Forest Hills
Title I
Reading

Families + Schools = Success
# Table of Contents

- **Introduction** ......................................................... 2
- **Breaking Down the Basics** ........................................... 2
- **Components of the Reading Process** ............................... 3
- **Phonemic A-what-ness?** ............................................. 4
- **Learning the Lingo** .................................................. 5
- **Think Outside the Book** ............................................. 6
- **Beyond Bedtime** ..................................................... 8
- **Tools of the Trade** .................................................. 8
- **Stocking a Super Shelf** ............................................. 9
- **For More Information** ............................................... 9
Introduction

What's the biggest factor in your child's overall academic success? (Hint: it's not her* ability to memorize the entire Friday night TV lineup.) It's reading. Simply put, a child who reads well does well.

But research shows that good readers aren't born, they're made—often in word-rich homes where library cards outnumber video games. Which, Mom and Dad, is where you come in.

If you can get your elementary schooler to read for pleasure, you'll be giving her a gift that will pay dividends both now and later. Help her see that books are like passports to the world around her, and you'll be handing her that world.

This guide will give you the tools to do just that—turn your child into a lifelong reader. It'll also help you wade through some of the educational jargon associated with elementary-level reading. Because underneath the talk about phonics, sight words, decoding skills and phonemes, it's all about kids and books.

And, really, what's more wonderful than that?

*Each child is unique, so this publication alternates using masculine and feminine pronouns.

Breaking Down the Basics

You might think of reading as involving three simple steps: Grab a snack, find a comfy chair and crack open a book. And for you, it probably is that straightforward. For elementary-schoolers, though, there's a little more to it.

As your child develops his reading skills, you may hear his teachers mention different components of the reading process, as well as the degree to which he is (or isn't) mastering them.

To help you better understand these components, following is a breakdown of the reading process itself, along with a few "signs of success" to watch for.
Components of the Reading Process

Decoding: (See also "Learning the Lingo" on page 5)
With this skill, a child uses what he knows about pronunciation and the sounds letters make to figure out written words. Decoding is similar to "sounding out," but it requires him to have a deeper understanding of the letter-sound relationship (for example, such as knowing that, when used together, "p" and "h" make the /f/ sound).
- Sign of Success: A child with strong decoding skills can generally figure out unfamiliar words. For instance, he'll see "rhinoceros" and know that the "c" sounds like /s/. If he encounters "through," he'll realize that the "gh" is silent.

Using Context Clues:
This skill allows kids to use the whole of what they're reading to understand confusing sections or words. It also boosts their vocabulary. For instance, a child might encounter the following passage: "The pond was stagnant; the murky, unmoving water looked like mud." Using context clues, he'll be able to determine that "stagnant" means murky and unmoving. Not only has he learned a new word, he hasn't had to interrupt his reading to look it up.
- Sign of Success: Kids who use context clues tend not to stumble over terms while reading. They know to search for hints about a confusing word's meaning. And when there aren't any clues to be found, these kids head for the dictionary.

Comprehension:
This skill has to do with grasping the big picture. A child with good comprehension truly understands what he's reading, despite the presence of unfamiliar words or nuanced ideas. He can also go over a story and get a sense of its tone, whether it's funny, serious, silly or dry.
- Sign of Success: A child with good reading comprehension will be able to tell you about (or answer questions about) what he's read. If he encounters an especially difficult text, he'll help himself comprehend it by rereading tricky passages, highlighting important information, or taking notes as needed.

Fluency:
With this skill, readers "put it all together and make it flow." Kids who read fluently are the ones most likely to enjoy reading for pleasure because they're not constantly tripping over words. While fluency may come naturally to some children, it can also be cultivated through patience and practice. Like other components of reading, it shouldn't be rushed.
- Sign of Success: Fluency is easy to spot (and hear). A child who reads fluently will get through stories at a reasonable clip. When he reads aloud, his speed will be conversational and pleasant to listen to.
Phonemic A-what-ness?

Actually, it’s phonemic awareness, and many experts think it plays a huge role in your child’s reading success. “But I wasn’t even aware I had phonemes!” you say. Relax, you don’t—but words do. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound. When put together, they form words. Take hat, for example. A child with good phonemic awareness understands that hat is made up of three individual sounds: /hhh/ /aaa/ and /ttt/. Put another way, phonemic awareness helps her separate the parts from the whole.

If your elementary-schooler seems to be struggling with the idea that “sounds form words,” there are plenty of ways you can help her grasp it (they’re fun, too, so she won’t suspect a thing!). Here are a few:

- Start clapping. Syllables, that is. Shout out a multi-syllable word—like elephant—and have your child clap her hands for each of the three syllables (el-e-phant). To make it more fun, alternate your roles as shouter and clapper.

- Make time for rhyme. Whether it’s reading the notoriously rhyme-filled Dr. Seuss or playing a word game (“Who can name the most words that rhyme with ‘sat’ in 10 seconds?”), rhyming is a great way for kids to discover that changing a word’s beginning sound creates an entirely new word.

- Keep her guessing. Start making letter sounds, and see how quickly she can blend them into a word. For instance, say, “/sss/ /kkk/ /iii/ ...” and see if she guesses skip. This is a good activity for long car trips, extended waits in line, or any time she’s a captive audience.
Learning the Lingo

What's the difference between reading-related terminology and quantum physics? Quantum physics is easier to understand. Still, it's a good idea to have a basic grasp of certain “academic” reading terms, especially if you hear them tossed around in relation to your child. Below are some of these intimidating-sounding terms, along with their not-so-scary definitions:

- **Age equivalent scores**: A type of scoring that takes into account the average age of students who receive the same score as an individual child. The individual child’s score, then, is said to be similar to younger students, to students his own age, or to older students. For instance, if an eight-year-old’s reading assessment score is determined to be similar to that of the average twelve-year-old, the younger child would be considered advanced. (Can also be assessed by grade as “grade equivalent scores.”)

- **Alliteration**: The repetition of an initial letter sound; often found in tongue-twisters (“Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”).

- **Assessment**: A gathering of data to determine a student’s overall performance. While assessments may take into account individual test scores, they are not tests themselves. Rather, tests are just one component used in making an assessment.

- **Basal reader**: A book used to teach reading. Typically, the same words are used over and over in each succeeding book, with new words being added regularly.

- **Blending**: Combining individual sounds to form a word. For instance, /mnn/ /oo0/ /nnn/ can be blended into *moon*.

- **Close**: Fill-in-the-blank stories that require a child to use clues from the text to figure out what comes next. (“Jacob knew not to touch the fire because the flames were _____.”) Cloze assessments can be used to evaluate things like reading comprehension and vocabulary.

- **Criterion-referenced assessment**: An assessment in which a child’s score is compared against a predetermined "acceptable" score (instead of against other students). This score is then judged to be either above or below that standard.

- **Decoding**: When a child uses what he knows about the “spelling-sound relationships” and pronunciation rules to figure out how to pronounce written words.

- **Diphthong**: A sound that starts with one vowel and gradually changes to another vowel within the same syllable, such as /oi/ in *foil*.

- **Fluent reading**: Smooth, easy reading (silent or aloud).
Learning the Lingo (continued)

- **Listening comprehension**: refers to a child’s understanding of what he hears, and can be broken into levels.
  - Lower-level comprehension can be seen in a child who only understands the basics of what he’s hearing (and “what he’s hearing” generally includes straightforward facts and simple vocabulary).
  - Higher-level comprehension involves the ability to grasp what’s being said and also to draw inferences from it.
  - Children with high level comprehension can often understand complicated syntax and vocabulary.

- **Phoneme awareness**: the understanding that spoken words are made up of individual sounds. (See also “Phonemic A-what-ness?”)
- **Phonics**: a type of reading instruction that emphasizes the sounds letters make and how these sounds are put together to form words.

- **Sight word**: a word that hasn’t yet been taught that can be figured out based on the story’s context or on other words a child knows.
- **Struggling reader**: any student who hasn’t grasped the reading skills or fluency deemed necessary for children his age.
- **Syntax**: the rules for putting words together into meaningful sentences.

- **Whole Language**: a type of reading instruction that emphasizes the recognition of whole words rather than letter-sound relationships (or phonics).

Think Outside the Book

Look around your house. What do you see? Hopefully, it’s books, magazines, newspapers and notepads. That’s because children who grow up surrounded by words are the same ones who learn to love them. Make your home word-rich, and your child will get the message: There’s something to this reading thing.

But “word-rich” means more than just having books around. In fact, if you have a reluctant reader, it may mean consciously moving beyond “curling up with a good book.” Luckily, there are many ways you can make your home reader-friendly, whether your own little reader is reluctant or not.

Here are several:

- **Read for pleasure yourself.** If your child regularly sees you with your nose in a book or magazine, she’ll be more likely to want to read herself. Also, talk to her about what you’re reading: “I just saw the strangest story in the newspaper .... .”

- **Start a family book club.** It doesn’t have to be formal, but why not set aside one night each week to chat about something you’ve all read? Better yet, do it during dinner—you’ll get the benefit of each other’s company and a good discussion.

- **Surround your child with letters and words.** From alphabet magnets on the fridge to writing tablets on the coffee table, give her plenty of opportunities to read, write and spell.
More ways to make your home reader-friendly:

- **Enjoy wordy games.** From Scrabble® to Hangman, there's no end to the "literary" games you can play. While you're at it, don't forget activities like 20 Questions, which will boost your child's vocabulary skills by encouraging her to come up with creative queries.

- **Limit TV watching.** Books are fabulous, but they can have a tough time competing with a loud, flashy TV. So don't let them. Instead, limit your child's television time to an hour or two per day, and encourage her to spend more time reading. And, experts say, a child should never have a TV in her bedroom.

- **Develop incentives for reluctant readers.** If your child balks at books, make reading more attractive. Consider rewarding her—such as with stickers or a trip to the playground—for each age-appropriate book she tackles on her own.

- **Make reading a part of everyday life.** If you're cooking dinner, ask your child to read you a recipe. If you're busy folding laundry, suggest that she read you a magazine article while you finish.

- **Tie reading into the things she loves.** If your child is obsessed with dinosaurs, search out some titles on the Jurassic period. If she can't get enough of racecars, go to the library for some books on how the speedsters work and where they're made.

- **Put books before movies.** Lots of popular children's stories—from *Harry Potter* to *Holes*—have leapt to the big screen. If your youngster is desperate to see one, let her—after she's read the book.

- **Read together.** Sharing stories doesn't have to be shelved along with your child's footie pajamas and pacifier. All kids, even older elementary schoolers, benefit from reading aloud with their parents. If yours balks, suggest that you take turns—you read a chapter to her, then she reads one to you (just don't doze off while she's reading!).

- **Take the pressure off.** Don't turn every trip to the library into a quest for the literary Holy Grail (i.e., the perfect book). Instead, give your child room to browse. Rather than herd her toward the same section each time, let her explore a different area. How about nonfiction? Poetry? Photography?

- **Give books as gifts.** Did you ever notice that birthdays and holidays seem to pop up every single year? To make these special occasions even more so, give books. It can be as simple as digging up one of your old favorites from the attic and giving it to your youngster, or as elaborate as sifting through a huge coffee table tome. Either way, it'll be priceless.
Beyond Bedtime

Few things give you that blissful, all-is-right-with-the-world feeling like snuggling up with your child and reading a bedtime story. But bedtime is only one of many terrific reading opportunities, and one that often goes by the wayside as kids grow. To keep your child in the habit of reading for pleasure, encourage him to indulge his bookishness during these times, too:

- **In the car.** Keep a small stack of “road reads” handy for the countless afternoons when you’re chauffeuring him to tee ball and band practice. Whether it’s comic books or leather-bound biographies, encourage your child to pass the miles by reading.

- **In the waiting room,** or checkout line ... or dry cleaners. A couple of paperbacks stashed in your purse—or your kid’s backpack—will be much-appreciated when a “quick errand” turns into a standing-in-line-for-20-minutes nightmare.

- **On the sidelines.** Yes, your child should probably focus on the game if he’s the team’s star center. But what if he’s just waiting while an older sibling finishes soccer practice? Hand him a book and prevent yet another senseless death from boredom.

- **In the morning.** On those rare occasions when the family’s not in a gotta-finish-breakfast-and-catch-the-bus frenzy, encourage your child to do some sunrise reading. It’s a nice alternative to brawling over who ate the last waffle.

Tools of the Trade

Want your home to be as reader-friendly as possible? Try stocking it with the following items:

- Books, magazines, comics and newspapers.
- Comfy reading spots (whether it’s an overstuffed chair or a big pillow on the floor).
- Quiet, TV-free spaces.
- Writing pads, a dictionary and a thesaurus.
- Pens, pencils, markers and anything else that encourages your child to put words on paper.
- An up-to-date, well-worn library card.
Stocking a Super Shelf

Perusing the library or bookstore for good children's titles can be a lot of fun—and more than a little intimidating. If you'd like some expert guidance, start with your local librarian. Give her an idea of your youngster's likes and dislikes, and ask her to come up with a few suggestions. Beyond that, try these resources for unearthing kid-friendly literary gems (along with tons of helpful reading-related information):


- **International Reading Association**, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, 302-731-1600, www.reading.org.


For More Information

"Glossary of Reading-Related Terms"
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
www.sedl.org/reading/framework/glossary.html#Norm-referenced%20assessment

"Supporting Phonemic Awareness Development in the Classroom"
bby Hallie Kay Yopp and Ruth Helen Yopp
www.reading.org/publications/rt/yopp.html

"Understanding Your Child's Learning Differences"
International Reading Association
www.reading.org/pdf/1037.pdf
The Education Trust

Homework: A Guide for Parents to Help

Homework is homework important?

Why is homework important?

.easy

meaningless, too difficult, or too

get help when homework seems

assignments

Ask questions about homework

with the standards

Complete homework assignments

standards

locate the state's academic...
Parents CAN DO

Four Things You CAN Do

1. Communicate with your child's teacher to understand the purpose of homework and how it relates to the curriculum.
2. Review the homework and help your child complete it. Ask if there are any questions or concerns.
3. Ask if your child has any questions about the homework. Make a note of common mistakes or areas where help is needed.
4. Let your child know that homework is an important part of their education.

What are Academic Standards?

Academic standards are guidelines for what students should know and be able to do. They are important because they help ensure that all students receive a high-quality education. There are national, state, and local standards, and each school district can choose which ones to use. Some common academic standards include:

- Common Core State Standards
- Next Generation Science Standards
- National STEM Standards

These standards help ensure that all students have the same opportunities to learn and succeed.
Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don’t let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?

CHRONIC ABSENCE
18 or more days

WARNING SIGNS
10 to 17 days

GOOD ATTENDANCE
9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org
### Why Should We Focus on Attendance?

- Children can't learn if they aren't present in school, so attendance is a must.
- We can influence attendance and poor attendance can be prevented.
- Parents — especially in the early years — are best positioned to ensure children attend school and to build the expectation around attendance.

### Parent Engagement and School Dropout Prevention

**How Is Attendance Focused on School Success?**

- Chronic absence in Kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade among all children and, for poor children, predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade.
- By 6th grade, missing 20% (or two months of school) is a critical warning sign of school drop-out.
- By 9th grade, missing 20% of school can be a better predictor of drop-out than 8th grade test scores.

### Helping Parents

#### What Schools Can Do

- **Educate** families about the adverse impact of poor attendance on school achievement.

#### What Community Agencies Can Do

- **Teach** parents about the importance of regular attendance starting in kindergarten.

#### What Parents Can Do

- **Help** your child get into the habit and learn the value of regular routines.

- **Teach** your child that attending school is non-negotiable unless they are truly sick.

- **Build** relationships with other families and discuss how you can help each other out (e.g., drop off or pick up children, babysit, translation assistance) in times of need or emergencies.

- **Identify** non-academic activities (drama, art, music, etc.) that can help motivate your child's interest in school and learning and seek out schools that can offer those experiences.

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**Parent Engagement Toolkit | www.americaspromise.org/parentengagement**
## PARENT READING CHECKLIST

**DO I:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Read to my child?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Let my child read to me?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Read something myself every day?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Let my child see me reading?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have a library card?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Take my child to the library?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Subscribe to a newspaper and/or magazine.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have books in the house?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Buy books for my child?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Watch for signs of hearing or sight problems with my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contact my child’s teacher if I notice he/she has a problem reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Find time to do reading activities with my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Read poetry and rhyming books?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Read a recipe to make a cooking project?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How do you score in helping your child to read?
Study Skills & Strategies

Helping Children Study

Increasing a child’s awareness of what it takes to be successful involves developing her ability to "think about thinking", while understanding that learning occurs both in and out of school and across the lifespan.

Develop the Value of Learning

- Help your child understand that the purpose of learning and studying is not only to please parents and teachers, earn a good grade, or fulfill requirements, but that learning is something that they will do throughout their lives, for school, work, and when exploring personal interests. Learning is not just for school!

Goal Setting and Study Planning

- Helping children to learn how to set goals independently. Help your child to set goals related to what they have to study. For younger children, it may be necessary to provide more assistance in this process. However, it is important to let them provide extensive input. Goal setting can involve many things, but may include completing a series of math practice questions each day to prepare for a quiz or studying five vocabulary words per night for a test at the end of the week.

- Break down what is required into manageable steps for completion. It should also involve deciding on specific techniques or strategies that will help them to master the material, including things such as finding a quiet place to work, memorizing materials, and connecting information to previous knowledge, among others. Children should ask themselves “what do I have to do, and what will help me do it?”

- Help children understand the importance of planning. Developing a plan of attack to achieve their goals is necessary, and will help children set reasonable goals within a specific time frame. Examples of planning include arranging a study schedule or completing parts of a large project for an hour every other day. At this point, children should ask themselves “what is my goal (what do I want to do) and by when?” Planning can be both long term and short term, but ideally, should be done by the child, thereby building independent planning skills; the point of your efforts is to help your child set goals and plan on his own!

Apply Specific Strategies and Methods and Monitor their Usefulness

- Teach children to use specific study methods depending on the project at hand. If a child needs to read a great deal of material, a common sense way to increase focus would be to help find a quiet place for reading. If a child needs help with spelling words, you may be able to work with her in a drill and practice format, or, she may prefer to write spelling words repeatedly for mastery. You can help your child understand what learning strategies work best for studying different types of materials.

- Help your child understand which study techniques or strategies works best for him, and why. For example, encourage your child to compare whether or not studying with you or alone is most helpful. Does your daughter or son remember more after studying in the hectic family room, or quietly in their bedroom? Is it helpful to associate new vocabulary words with those learned previously, or strictly memorize word definitions? Instilling in your child the importance of self-
monitoring whether or not certain study techniques increase success, or decrease success, is an important component of self-regulating the learning process. By identifying what works best for them, children are able to abandon unsuccessful approaches and reformulate their study efforts to increase success.

Increase Awareness of What Helps, What Doesn’t, and Why

- Encourage your child to compare his progress when using different study strategies, and to his achievement before and after developing a study plan. Exploring progress and achievement will help your child understand what has helped them the most, and perhaps, what has helped the least. It is helpful to encourage your child to compare their academic performance to earlier efforts to help re-formulate study approaches.

- Help your child understand that errors or improper strategy selection-things that they can improve on- are the cause of a poor performance, not their ability to understand a subject or achieve academic success. Children who understand that they can do it if they take the right steps are far more successful than children who believe that failure stems from lack of overall ability.

Organization

Get organized! Lack of organization is a key characteristic of students with academic difficulties. Help your child learn to:

- Designate different folders for different subjects or tasks. When study materials are used from different folders, encourage your child to put materials back where they belong. When take home assignments are completed, make sure they are in the book bag and ready to go back to school.
- Keep notebooks clear of unwanted pages, and keep book bag clear of junk or unused materials.
- Provide your child with a study agenda or notebook in which she can write all homework or study tasks; teach him to fill it in appropriately when at school.
- Teach your child to prioritize study tasks in order of importance or by due date to avoid “forgotten” quizzes and tests, or tests that are far in the future. Use the study agenda to help in this process.
- Help your child to learn how to bring appropriate materials home for study according to quiz and test dates. Doing so may help your child to avoid the "all or nothing" approach to bringin text books and notebooks home.
- If your son or daughter forgets to bring study materials home, make it a point to retrieve them from school immediately if at all possible. If not, use an alternate study task in its place. Taking an active and firm approach to study will help them understand that forgetting materials, accidentally or purposefully, will not get them out of study obligations.
- If your child appears to avoid certain study tasks, take time to explore the reason why. Is it because the work is difficult? Do they not understand a topic? Don’t like the subject? Haven’t been successful so far? Understanding why students avoid study of certain or all subjects may help you come up with a new study plan that takes their needs into account. Exploring study difficulties will also help you to work directly with teachers, school psychologists, or school counselors to develop interventions at home and at school if difficulties continue.
Time Management

Help your child use time wisely and efficiently:

- Help your son or daughter to learn to identify when they need to study. Use of the study agenda may be helpful in this process to determine how far in advance study should begin. It is also important to help your child understand that study is not only necessary for tests and quizzes, but is needed when they do not understand topics covered in class.

- Get into the routine of things! Working with your child, help him or her develop a routine study schedule. Be sure to consider other commitments, such as sports and appointments, when planning study. Using a study organizer or schedule with days of the week and time intervals will help to plan study after school and on weekends.

- Depending on the complexity of each study task, help your child to estimate how much time studying will take. Plan study accordingly.

- Plan to study challenging or complex topics when they feel most awake and prepared. Break long study tasks into smaller components.

- Encourage your child to study in short intervals with frequent, short breaks. Taking such an approach will avoid fatigue and increase retention of study material.

- Be cautious that activities started during study breaks do not make it difficult to continue with priority number one: study. Play and social activities are important parts of the day, but should not be mixed with study if your child has a difficult time getting back to work. Brief breaks are important, but avoid encouraging activities that may be difficult to discontinue once started.

- Encourage your child to reflect on their study experiences. What has worked so far? Have they had enough time to study? What might work better next time? Reflecting on successes and weaknesses will help them to plan better in the future.

Getting Extra Help

Good students learn to realize when they understand material, and when they don’t. It is important that your child:

- Learn to determine whether he understands the material he is learning.
- Learn to identify what parts she understands, and what parts she doesn’t understand.
- Learn to ask for additional help or clarification at school when he does not understand material completely.

As parents, it is important to provide appropriate support for your child while she is studying. It is also important to be accessible in the event that he needs assistance or clarification. When your child is studying:

- Do make yourself available in the event she needs your guidance.
- Don’t do his work for him. It is important that you provide support, but not answers, so he becomes an independent learner.

Examples of ways to provide positive support during study include:
• Help your child to clarify directions or concepts.
• Help your child to review by asking questions or quizzing if it is helpful to her.
• Help your child learn how to find answers...not finding the answers for them.
• Help them to brainstorm suggestions regarding the best ways to study certain topics.

Study Tools

Like any job, being a student involves a great deal of work and requires many tools. Parents who are aware of the types of tools and support necessary for study are able to ensure that their child is prepared before they begin to study. To prepare your child for study, you can:

• Help your child to discover what type of study environment works best for them. While some students study best in an environment that is quiet without distractions, others may be more successful if there is a moderate amount of noise, or if family is around. It may be beneficial to help your child determine what works best for them by comparing their productivity in different environments with different degrees of background activity.

• Designate a specific area for study in the appropriate environment in which your son or daughter likes to do work. This work place does not necessarily have to consist of an entire room, like a bedroom, but may include an area within a room, such as at the kitchen table. Sometimes children are able to study well with their parents or siblings around, while other times they work best alone. If your children share a bedroom, it may be best to separate them during study time if they seem to work better independently. However, it is important to let your child decide what works best for them after evaluating their academic progress. Not all children work their best in a quiet room without distractions.

• Provide appropriate supplies, including lighting, paper, highlighters, notebooks, rulers, and index cards, for study.

• Provide reference materials, including dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias, when possible. Teach your son or daughter how to access these materials online if there is a computer in the home. If possible, help your child to get to the library when needed.

• If there is a computer in the home, ensure that your child has appropriate access to it for study purposes. Let your child know that their school related computer needs take priority over casual internet surfing by other family members. If you have more than one child who needs to use the computer, prioritize according to study needs and due dates. Designing a computer usage schedule may be helpful in families with more than one student.

• When using the computer for study purposes, ensure that your child is doing their work as opposed to checking email or instant messaging friends.
Homework Tips
For Parents

- Ensure your child has a nice quiet place to complete their daily homework assignment. For example, their bedroom or the dining room table.
- Family member check their homework for completion.
- Ensure your child has necessary supplies to complete their homework.
- Encourage your child to ask questions if they don’t understand what’s expected.
- Ensure your child gets a good night’s sleep.
- Encourage your child to read at least 30 minutes a day.
- Support your child’s academic success by minimizing video game time and TV time daily.
- Let your child know that Tutors and Counselors are available to help them. Inquire at your child’s school.
- Remind your child that it’s very important to turn their homework in the next day or by the due date provided.
- There may be other community or faith based organizations offering homework help for all students.
- Encourage your child to use previous homework assignments to review for tests.
Ways Parents Can Help Students Achieve
Practical and Fun Things You Can Do At Home

- Establish routines for your child. Children thrive on orderliness. Keep a fairly regular schedule for meals, play, and work time. Set a regular bedtime. A child who is used to a routine at home can adapt to classroom rules more easily.

- Spend time everyday talking with your child about her interests, hobbies, and friends. Children learn language at home and spoken language gives children the foundation for better reading and writing. As children grow older they need daily conversations as a way to develop values, test ideas, and share their thoughts.

- Give your child responsibilities at home. Ex: Keeping his room clean, sharing responsibility for a pet, etc.

- Play games that reinforce language and math skills.

- Make sure you have plenty of reading materials available at home. Library visits can supply a constant supply of books.

- Read! Read! Read! to your child regularly and often. Studies show this is the single most important thing parents can do to help their children achieve. Encourage older children to read to their younger siblings.

- Decorate your child’s room with large maps of your state, the U.S., or the world. This could help everyone in the family learn about geography.

- Set limits on how much television your child can watch.

- Limit video games. Make rules that say no TV or videos until homework is complete.

- Make homework a priority, set a quiet, neat and orderly homework environment.

- Start a parent-child book club.

- While your younger child is doing homework sit with her, even if you can’t answer the homework questions be there to support his learning.

- Reward and praise your child’s effort as well as her accomplishments.

- Display your child’s schoolwork. Use the refrigerator or bulletin board. Let your child know how proud you are of what he accomplishes in school.

- Talk about school every day. Ask specific questions. For example: what was the funniest thing that happened today? What was the hardest thing you did today, what new fact/idea did you learn today?

- Count with your child. Kids love to count.

- Give your child plenty of chances to learn by doing. Let her try new things.

- Sing songs with your child. Children love the rhythm and rhyme of music.

- Make reading special. Plan an evening with reading and popcorn or a reading picnic.

- Use the newspaper. Use a weather map to learn geography. Choose a person of the week, cut their picture out and discuss it throughout the week.

- Help your child be proud of your family’s ethnic heritage.

- Teach your child to celebrate diversity. Learn about other cultures from television programs, reading books and using the internet.

- Find time for one on one conversation with your child. Each week try to set aside special time. Write it on your calendar so your child looks forward to it.

- Be aware of your expectations. Parents who assume “boys are naturally better at math or sports - and girls are better at reading” may be limiting their child’s future accomplishments.

- Exercise with your children. Make sure meals are nutritious.

*Courtesy of Pittsburgh Public Schools, of Pittsburgh, PA*
There are many ways you can help your child succeed and be successful in school.

1. Get Involved.
2. Attend school events.
3. Volunteer.
4. Communicate with teachers.
5. Read with your child.
6. Help with homework.
7. Provide a quiet, organized study space.
8. Set a regular bedtime.
9. Eat healthy meals.
10. Exercise regularly.

Collaborating with the Community:

1. Support local community programs.
2. Advocate for your child's needs.
3. Attend community meetings.
4. Volunteer at local events.
5. Donate to community funds.
7. Connect with other parents.
8. Foster a sense of community.
9. Encourage community involvement.
10. Promote community values.

Partners with:

1. School districts.
2. Non-profit organizations.
3. Local businesses.
5. Local government.
7. Local publications.
8. Local artists.
9. Local musicians.
10. Local chefs.

Together, we can support your child's success.
Engaging and Energizing Learning

1. Classroom community
   - Create a welcoming and inclusive environment
   - Foster a sense of belonging and belonging
   - Encourage open communication and collaboration

2. Student Learning
   - Personalized learning experiences
   - Differentiated instruction to meet diverse needs
   - Use technology to enhance learning

3. Classroom Environment
   - Organized and inviting space
   - Visual aids and posters
   - Seating arrangements to facilitate interaction

4. Teacher Preparation
   - Continuous professional development
   - Access to resources and materials
   - Collaborative planning with colleagues

5. Data Driven Instruction
   - Regular assessment of student progress
   - Use of data to inform instruction
   - Adjust teaching strategies based on feedback

6. Family and Community Engagement
   - Regular communication with parents and guardians
   - Involve community members in school activities
   - Foster partnerships with local organizations

7. Student Voice and Choice
   - Involve students in decision-making processes
   - Allow students to choose their learning paths
   - Encourage student leadership and advocacy

8. Reflective Practice
   - Engage in self-reflection and goal setting
   - Regularly assess and adjust teaching strategies
   - Seek feedback from students and colleagues

9. Professional Learning Communities
   - Collaborate with peers to improve teaching
   - Participate in ongoing professional development
   - Share best practices and resources

10. Ongoing Improvement
    - Continuously evaluate and refine teaching strategies
    - Use evidence-based practices
    - Adapt to changing needs and circumstances