

ELEMENTARY PARENT NEWSLETTER

TIPS, IDEAS, AND ADVICE FOR ELEMENTARY PARENTS

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Here are some questions to ask your child this month.

- ▶ What is the best part of your school day?
- ▶ What are you learning in math now?
- ▶ What new friends have you made?
- ▶ Is there anything you'd like some extra help with?



WORKING WITH OUR SCHOOL

Everyone at our school wants your child to enjoy school and have a successful year. To make sure this happens, we need to work together as a team. Here's how you can help.

- ▶ Stay informed. Attend parent programs, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Read newsletters and regularly check our website for news and updates.
- ▶ Get to know your child's teacher. Learn how to best communicate with him/her, and how to keep informed on your child's progress.
- ▶ By your words and actions, show your child that doing well in school and getting a good education are very important to you.
- ▶ If you ever have concerns about your child's progress, or if your child is having problems at school, talk to your child's teacher. When teachers and parents work together, great things can happen. Don't hesitate to reach out!

TALK ABOUT IT!

Talk to your child about all the different people who work in our school, and about what they do. Make sure your child knows that everyone wants the best for him/her, and that we are all available to help your child in any way we can.

HELP YOUR CHILD CREATE A STUDY PLAN

Your child most likely has regular homework. Having a plan for getting homework done can go a long way in keeping your child organized and less stressed.

Help your child decide when is the best time to do homework. Some students want to get their homework done right after school. Others want to take a break and do their homework later. Help your child determine the best time to do homework, and create a schedule that makes homework a part of your child's daily routine.

Think about anything that might interrupt your child's study plan. For instance, if your child is easily distracted, turn off the TV and make homework time a quiet time in your household. If your child has a tendency to procrastinate, make a "no TV or screen time" rule until homework is done.

EVERYDAY ACTIVE LEARNING

Active learning is learning that engages a child in the learning process (e.g., exploring personal interests, problem solving, asking and answering questions).

This month's active learning tip is to watch something educational and discuss it with your child. Whether it's a nature documentary on TV or a science YouTube video, learning something together is a great way to spend quality time with your child.

- ▶ For ideas on educational programming, check out commonsensemedia.org.
- ▶ Discuss what you've learned, and if it's a subject your child is interested in, go online to learn more.

SMART STUDYING

When doing homework, encourage your child to alternate between subjects and types of assignments. For example, your child might start with reading a language arts assignment, switch to math, and then read a social studies assignment.

TIPS FOR READING A TEXTBOOK

Reading a textbook is much different than reading a picture or chapter book. Here are some tips for helping your child get the most out of textbook reading assignments.

- ▶ Make sure your child pays extra attention to words in **bold** and *italic* print. These are usually important terms.
- ▶ Reading a textbook requires more focus and concentration. Remind your child to read textbooks more slowly.
- ▶ After completing a reading assignment, encourage your child to take a few minutes to review what he/she has learned. *Review is the key to learning!*



HELPING YOUR CHILD MAKE DECISIONS

As children get older, they have more and more opportunities to make decisions for themselves.

You can help your child learn to make smart decisions by encouraging him/her to use this step-by-step process.

- ▶ Step 1: Figure out what your choices are.
- ▶ Step 2: Identify the good and bad things about each choice.
- ▶ Step 3: Make sure you have all the information you need.
- ▶ Step 4: Think about your choices and make your decision.

Give your child opportunities to practice this process. For instance, you might let your child decide how to spend his/her allowance, choose what sport to play, or decide what the family should do on a weekend family outing.

By allowing children to make small “safe” decisions, parents are helping their children develop the skills they will need to make the bigger, more important decisions later.



ADJUSTING TO NEW SOCIAL SITUATIONS

The start of a new year can be stressful. In addition to new teachers and classes, students also have new classmates and social situations to deal with. Even the most outgoing children sometimes have a hard time adjusting. Here’s how you can help.

Talk about ways to break the ice. Many children are naturally talkative, but if your child has a hard time jumping into conversations or play, offer your child suggestions for befriending other kids, such as complimenting their shirt or bookbag—or by asking a question. You can even practice at home if it will help your child be more comfortable. And remind your child that sometimes it takes a while to make new friends.

Be supportive. Like adults, children often suffer from insecurity (“*they won’t like me*”), so help build your child’s confidence by complimenting his/her actions and skills (“*You did an awesome job figuring out that puzzle*” or “*I really like your drawing!*”)

MONTHLY CHALLENGE

Model calm behavior

Children can sometimes be challenging on the best of days, but if you’re able to model behavior that defuses a frustrating situation, you will be teaching your child by example.

When your child is being especially challenging, walk away, take a deep breath, or calmly explain why you’re frustrated. Show your child positive ways to deal with anger/frustration.

“Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.”

Garrison Keillor

CAREER CORNER

Your child likely understands the progression of education from elementary school through middle and high school, but he/she might not know what happens after that. Talk about four-year colleges, two-year colleges, and career and trade schools—and about how each can prepare students for a career.

BONDING WITH YOUR CHILD: FUN THINGS TO SHARE AND DO

A strong parental bond is key to student success!

Fun facts to share with your child

- ▶ Only female mosquitoes bite people.
- ▶ Horses and cows sleep standing up.

Spend time together

- ▶ Make homemade pizza, brownies, or bake a cake together.
- ▶ Visit a historical site in your area.

CHARACTER MATTERS: ADAPTABILITY

Young students sometimes have trouble being adaptable—being able to deal with uncertainty or change.

Remind your child that things don't always go the way we expect them to, and explain how this can be a good thing because it can help us grow. Share times that you've had to adapt to new circumstances or deal with change.

Also, don't hesitate to share with your child times when you've found it difficult to deal with new situations.

Q&A: QUALITY TIME

- Q:** During the school year, weekdays at our house are really hectic. Between work, homework, and activities, I feel like it's hard to spend quality time together as a family. How can I make the most of the time we spend together?
- A:** When life is hectic and everyone is busy, focus on making the time you spend together meaningful. The best way to do this is to turn things you're already doing into quality time that you spend together. Here are some ideas.
- ▶ Have your child help you prepare dinner. (Even young children can complete simple kitchen tasks like setting the table or measuring ingredients.)
 - ▶ Have conversations while driving to and from places. Talk about your day while driving your child home from school or to after school activities.
 - ▶ Build quality time into your routine, such as a bedtime book at the same time every night, or always playing a board game after dinner.

