



MESSAGE IN A BACKPACK™

Recipes to Road Maps: Fun Ways to Learn from Everyday Information

Crystal N. Wise and Nell K. Duke

Information is all around us. Learning how to find, critically read, and create information are important skills that you can start helping your child build today. In fact, you're probably already doing it! Are you reading about places to visit with your child or writing family recipes together? Then you're showing your child the value of informational texts.

From a picture book about how rainbows appear in the sky to an in-depth website on car repair, informational texts help us follow our interests and solve our problems. For young children, listening to, reading, writing, and presenting informational texts is a great way to build knowledge and vocabulary in science, social studies, and the arts—and a great foundation for success in school and life.

Here are some ways to help your child learn from—and be inspired by—informational texts.

- 1. Find your child's interests.** Does your child love dinosaurs? Dolphins? Dogs? Visit the library together or help your child search online for books, images, or videos on topics of interest.
- 2. Make running errands faster and more interesting.** Make a list of errands with your child and then use a map to plan the route together. Ask your local librarian for child-friendly materials related to the errands, such as books about how foods you buy at the grocery store are made.

3. Create recipes and cook up some learning.

While cooking your child's favorite meal, talk about the ingredients and steps. Help your child write down the recipe or video record the preparation as your child describes each step ("Cut . . ." "Stir. . ."). Then, share the written or video recipe with friends or other family members, especially for occasions when your little one is their guest!

- 4. Watch *Molly of Denali* on PBS KIDS!** Molly is a curious 10-year-old who loves to explore the world around her. She also enjoys using informational texts to solve problems and help others. As you watch *Molly of Denali* with your child, talk about the different types of texts Molly uses and creates. Discuss how Molly uses these texts to solve real-world problems, satisfy her curiosity, and teach others.

Find more ideas for learning with informational text at <https://pbskids.org/molly>.

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