

Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 4

Making Predictions

As a young reader, your child is learning to make predictions while reading. “What do you think will happen next?” “Who do you think drank Sara’s lemonade?” These types of questions we ask children as they’re reading help them learn to monitor their understanding of the story while thinking ahead to the next part. If your child is able to make good and fairly accurate predictions while reading, chances are she comprehends the story well.

Scientists, just like readers, make predictions all the time. In fact, scientists use predictions as part of their hypothesis, or question they try to answer through their experiments. Help your child begin to see the connection between what she does as a reader and what she can do as a scientist.

Below are two simple ways you can encourage your child to put her prediction skills to work as a scientist:

- 1. Play favorites.** What is our family’s favorite flavor of ice-cream? What is our favorite movie to watch together? What is our favorite bedtime story? Choose a question, or make up your own, that your child is excited about. First, have your child predict or guess the answer to the question. Help her write down her prediction. “I think chocolate is our family’s favorite flavor of ice cream.” Then, have your child ask each member of the family for an answer. Have your child record the answers using a special Science Notebook or simply mark tally marks on paper. Finally, ask your child to compare her prediction to the actual answers.
- 2. Good guess!** Estimation is often very similar to a prediction. In both cases, your child will be working to make a good guess about an answer. As with our Play Favorites idea, encourage your child to write down (or write together) the questions and answers in a special Science Notebook. Whenever possible, encourage the use of scientific words like estimation, predication, collect data, analyze, and prove. Here are some estimation questions that require your child to make a prediction:
 - How many noodles will it take to fill up this jar? Encourage your child to use scientific language and thinking to answer. “I predict it will take 300 noodles to fill the jar.”
 - How many steps is it from our front door to the mailbox?
 - How much does our dog weigh?
 - How many library books fit on one shelf?
 - How long do you think it will take for the ice cubes to freeze (or melt)?

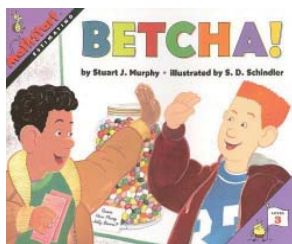
We predict your child will have great fun with these activities! And you can have fun knowing that you’re helping your child make important connections between the skills of prediction, reading, and science.

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.

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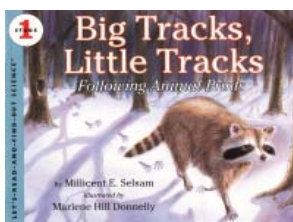
Recommended children's books



Betcha! Estimating

By Stuart J. Murphy

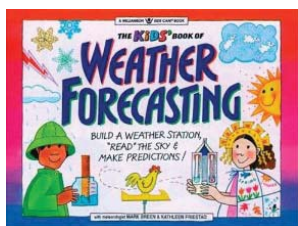
Two friends practice their estimating skills on their way to a store that's having a contest to figure out how many jellybeans are in the jar. (Age level: 4-8)



Big Tracks, Little Tracks

By Millicent E. Selsman

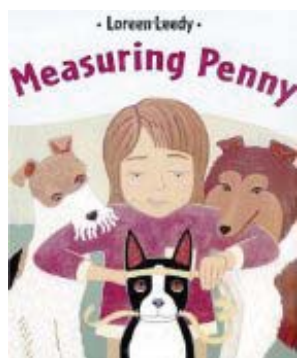
Does a cat use his claws when he walks? How does a rabbit run? What does a skunk smell like? Find out the answers in this book that teaches young readers how to track animals by finding footprints and other clues. The questions in the book encourage reflection and help children make predictions about what they are reading. (Age level: 4-8)



The Kid's Book of Weather Forecasting

By Mark Breen and Kathleen Friestad

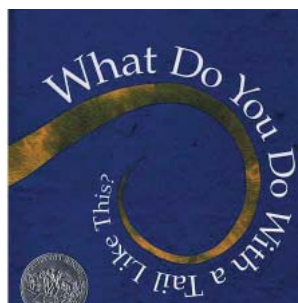
In this hands-on science book, kids learn how to make a barometer, record their observations in a Weather Log, use graphs and charts, read the cloud and wind direction, and look to the sunset glow to make more accurate predictions. (Age level: 8-12)



Measuring Penny

By Loreen Leedy

A young girl named Lisa has a homework assignment to measure something in as many ways as she can. "Use your imagination!" says the teacher. Lisa chooses her dog Penny and discovers, among other things, that Penny's tail is one biscuit long. This engaging book teaches the difference between standard and non-standard measurement. (Age level: 4-8)



What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?

By Steve Jenkins

Animals use their tails, noses, mouths, and feet in very different ways. With each new spread, children can try to guess which animal each part belongs to and how it might be used. Beautiful cut paper illustrations. (Age level: 4-8)