Elementary School
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Steger Public School District 194
make the difference!



Spark your child's interest in reading by being a role model

Children who see their parents reading are often more motivated to read themselves. To demonstrate that reading is important to you:

- **Let your child** see you reading every day. Pick up a newspaper, book or magazine. Make it clear to your child that you think reading is worth your time.
- **Tell your child** why you are reading. Are you reading for information, to double-check something you think you know, or for enjoyment?
- **Look up a word** in the dictionary when you come across one you are unsure of. Ask your child if he knows the meaning of the word.
- **Read aloud** to your child. When you come across something you think he might find interesting, read a small part of it to him. He may be motivated to finish reading it himself.
- **Use your library card.** When you take your child to the library, find something to check out for yourself.
- **Join your child.** When you see your child reading, pick up something to read yourself. Make a healthy snack to share.
- **Give books as gifts.** Show your child that books are special by giving them as gifts. Encourage him to give books to his friends, too.
- **Ask relatives** to support your child's reading habits. Could they record themselves reading a book to him?

Four ways to strengthen your child's character



Teachers help their students learn important skills and facts. But when it comes to teaching values, parents are the best teachers.

And, like any teacher, you need a lesson plan. Here are four strategies for building your child's character:

1. **Think about the values** that are important to you and your family. Talk about them openly with your child.
2. **Teach by example.** A parent's example is the most powerful teacher of all. Ask yourself, "If my child could watch my behavior all day, what lessons would she learn?"
3. **Set high standards.** Expect your child to act responsibly, to be kind to others and to tell the truth. Some families make it a point of family pride. "In the Smith family, we tell the truth."
4. **Teach the Golden Rule.** Teaching your child to treat others as she would like to be treated will help her make good choices. She should ask herself, "Would I want someone to talk to me that way?"

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Research shows nutrition is linked to academic performance



Have you heard of the expression "food for thought"? Well, it turns out to be, quite literally, the truth.

Good nutrition really does feed the brain. And it starts with breakfast. Research shows that eating breakfast helps students stay on task and recall information. Eating breakfast regularly is even linked to improved overall school performance.

What can you do? Keep low-sugar, whole grain cereals and fruit on hand. And be prepared for a rushed morning with a healthy breakfast that your child can eat on the way out the door.

Whether you're packing lunch or your child is eating a school lunch, encourage him to avoid high-calorie and high-fat foods. When children eat a meal that is high in fat and sugar, their bodies tend to become very tired—which makes it difficult to concentrate.

Children are typically hungry when they get home from school, so be sure to keep a variety of healthy snacks on hand—fruits, veggies, cheese, yogurt and whole grain crackers.

Remember: When you're grocery shopping, buy only the food you want your child to eat. Your child can't eat unhealthy food if it is not in the house.

Source: C. St John, M.P.H., R.D.N., "Proof Positive: Breakfast Improves Kids' Grades, Mood and Weight," Healthy Eating. Org, niswc.com/elem_healthyeating.

> **"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."**
>
> *—Jim Rohn*

Women's History Month is a great time to read a biography



March is Women's History Month—the perfect time for your child to read a biography of a famous woman. Help her select a biography she will enjoy by talking with her about her interests.

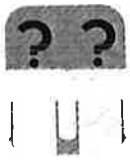
If your child likes:

- **Sports,** she might like to read about Wilma Rudolph, a three-time Olympic gold medal winner.
- **Politics,** she might like to read about Victoria Woodhull, who in 1870 became the first woman to run for president.
- **Fashion,** she might like to read about Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who was considered a cultural and fashion icon in the 1960s.
- **Science,** she may be interested in learning about Marie Curie, the only person to win a Nobel Prize in two different sciences—chemistry and physics.
- **Helping others,** she might like to learn more about Mother Teresa, who dedicated her life to serving the poor and disadvantaged.

Whatever your child's interests, there is sure to be a biography she might enjoy reading. Ask the librarian for help if you don't see a book that catches her interest right away.

Read the book with your child or let her read it on her own, but don't stop there. Encourage her to do some additional research on the person and share what she finds out.

Are you helping your child deal with frustration?



Today's students don't always have the skills to cope with life's minor hassles. Are you helping your child learn to deal with frustration? Respond *yes* or *no* to each statement:

____**1. I understand** that it isn't my job to protect my child from all of life's ups and downs.

____**2. I encourage** my child to keep trying when she gets stuck on a homework problem. I ask questions to help her find solutions.

____**3. I help** my child link her effort to success. Sometimes I say, "It isn't supposed to be easy. But you'll get it if you stick with it."

____**4. I point out** real-life stories of successful people who have overcome challenges.

____**5. I put** my child's feelings into words. "You're frustrated that learning this science concept is taking longer than you hoped. You'll get there."

How well are you doing?

If most of your responses are *yes,* you are giving your child opportunities to work through her frustration. For each *no,* try that idea in the quiz.

Elementary School Parents make the difference!

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March weather activities can teach your child science skills



According to the old saying, March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Is this true where you live?

In many parts of the country, the month of March brings changeable weather—which makes it a great time to enjoy science and other weather-related activities:

- **Keep a temperature graph.** Have your child record and graph the temperature each day for a month. Or, use the online weather report for your area. Record whether the day was sunny, cloudy or rainy.
- **Measure the rain.** You'll need a plastic jar with straight sides and a flat bottom, a ruler and a marker. On the outside of the jar, use the ruler and marker to mark off each quarter inch. Have your child keep track of the amount of rainfall.
- **Make wind chimes.** You'll need four clean, empty cans, some string and a coat hanger. Make sure the edges of the cans are smooth. Help your child punch a hole in the bottom of each can. Tie a knot in one end of the string and thread the string through a can. Then tie the other end to your hanger. Repeat with each can. Each time the wind blows, the cans will make music!

You and your child can also go online to learn more about weather. Check out these fun, age-appropriate websites:

- **Weather Wiz Kids,** *www.weatherwizkids.com.*
- **The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids,** *www.almanac4kids.com/weather.*
- **NASA's Climate Kids,** *climatekids.nasa.gov/menu/weather-and-climate.*

A peaceful home environment promotes a sense of well-being



It's nearly impossible to lead a stress-free life these days, but you can work to make home a haven away from the daily grind.

To help your entire family feel mentally and emotionally well:

- **Encourage laughter.** Laughter should be a part of each day. Have everyone share favorite funny shows, movies, jokes and stories.
- **Share stress-relief strategies.** Teach your child to take deep breaths, go for a walk or turn on some relaxing music whenever she feels stressed.
- **Remember the big three:** good nutrition, adequate sleep and exercise. These are the keys to wellness.
- **Share good things.** Every day, have each family member report at least one good thing (no matter how small) that happened. Try to do this during a family meal. You could even write down the responses in a family gratitude journal.
- **Stay organized.** An organized, clutter-free home creates a more peaceful environment for everyone. It also teaches your child how to take care of her belongings.
- **Pitch in.** Chores go so much more quickly when everyone works together. Have a family chore time and then reward yourselves by doing something fun as a family.

Source: A. Marks, M.D. and B. Rothbart, M.S.W., *Healthy Teens, Body and Soul: A Parent's Complete Guide,* Fireside.

Q: The principal called to tell me that my fifth grader shoved a child to the ground at school today. As a result, my child is going to be suspended for one day. I know this is the school's policy; however, my son says the other boy said mean things to him first. Should I go to the school to complain?

Questions & Answers

A: Children don't always make the right choices. What's important is the lesson they learn after they've made a bad choice. Arguing with the school on your son's behalf can teach him the wrong lesson. Instead:

- **Talk with your child** about the incident. Does he admit that he pushed the other child? It's important for him to learn to tell the truth about what he's done. Let your child know that pushing people is never acceptable—even if they call him names.
- **Help your child think** of other ways he might have reacted. He could have ignored the child, for example.
- **Encourage your child** to tell the teacher if the name-calling continues. If he had reported the incident, the *other* child might be the one in trouble.
- **Discuss the reasons** schools need rules. What if your child had been the one who was shoved? Would he want the child who shoved him to face a consequence?
- **Let your child** experience the consequence of his action. On the day of his suspension, don't let him watch TV or play video games. Instead, have him spend the same time studying that he would have spent in class.

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It Matters: Test Success

Test-taking tips can boost your child's test score



Your child has a big test tomorrow, and he wants to do his best. Encourage him to follow these test-taking strategies:

- **Focus on directions.** Your child should make sure he understands the instructions before he begins. If he has questions, he should ask the teacher.
- **Write down information.** If your child struggled to memorize something, he should write down what he recalls as soon as the test starts, so he can refer to it later.
- **Read through all the questions** quickly before starting. Your child should think about how much time he has and decide how much time he can spend on each question.
- **Skip a question if unsure** of the answer. Your child should answer all the questions he knows first. Then he can come back to the others.
- **Remember the true/false rule:** If any part of an answer is false, the whole answer is false.
- **Use multiple-choice strategies.** He should try to answer the question before looking at the choices. Or, eliminate the wrong answers and choose between what's left.
- **Outline essays.** Encourage your child to make a plan and stick to main points and key details. Even a brief outline is better than no answer.
- **Allow time to go back** and check answers. Do they make sense? Are sentences complete?

Help your child review graded tests and make adjustments

Your child is used to learning material before a test. But what about after the test? Unless she gets a perfect score on every test, every time, there is still learning to be done!

After a test, your child should:

- **Review the graded test** and make notes about which answers she got right and which she got wrong. She should take time to correct her wrong answers.
- **Identify the types of errors** she made. Mistakes generally come in two forms: Carelessness—your child may have rushed through the question. Lack of preparation—your child didn't study enough.
- **Make adjustments.** Brainstorm together about how she can reduce careless errors. For example, she could read each question twice and check her work before turning it in.



For mistakes based on lack of preparation, the solution is more studying. Your child should start to review several days before the test. The last day should be spent going over everything a final time, not learning new material.

Reduce your child's test anxiety with four proven strategies



It's normal to get a little nervous before a big test, but many children suffer from excessive test anxiety. They worry so much about taking the test that their performance suffers.

To help your child relieve those pre-test jitters:

1. **Focus on preparation.** Make sure he spreads studying out over time. True learning requires time to review and think about the content. And knowing the material is the best way to reduce anxiety and stress.
2. **Discourage cramming,** which can increase anxiety and interfere with clear thinking. The most important things your child can do the day before a test are to review and then get a good night's sleep.
3. **Encourage a positive outlook.** Build your child's confidence by reminding him of his strengths. Have him envision himself doing well on the test.
4. **Maintain perspective.** Remind him that test scores aren't everything. Make sure your child knows that, while you want him to *do* his best, he doesn't have to *be* the best.