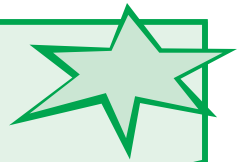




# Tips and Activities to Help Your Child Succeed In School



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Parent Resource Newsletter

## Parents Are a Child's First and Most Important Teacher

### Good Behavior

We all want our children to behave at home and at school. As parents we want our children to feel good about themselves, which doesn't mean letting them do whatever they want. We need to set boundaries and discipline children.

Good communication is very important:

1. Tell your children what you want them to do or what behavior you expect of them and follow through.
2. Things have changed since we were children. Explaining things and involving children in the process of behaving is seen as the best way to do things now, rather than ordering children to do things. Each family situation is different, but the key is to promote self-esteem and good behavior.



### Helping Your Child Prepare for High Stakes Tests

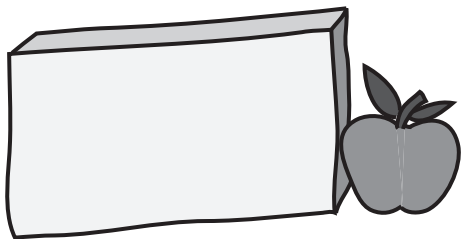
- Attendance is important. When your child misses a day they have missed a great deal of learning. Try to make doctor appointments after school, and plan vacations for holidays or non-school days if possible.
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep on a school night, especially just before the testing date.
- It is especially important for your child to have a healthy breakfast on a testing day. Remember high fats, sugars and carbohydrates are not good for learning and memory. Everything in moderation. Protein is beneficial for memory.
- Talk to your children about the importance of doing their very best in school every day. Offer praise and encouragement for a job well done.
- Be positive. Emotions do affect learning and memory.

**"We are all gifted; some just haven't opened their gifts yet." by Eric Jensen**

## Better Bag Lunches

We all get bored with the same old thing for lunch, especially when you are brown bagging and away from home. Create some new choices for lunch. Here are a few new ideas:

1. **On a Roll-** Instead of using sliced bread buy the small dinner rolls to make a mini sandwich.
2. **Other Choices to Go with Peanut Butter-** How about making a peanut butter sandwich and adding one of these choices- bananas, raisins, dried cranberries, marshmallow fluff, apple slices, pretzels or mini chocolate chips.
3. **Pasta Salad-** Cook and cool a fun shaped pasta and then toss in a veggie that your child likes like peas, corn, or broccoli and cheese, or perhaps add bits of turkey, pepperoni, taco beef with some salad dressing.
4. **Salad Bar in a Bag-** Fill a baggy with salad fixings that your child likes such as lettuce, cukes, tomatoes, etc. and then add a small container of dressing.
5. **Pinwheel Wraps-** Make a sandwich by filling a tortilla wrap with meat and cheese and perhaps some condiment and then rolling it and slicing it into pinwheels.
6. **Breakfast for Lunch-** Pack some low fat yogurt with a cereal that your child likes and perhaps some berries to add over the top.



## Grades K to 1 At Home Activities

1. While driving or walking along draw attention to signs on the road or familiar restaurants- STOP, McDonalds, Burger King, etc., or at home or the grocery store draw attention to labels on boxes or cans. You will be surprised at how much your child will pick up.
2. Draw attention to ways that you write such as, making a grocery list, or a to-do list, or even when you write a note or a letter.
3. Place signs on different items in the house such as, “door”, “trash can”, “stove”, “windows”, or even label pictures of family members on the refrigerator or in a picture frame.
4. Magnetic letters on the refrigerator are great for writing words such as, “dog” and “cat”, etc.
5. Encourage your child’s reading or writing in a positive way even when they make a mistake.

**Prepare a healthy breakfast for your children, or help them to prepare a breakfast with healthy choices. Research shows that we learn better with diets low in carbohydrates, fats and sugars.**

## List of Effective, Inexpensive Home Activities for Learning

- Cut out a food pyramid from the side of a cereal box. Talk about the foods that you and your family like to eat and talk about which food group this would be in.
- Have your child cut out healthy foods from a magazine and glue them down on a paper plate. Talk about things that are good for you.
- Make up a story with your child or children as the main characters. Lead them to add details to the story.
- Have your child cut out some pictures to add to all four sides of a milk carton or boutique tissue box. You could even use personal pictures. Students will tell a story about the pictures or write a story.

## Parent Pointers for Math

1. Probability is essential in understanding in many areas of math. Playing games of chance is one way to develop skills in probability, such as flipping a coin to see how many times it will come up heads or tails, or throwing 2 dice and adding them together to see which numbers come up more times.

2. Playing around with money and batching in groups of 2's, 5's, and 10's teaches children matching skills and helps them in the beginning stages of skip counting, addition and multiplication. They will also learn how to identify coins and understand the value of pennies, nickels, dimes, etc.
3. Learning to use a calculator will help your child with estimation skills, as well as learn addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

## Older Elementary Readers

As students get older they have their own ideas about what they want to read, or not. In school they don't always have a choice as to what they read so at home it's good for them to be able to choose. Many children want to read easy, light fiction books with very little literary value in their leisure time.

Some students want to read graphic novels or comic books. Whatever students want to read whether it is from an online source or in a book, magazine or newspaper, parents need to encourage reading in any form. Some students enjoy listening to books on tape, which is also a good activity to hear the story from a character's tone of voice. This may lead them to want to read more books about this character, or by this author.

Letting your child see his or her parents reading is a great motivator.

## Promote Reading at Home

1. Make sure your children read every day. Reading is a skill that improves with practice like any other skill. Research has found that children of any age that read for fun at least 30 minutes a day at home become better readers at school.
2. Get in the habit of going to the library on a regular basis. It's free. Everyone in the family can have a library card.
3. Jim Trelease in his book "The Read Aloud Handbook" reports on the research that shows the most important thing parents can do to help their children become better readers is to read aloud to them. Some tips from his book include:
  - It is never too early to start reading to your children.
  - Continue reading to your children as they grow older or have them read to you.
  - Read books to your children that you enjoy.
4. Give books as gifts and create a place for your children to keep their books.
5. Make extra reading time a privilege such as "You can stay up 15 extra minutes if you read in bed."
6. If you have problems reading ask an older child or a friend to read to your children. Then talk about the books with your children.

**No matter how old your children are, we all like to have stories read to us.**

## Report Cards

Report card time can be intimidating for a child that gets less than perfect grades. Some children feel pressured to get good grades and feel like failures when they don't succeed. Here are some tips for dealing with report cards.

1. Stay calm. The report card is not a reflection on your parenting skills and you don't want the report card to affect your child's self esteem.
2. Talk to your child and try to be positive. Ask him or her what both of you could do to improve the report card. Don't compare your children. Every child has different strengths and weaknesses. Not all children will get straight A's.
3. Set realistic goals and stay on top on your child's work that comes home. Are you noticing improvement? Help your child to feel good about the extra effort they are putting in.
4. It is always a good idea to contact the teacher so you can work together in helping to motivate your child. There may be things you can do at home with your child to help.

**Studies show that frequent absenteeism in the early grades is a predictor of truancy in high school.**

