Questioning

As your child grows as a reader, it is important to make sure they understand what they are reading. Here are some quick and easy prompts you can ask to encourage comprehension.

FICTION

- ☐ Who are the characters? What are they like?
- ☐ How did the character feel when _____? How do you know?
- ☐ Why did the character _____?
- ☐ Did the character change in the story? How?
- ☐ What is the setting? Where does the story take place? When does the story take place?
- ☐ What is the problem? How is the problem solved?
- ☐ What lesson do the characters learn?
- ☐ What do you predict will happen next?
- ☐ How did the story begin?
- ☐ What was your favorite part? Why was that your favorite part?
- ☐ Why should other kids read this book?
- ☐ How did the story end?

NON-FICTION

- ☐ What did you learn about this topic?
- ☐ What was the big idea in this book? What did the author want you to learn? ☐ Do you think this is a good title for this book? Why or why not? ☐ What are some new words you learned?
- ☐ Do you have any questions after reading this book?

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Sight Word Tips

Sight words are common words taught to recognize easily by sight without sounding them out. They tend to be high frequency words, so it is important that students learn to recognize them with increasing automaticity. This year, your child was introduced to many new sight words. We recommend that rising Third Grade students practice reading the following words in isolation and in the context of familiar stories! Although many students can READ the words, they are often more challenging to spell. These words are those which you should hold your child accountable for spelling correctly.

Pull full both talk walk done goes pretty again please animal sure use used against
knew to know always often once only house move right place together eight large
change city every family night carry world answer picture something different learn
earth father brother mother great country away America school thought whose won
son breakfast head ready favorite early ocean cousin lose tomorrow beautiful
brought bought piece enough special laugh daughter trouble couple young

By the end of second grade, students should also read and spell the days of the week and the months of the year correctly.

Sight words can be practiced in many fun and creative ways to keep learning interesting and hands-on for your child. Use the activities on the next page for ideas on engaging sight word practice. For a few activities, you may like to have your child make flashcards by writing the words on index cards.

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Sight Word Games

Can You Find?

Lay cards down on a table, face up. Ask your child to find a given word. If they find it, they keep it. Keep going until all cards are picked up.

Who Has More?

Flash the cards to your child. If they read the word within five seconds, they keep the card. If not, you keep the card. The goal is that your child has more than you at the end of the game.

Concentration

Make two copies of the words, and take turns turning over two cards at a time trying to make a match. The player must read the word correctly to get the match.

Go Fish

Using the double copies of the word cards, pass out all but five or six of the words. Put these cards in a stack, face down on the table. Look for matches in your set of cards (each player must be able to read the word, or the set goes in the stack on the table). Take turns asking each other for the cards to make matches. The person with the most matches at the end is the winner.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Sight Word Games

Chalk Writing

Use sidewalk chalk to practice writing the review sight words. Call out a word and have your child write the word out in the driveway or on the sidewalk.

Sidewalk Chalk Hop

Write the letters in random order all over the driveway or on a sidewalk. Call out a word and have your child hop to spell the word.

Scrambled Eggs

Write some of the words on a whiteboard or spell them out using letter tiles like

Scrabble tiles, but do not spell them correctly. Mix the letters up in order. Time your child to see how fast they are able to unscramble the words to write or build them correctly.

Lego Spelling

Write letters on old Legos. You may want to duplicate the letters on several Legos including multiples of the vowels. Have your child build words by connecting the Legos.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Responding to Reading

Writing about reading is a great way to practice both important skills in the summer. Your child can write in their journal about some of the books they read using the following prompts to help them get started. Each entry should have the title and author of the book so it can be referred to again.

FICTION

- ☐ What was your favorite part of the story? Why was this part important?
- ☐ How did the main character change in the story?
- ☐ What lesson did the character learn in the story?
- ☐ Does this book (or a part of the book) remind you of another book? Explain why.
- ☐ Does this book (or a part of the book) remind you of someone or something in your life? Explain why.
- ☐ What was unique about the way the author wrote the book?
- ☐ Describe the main character. What are some character traits that describe him/her? Use evidence from the book.
- ☐ What was the setting? How does the setting impact the story?
- ☐ What was the problem? How was the problem solved?
- ☐ How are you similar or different from the main character? Use at least two reasons to describe your thinking.

NONFICTION

- ☐ What new or interesting information did you learn in this book?
- ☐ Describe two nonfiction text features that you noticed. How did they help you understand the topic?
- ☐ What was the main idea of the book? What did the author want you to learn?
- ☐ What is something unique about this nonfiction book?
- ☐ Why do you think the author chose the title? Is it a good title? Why or why not? If not, come up with an alternate title.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Suggested Reading List

FICTION

- *The Stories Julian Tells* – Ann Cameron
- *The Hundred Dresses* – Eleanor Estes
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* – Shel Silverstein
- *Henry Huggins* – Beverly Cleary
- *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* – Beverly Cleary
- *Frindle* – Andrew Clements
- *How to Train Your Dragon* – Cressida Cowell
- *Fantastic Mr. Fox* – Roald Dahl
- *The Tale of Despereaux* – Kate DiCamillo
- *Half Magic* – Edgar Eager
- *The Zoo at the Edge of the World* – Eric Kahn Gale
- *Bliss* – Kathryn Littlewood
- *Dragon Slayers Academy* – Kate McMullan
- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* - J.K. Rowling
- *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* – Louis Sachar
- *Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective* – Donald Sobol
- *The Boxcar Children* – Gertrude Chandler Warner
- *Charlotte's Web* – E.B. White
- *Mango and Bambang: The Not-a-Pig* – Clara Vulliamy
- *Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere* – Elise Gravel
- *King of the Bench: No Fear!* – Steve Moore
- *Pip Bartlett's Guide to Unicorn Training* – Maggie Stiefvater & Jackson Pearce
- *Detective Gordon: A Case in Any Case* – Ulf Nilsson
- *Upside Down Magic: Showing Off* – Sarah Mlynowski, Lauren Myracle & Emily Jenkins
- *Marty Pants #1: Do Not Open!* – Mark Parisi
- *Harper and the Scarlet Umbrella* – Cerrie Burnell
- *Heartwood Hotel: A True Home* – Kallie George
- *Third Grade Mermaid* – Peter Raymundo
- *Jada Jones Series* - Kelly Starling Lyons
- *Fish Are Not Afraid of Doctors* – J.E. Morris
- *The Funniest Man in Baseball: The True Story of Max Patkin* – Audrey Vernick
- *Grilled Cheese and Dragons* – Nancy Krulik
- *Jasmine Toguchi, Drummer Girl* – Debbi Michiko Florence

NON-FICTION

- *100 Things to Be When You Grow Up* – National Geographic
- *The Official DC Super Hero Joke Book* – Michael Robin, Sarah Parvis & Noah Smith
- *Seymour Simon Books*
- *If You Were a Kid...* – Scholastic
- *A Picture Book of...Biographies* – David Adler
- *Let's Read and Find Out Series*
- *True Books Series*
- *National Geographic Kids Readers*
- *10 Fascinating Facts About...* – Rookie Star
- *You're Pulling My Leg* – Pat Street
- *What Happens to Our Trash* – D.J.Ward
- *If Sharks Disappeared* – Lily Williams
- *Math for All Seasons* – Greg Tang
- *How Things Work in the House* – Lisa Ernst
- *National Geographic Weird But True Series*
- *Who Was... Biographies*
- *What Was... Series*
- *Around the World on Eighty Legs* – Amy Gibson
- *Scholastic True or False*
- *If You... Series*
- *Lincoln Tells a Joke: How Laughter Saved the President (And the Country)* – Stacy Innerst
- *Glow Animals with Their Own Night-Lights* – W.H. Beck
- *The Quickest Kid in Clarksville* - Pat Zietlow Miller
- *Beatrix Potter and the Unfortunate Tale of a Borrowed Guinea Pig* – Deborah Hopkinson
- *DNA Detective* - Tanya Lloyd
- *Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever* – H. Joseph Hopkins
- *The Notorious Benedict Arnold* – Steve Sheinkin
- *Nice Work, Franklin* – Suzanne Tripp Juryman
- *Mean Machines Customized Cars* – Kane Miller
- *The Kid from Diamond Street: The Extraordinary Story of Baseball Legend Edith Houghton* – Audrey Vernick
- *I Am Series*
- *Yaks Yack Animal Word Pairs* – Linda Sue Park
- *Masterpieces Up Close Western Painting from the 14th to 20th Centuries* – Claire d'Harcourt
- *Biggest and Smallest! Guinness World Records Over 300 Fun Facts*

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Summer Themed Writing Prompts

If your child has trouble thinking of what to write from time to time (or even most of the time!), give them the following prompts to get their juices flowing!

- What is your favorite family summer tradition?
- How would summer vacation be different if it was taken during the months of December through February?
- Describe how to build a sandcastle. Use sequence words to help you.
- Does your family have any special rules during the summer? What are they?
- What is your favorite summer memory so far?
- What is your favorite summer treat? Why?
- Should you catch lightning bugs and keep them in a jar? Why or why not?
- Is it better to be outside or inside during the summer? Explain your thinking.
- Bedtime should be later during the summer. Agree or disagree? Explain why.
- Should teachers assign summer homework? Why or why not?
- How did you spend the 4th of July?
- Which month of summer is best? Why?
- Write a poem describing a beautiful summer day. Use your five senses to help!
- Write a story from the perspective of a fish. What would it be like to live underwater?
- Write about the first time you jumped or dove into the deep end of the pool.
- Have you learned a new skill this summer? If so, write about it. If not, what would you like to learn?
- How are the beginning and end of summer different?
- Write about a summer camp experience.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Summer Postcards

Feel free to send us postcards from your summer, whether you travel far and wide, or stay close to home! We would love to stay connected!

Please address postcards to:

The Wardlaw + Hartridge School

Lower School

1295 Inman Avenue

Edison, NJ 08820



Summer Home-to-School Connections

Math Practice

The best way to continue to develop your child's mathematical skills is to continue building their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication & division facts and reviewing concepts taught throughout their Second Grade school year. One of the most important concepts in this grade is building through tens. Children should work on their mental math skills by utilizing ten. For example, $22 + 34 = ?$ {Think: $20 + 34$ is 54, so $22 + 24$ is 56.} In this case, don't write it down! They can practice their mental math this summer with anything! While children of this age have a varied set of knowledge and abilities, as they enter Third Grade, the best way to review the important concepts taught in Second Grade is to play games. Whenever possible, provide concrete representations of the numbers/concepts. For example, if you are practicing addition stories, provide your child with items like Cheerios, Legos, marbles, etc. to allow them to "see" and visualize the numbers.

Here are a few tips, as well, for summer math learning:

- View road trips as a mobile classroom.

Have children count cars, trucks, etc on the highway. Talk about shapes you see and make up addition and subtraction stories about your travels.

- Use everyday errands as learning opportunities.

At the grocery store, review numbers while you choose groceries, for example, adding the quantity of apples, and do simple number/cardinal (1^{st} , 2^{nd}) recognition while standing in line.

- Transform routine chores into fun lessons for children.

Sort laundry: colors, whites, and darks; bake and cook together: measuring, counting, etc.

- Turn children's collections into math lessons.

Children love to collect and gather items, especially at the park, beach, forest, or even in the backyard. Encourage children to sort their items by size, color, shape, or texture.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Educational Apps to Support Learning

Authentic, tactile experiences will always be best for your child's learning. However, there are some excellent apps on the market, which are good supplemental ways to add to your child's learning experience. Below find a list of apps you might like to try.

- Short Vowel Word Study*
- Long Vowel Word Study*
- Speed Reading Academy*
- EPIC Virtual Library*
- Reading Rainbow*
- Time for Kids*
- Starfall*
- Sight Words Learning Games*
- Endless Spanish*
- BOB Books*
- Sight Word Ninja*
- Dr. Seuss Treasury*
- Splash Math*
- Khan Academy*
- FlowPlus*
- Marble Math Junior Mental Math*
- Bubble Math*
- Lola's Fruit Shop Sudoku*
- Mystery Math Town*
- iTooch*

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Self-Help, Self-Impulse Control, & Routines

As children grow, their ability to care for themselves in small ways also grows. Help your child develop self-help skills over the summer. Your child is still learning and it's our job, as parents and teachers, to be patient and teach them these skills also.

Help your child learn to grow as a member of the classroom community by learning how to share, take turns, be kind, honest, and respect others. You can also have them practice by following one and two step directions to follow within their routines. For example: When I get ready for bed, I use the bathroom, wash my hands, and brush my teeth. Following some sort of daily routine that you determine will prepare students for the daily routines they will learn to follow independently in Third Grade. As your child grows, you will notice new developmental changes in their ability to be independent. Seven and eight-year-olds can make many choices on their own. Provide them with either/or choices throughout their days to allow them to exercise their growing need to do things themselves.

Summer Home-to-School Connections

Summer Ideas from Teachers of the Related Arts

There are also many things your family can do to support the work your child learned in classes such as Spanish, Music, and Art.

ART

- Plan to visit some museums over the summer. Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton is a great place for a day out with the family. The Princeton Museum at the University is also a nice first-size museum to go to together.
- Have plenty of art supplies on hand, especially paper. Do art activities together, but also allow your child to have the gift of freedom of expression.
- As you read picture books with your child, have them describe to you not only what they see in the book, but also have them describe what they see in their mind.
- Limit time on devices, encourage building with blocks, playing board games, rollerblading, and riding bikes together. This helps them develop ideas for their drawings.

SPANISH

- Review what we studied in Second Grade using the LS Spanish Haiku Page by saying the words you find there, and have your child point them out on the webpage.
- Help your child become more familiar with Spanish by watching TV programs, "El Perro y el Gato" or using website "Noah Comprende."
- Read bilingual books to your child checking them out from your local library.

MUSIC

- Listen to music with your child! All types of music!
- Classical music is an excellent way to calmly start the day. Listen to classical music during breakfast, or a transition time.
- There is a wide variety of different musical toys to expose children to new instruments without making a financial commitment to the instrument itself.
- Podcasts designed for children are also a great way to develop your child musically.

- *PeaceOut*
- *Saturday Morning Cereal Bowl*
- *OKTK Kids' Music Monthly*
- *KidsCorner*

Summer Home-to-School Connections

PLAY

Most importantly, the best thing you can do with your child over the summer is to spend time together, rest, and let them play! Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact with the world around them.

As outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, play is the work of the child for many important developmentally crucial reasons.

1. Children make their own decisions.

When children choose how to play for themselves, they experience freedom in making those choices. They also begin to see connections between choice and the consequences or results of that choice. The type of toys or materials parents offer can help their children make more meaningful decisions. Open-ended materials can be used in many ways so children can decide for themselves how to use them. For example, a child can imagine a block to be a fire truck or any number of things. A toy fire truck, on the other hand, is usually used as a fire truck. Foam pieces, little wooden sticks, ribbon scraps, and other reusable resources are all open-ended materials that inspire creative thinking and delight when children use them to make something no one has ever made before.

2. Children are intrinsically motivated.

The impulse to play comes from a natural desire to understand the world. This play impulse is as strong as your child's desire for food or sleep. It is this intrinsic motivation that allows a child to regulate their own feelings and desires in order to keep playing. Because children eventually find it more important to be part of play with their friends than to satisfy their own wants and needs at that moment, children learn self-control. And self control has been shown to lead to success in later years, especially in today's information age, where distractions are part of daily life.

3. Children become immersed in the moment.

In true play, children are so fully engaged that they lose awareness of their surroundings, time, and space. In this risk-free atmosphere where reality is suspended, children have the security and safety they need to experiment, try new ideas, and investigate the laws of nature. Although they are immersed in their play, children still can recognize reality versus fantasy, something parents often wonder about.

4. Play is spontaneous, not scripted.

Often, play is totally unplanned. Other times, play is planned but a child impulsively makes a change. One child changes his mind, or perhaps a toy does not cooperate. This sense of the unknown provides children with opportunities to develop flexibility in their thinking and decision making, which is a vital life skill.

5. Play is enjoyable.

Play always has an emotional response attached to it. Without this emotional connection, the experience is simply an activity; it is not PLAY. Enjoyment is the direct result of engaging in play. It is FUN! These five essential elements of play outline why play provides your child with a rich experience. And isn't that what we want for our children, to develop play memories that will become the "good old days"?

And so, all of the suggestions and recommendations we provide you with cannot take the place of play. They are all supplemental to the core of the work of the child. Let them play.