

Elementary School Success

Tips for Parents



You are the most important person in your child's life, and your child needs you to be interested and involved in their education. *The following tips will help ensure that your child has a successful school year.*

- ▶ Insist on daily attendance. Unless your child is ill, they need to be in school.
- ▶ Make sure your child has the recommended school supplies. If you have questions, talk to your child's teacher.



Studies show that parental involvement significantly improves a student's school performance.

- ▶ Talk to your child about what's happening at school. Show interest in what your child is learning, and in their academic progress.
- ▶ Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Elementary-aged children should get 9–11 hours of sleep each night.
- ▶ Monitor homework. Have a set time for homework, remove as many distractions as possible, and monitor your child's homework grades.
- ▶ Be supportive. Praise extra effort and celebrate achievements!



For more helpful parenting tips, watch this quick video!

VIDEO

Homework Tips

for Elementary Parents

Establishing the importance and the routine of doing homework at an early age helps students develop study habits that will serve them well throughout their education.

Make sure that your child understands the importance of completing homework accurately and on time.



What are the benefits of homework?

- ▶ **Homework aids in learning.** Homework gives students the opportunity to practice the skills they've learned in school.
- ▶ **Homework helps students be more responsible.** When students are required to keep track of their assignments and complete them independently, they develop important study skills (e.g., organization, time management).
- ▶ **Homework helps keep you informed.** Homework is a great way for you to stay up-to-date on what your child is learning in school.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences provide an opportunity for you to give and receive information about your child. To make the most of your conferences, come prepared with questions and concerns to discuss with your child's teacher(s).

Here are some examples of questions you might ask during your conference.

- ▶ Is my child organized? Does my child have everything he/she needs in class?
- ▶ Does my child participate in class?
- ▶ Is my child's homework completed thoroughly, correctly, and on time?
- ▶ Does my child pay attention in class?
- ▶ How is my child doing? Is my child working up to his/her potential?
- ▶ Is my child respectful and courteous?
- ▶ Do you have any advice or suggestions for me or my child?

Use this space to jot down any specific questions or concerns you have.

Conference Date and Time: _____

The Importance of Reading at Home

Information for Parents



Reading improves student concentration.



Reading helps students develop language skills.



Reading fosters curiosity about the world we live in.



Reading helps students do better in all school subjects.



Children who are read to at least three times a week are twice as likely to score in the top 25% of reading scores.



The number of books in the home correlates significantly with higher reading scores for children.



65% of American fourth graders do not read at grade level.



Children's books contain 50% more rare words than primetime TV.

Source: literacyprojectfoundation.org

Make Reading Part of Your Child's Day

10 Tips for Elementary Parents

Reading to and with your child every day is the best way to help your child develop their reading skills. Here are ten easy ways to incorporate reading into your child's day.



1. Have family reading time

Have a set time when everyone in your family sits down together and reads. Try doing this once or twice a week for 20–30 minutes.

2. Use waiting times wisely

Keep a selection of books in your car or tote bag. When you're waiting at the doctor's office or in a drive-thru line, pull out a book to give to your child instead of a phone or tablet.

3. Mix it up

Make reading fun by reading books together or independently in different places—at the park, under a tree, at the pool, in a fort made of blankets, or on a picnic in the backyard.

4. Do activities that require reading

Cook or bake with your child and have them read the recipe steps to you—or invite them to help you put something together that involves reading the instructions.

School Refusal

Tips for Parents

What is school refusal?

Sometimes called school avoidance or school phobia, school refusal refers to a child's repeated refusal to go to school. This refusal is often accompanied by claims of illness, such as stomachaches or headaches, tantrums, or separation anxiety.

School refusal can happen at any time, but it occurs most frequently at the beginning of a school year, after moving, or following a stressful life event.

Reasons for school refusal

School refusal happens for a variety of reasons. Here are just a few.

Anxiety



Anxiety about a new school year or new routine can make students apprehensive about leaving the security of home. Children may also suffer from anxiety if they don't feel completely safe at school.

Academic issues



Trouble with grades, falling behind, or not understanding what they're learning is often the underlying cause students refuse to go to school.

Social issues



Bullying, conflicts with friends, or exclusion by other students can make students not want to go to school.

Determine the reasons

It's important to identify the underlying issue(s) behind school refusal. Once you've identified why your child is refusing to go to school, you can better develop a plan to fix the issue. *Don't hesitate to enlist the help of your child's teacher(s) and school counselor.*

Your Child's Sleep



Information for Elementary Parents

Did you know?

Experts recommend that children between the ages of 6 and 12 get 9–11 hours of sleep each night.

Getting enough sleep has a direct impact on a child's mental and physical health.

Here are just some of the reasons why getting a good night's sleep is so important for children.

▶ Improved cognitive ability

Students who get enough sleep have an easier time paying attention in school and at home. Sleep also helps with memory and motivation.

▶ Behavior and mood

Getting enough sleep helps decrease instances of irritability, anxiety, moodiness, frustration, and stress.

▶ Physical health

Sleep gives your child's body time to rest and recover. Not getting enough sleep is associated with long-term health issues, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

For many parents, helping their child establish a healthy sleep routine can be a struggle. Keep reading for some tips on how to make bedtime easier.

FRIENDSHIP INFO FOR PARENTS

Friends make life a lot more interesting and fun, and as children grow, friends become more and more important. Help your child know what makes a good (and not so good) friend, and help him/her learn how to develop and maintain healthy friendships.



WHAT IS (AND ISN'T) A FRIEND

As your child grows and becomes more interested in spending time with friends, you can help your child develop lasting friendships by having your child ask him/herself these questions.

- ▶ Do we share similar interests?
- ▶ Do we laugh and have fun together?
- ▶ Do we have similar ideas about what's right and wrong?
- ▶ Do we respect and trust each other?
- ▶ Can I be my true self around this person?

Of course, friendships aren't easy and fun all the time. Help your child understand that it might be time to rethink a friendship if a friend ever...

- ▶ tells you to do things you don't want to do
- ▶ is mean to you
- ▶ brings a lot of drama into your life
- ▶ makes you feel bad about yourself
- ▶ talks about you behind your back

PARENTING TIPS

For Elementary Parents

Being a good parent doesn't involve doing extraordinary things. It's the little things you do every day that are what's most important.



Use these tips to help your child thrive and grow!

Spend time together. Regularly spend one-on-one time with your child doing something you both enjoy.



Make education a top priority. Show consistent interest in your child's academic progress and in what your child is learning.

Monitor technology use. Know the technology your child uses, and be aware of where your child goes online. Provide guidelines and set limits.

Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Have nutritious food at home and make sure your child gets plenty of sleep and exercise.



Career & College



Info for Elementary Parents

It is never too early for children to begin exploring their career interests, and to think about their future. In fact, research shows that elementary-aged children benefit greatly from early career and college exploration.

Explore Careers Together

Expand your child's horizons

Children like to imagine what life will be like as an adult, and they often like to think of themselves in a glamorous or exciting career (e.g., professional athlete or rock star). By exploring and investigating a variety of careers, you can help your child understand that there are lots of interesting and rewarding careers to choose from.

Identify your child's abilities and interests

Talk to your child about how his/her talents and personality traits can be valuable assets in the right career field.

Learn about careers

- ▶ Talk about the jobs and careers you have had, and provide opportunities for your child to learn about the careers of other family members.
- ▶ Arrange for your child to talk to someone who works in a career field he/she finds interesting.
- ▶ There are a number of excellent books, and there's a wealth of career information online at sites such as bls.gov/ooh.
- ▶ Find some after-school activities to support and expand your child's interests.

Top 10 Reasons Your Child Should Be in School *Every Day!*

Info for Elementary Parents

Elementary-aged children are constantly absorbing new knowledge and developing new skills—and regular school attendance is crucial for their success. Here are the top 10 reasons why your child should be in school every day.

- 1 Better academic performance**
According to research, missing just two days per month negatively impacts a student's academic performance and test scores.
- 2 Greater social development**
Elementary students develop social and emotional skills that benefit them throughout their lives. At school, they learn to interact with others, make friends, and build relationships with adults outside their family.
- 3 Increased literacy skills**
A student's attendance in elementary school significantly affects their reading skills. Research shows that students who attend school regularly have better literacy skills by the end of third grade than those who do not.
- 4 Routine and structure**
Children thrive on structure. Going to school every day provides children with a sense of security. They also learn to follow rules and routines outside of their own home—a skill that will benefit them for years to come.

INTERNET SAFETY

Information for Elementary Parents

Technology is a huge part of our lives.



95% of children have a mobile device at home.



53% of children own a smartphone by age 11.



95% of parents say their children have internet access.

But there can be dangers.



Nearly half of all teens report being cyberbullied.



53% of children are exposed to pornography by age 13.



40% of 4th-8th graders admit to connecting with a stranger online.



1 in 20 children admit to arranging to meet with a stranger they met online.

Teaching internet safety is an important part of being a parent today. But with new apps and websites coming out so quickly, it can be difficult to keep up. Keep reading for some easy-to-implement internet safety tips.



Kindergarten Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great kindergarten year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Read to your child every night.

Reading to your child expands his/her vocabulary, stimulates your kindergarten's imagination, and improves your child's listening skills. It also nurtures the bond between you and your child.



2. Encourage active reading.

While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" "What would you do?" and "How do you think he felt?"



3. Develop writing skills.

Encourage your child to write simple thank you notes and get well cards, and to title and sign his/her artwork.



4. Build math skills.

Look for ways to talk about numbers in everyday life. Ask your child to bring you a certain number of objects, and play games that require counting.



5. Stay informed.

Attend parent programs, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Also, regularly check your school's website for news and updates.



1st Grade Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great first grade year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Encourage everyday reading.

Ask your child to point out words he/she recognizes in books, on street signs, and in stores—and to also try to sound out unknown words.



2. Promote active reading.

While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" "What would you do?" and "How do you think he felt?"



3. Develop writing skills.

Have writing supplies readily available. Encourage your child to make cards for family members, write thank you notes, and put titles on artwork.



4. Build math skills.

Provide small objects such as cereal for your child to practice counting up to 120. Use drawings and small objects to practice adding and subtracting.



5. Support your child.

First graders are learning many new things and may get frustrated at times. If your child gets frustrated, provide encouragement and be available to help.



2nd Grade Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great second grade year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Read together.

Read to your child every day and have your child read to you. Ask questions such as "What do you think will happen next?" and "What would you do?"



2. Develop writing skills.

Ask your child to write about something that was enjoyable or fun, such as a friend's birthday party, family outing, or vacation.



3. Build math skills.

While your child is completing routine tasks, verbally quiz him/her on addition and subtraction facts (e.g., $9+1$, $10-4$). Be sure to keep it fun!



4. Encourage curiosity.

Visit museums. Explore nature. Search online together for answers to questions like "How are thunder and lightning formed?"



5. Develop large motor skills.

Encourage fun physical activities, such as riding bikes, swimming, hiking, kicking a soccer ball, or playing catch.



3rd Grade Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great third grade year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Make reading a priority.

Encourage your child to read independently—and ask your child to tell you about what he/she is reading.



2. Make writing fun.

Create a “dialogue journal” (a notebook in which you and your child write back and forth to each other) or suggest your child try creative writing.



3. Apply math to real life.

Ask your child to count out the correct coins to pay for an item or help you measure things for a home project.

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ \times 4 \\ \hline 8 \end{array}$$

4. Provide math encouragement.

Third graders are learning many new math skills and may become frustrated at times. If your child ever gets discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement and be available to help.



5. Reduce test anxiety.

In many states, third grade is an important year for standardized testing. Explain that the test doesn't affect school grades, and tell your child to just do his/her best.



4th Grade Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great fourth grade year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Make attendance a priority.

Attendance is the #1 school success factor. Make sure your child is in school, on time, every day.



2. Read together.

Choose a book series to work through together (such as *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or *Magic Tree House*). Take turns reading to each other.



3. Encourage writing.

Have your child write thank you notes, letters to friends and relatives, or a poem or short story to share.

$$\begin{array}{r} 35 \\ \times 18 \\ \hline 630 \end{array}$$

4. Model problem-solving.

If your child asks for help with math homework, verbalize your thinking as you determine how to work out a math problem.



5. Help your child get organized.

Provide your child with a planner, folders, and/or binders. Help them create a simple system for organizing papers and recording homework assignments.



5th Grade Success Tips for Parents

Help your child have a great fifth grade year. These ten tips are sure to put your child on the path to success this year—and for years to come!



1. Make attendance a priority.

Attendance is the #1 school success factor. Make sure your child is in school, on time, every day.



2. Be a reading role model.

Let your child see you reading books, newspapers, and magazines. At dinner, talk about the interesting things you've learned.



3. Give your child a journal.

Encourage your child to use a diary or journal to write down his/her ideas, thoughts, dreams, and goals.



4. Talk about real world math.

Ask your child to help you figure out how much money to leave for a tip—or figure out which grocery item is the best value.



5. Promote responsibility.

Students must be responsible for keeping track of their own assignments, completing them accurately, and turning them in on time. Be supportive, but make the completion of homework your child's responsibility.



Cultivating Kindness

Tips for Elementary Parents

Kindness is not a quality that children are born with—it is something they learn with practice and time.

Use the following tips to help your child develop kindness and empathy.

Model kind behavior

Look for ways to demonstrate kindness for your child. Help a neighbor with their yard work. Speak kindly to the cashier at the grocery store. Offer the mailman a bottle of water on a hot day. You are your child's most important role model, and they will learn from your example.

Identify and label nonverbal cues

Encourage your child to notice facial expressions and body language. For example, "*Annie is crossing her arms and frowning. I think she is upset. How can we help?*" The key to empathy is understanding the perspective of others.

Point out the kindness of others

When someone is kind to you or your child, say something about it. "*It was so nice of the woman at the store to let us go ahead of her in line.*" Also, be sure to acknowledge and praise your child when they show kindness.

Spread the joy of helping others

Allow your child to experience how good it feels to help others. Donate books and toys to children in need, or rake a neighbor's leaves. Give your child ample opportunity to develop a giving spirit.



To review, watch this quick video!

VIDEO



Building Confidence

Tips for Elementary Parents

It's natural for children to master some skills easily and to struggle with others. But when children can take pride in their accomplishments and persevere despite failure, their self-confidence will grow.

Keep reading to find out how you can help nurture self-confidence in your child.

Encourage new experiences

Whether it's trying a new sport, learning how to use a camera, or exploring a more difficult hiking trail, allowing your child to try different things and conquer new challenges will help build their self-confidence and boost their self-esteem.

Delegate responsibility

Give your child age-appropriate household tasks, such as taking out the trash, helping put away laundry, taking care of a pet, and making their bed each day. Make sure that tasks are completed, and praise your child for their effort. Conquering even simple tasks can lead to big gains in self-confidence.

Demonstrate perseverance

You are your child's most important role model, and letting your child see you tackle obstacles, overcome adversity, and achieve personal goals is invaluable. Show pride in your accomplishments ("*I ran three miles for the first time today!*") and grace in your failures ("*I messed that up, but I'll do better next time*"). Most importantly, let your child see that you are human and imperfect.



Fostering Patience

Tips for Elementary Parents

Today's children are being raised in a world where much of what they want and need is instantly available. This can make it hard for children to practice patience—a quality that will be important for them to have throughout their lives.

Here are some tips on how you can teach your child to be a more patient person, even when it's hard.

Know your child

Depending on your child's personality, they may be either more or less inclined to be patient. For example, a child who is calm and easygoing may have an easier time being patient than one who is a bit more excitable. Understanding your child's unique personality can help you adjust your methods and expectations accordingly.

Show what patience looks like

Use every opportunity you have to model patience for your child. For example, when the line at the grocery store is long, avoid complaining or rolling your eyes. Instead, stay calm, smile, and remain positive. When your child sees you cope with these situations in a patient manner, they are more likely to follow suit.

Teach your child about time

Many children have no concept of the difference between one minute and five or ten. When you ask your child to wait, set a timer for the allotted time. Also find opportunities to connect time with actions, such as, "*We are going to eat dinner in 30 minutes.*"



Teaching Responsibility

Tips for Elementary Parents

For children, being responsible is about more than just doing chores around the house. Being responsible also includes:

- ▶ keeping promises
- ▶ being reliable
- ▶ honoring commitments
- ▶ behaving appropriately in different social situations
- ▶ being a good citizen—at home, at school, and in the community

Here are some tips for helping your child be a responsible family member, friend, and community member.

Define responsibility for your child

Responsibility can mean different things to different people. To help your child understand what responsibility means, explain that it is a job, a promise, or some other situation in which others depend on them. For example, “*Homework is a responsibility. Your teacher depends on you to do your homework so that you can be a successful student.*” or “*If you make a snack, I am depending on you to clean up after yourself.*”

Start at an early age

It can be tempting for parents to do everything for their child, especially when they are young. But giving children small tasks they are able to complete on their own increases self-esteem, and makes it much more likely that they will be responsible with future tasks.



Encouraging Honesty

Tips for Elementary Parents

Young children mostly understand that honesty is best, but it is also natural for them to be tempted to hide the truth—especially when they know that their actions could disappoint loved ones, or get them in trouble.

Here are some tips for helping your child learn to choose honesty, even when it's hard.

Start early

Begin talking to your child about the value of honesty when they are very young. Explain what it means to be honest, and emphasize the link between honesty and trustworthiness. Make honesty a part of your daily conversation so that your child will understand that it is expected.

Be a good role model

If you want your child to be honest, then you must be honest yourself. When you lie in front of your child, even if you consider it a “small” lie, it teaches your child that lying is acceptable. Admit that sometimes being truthful can be hard, even for you. Make open and honest communication a priority in your home for everyone.

Reward the truth

When your child is truthful in a difficult situation, let them know how proud you are of them. Rewarding your child with praise and affection when they have been honest reinforces positive behavior, builds your child's self-confidence, and increases the likelihood your child will be honest in the future.



Inspiring Citizenship

Tips for Elementary Parents

Being a good citizen means working to make the world a better place for everyone. For children, this primarily means being a good family member, friend, and classmate. Of course, it can also mean lending a helping hand to those in need, as well as being a responsible member of your community.

Here are some ways you can inspire your child to be a good citizen.

Start small

As a citizen of your household, your child should be expected to take on age-appropriate tasks at home. They might help plant a small vegetable garden, sweep the front porch, or put up holiday decorations. Helping with household tasks gives children a sense of pride and responsibility.

Read books

Books are great for encouraging discussions on citizenship. Look for age-appropriate books that promote diversity, inclusion, helping others, and caring for the environment. Try to relate what you read in books to your own community—and help your child see how they can be a good citizen.

Make community connections

Help your child get to know your community. Ride the bus together, visit the library, and play at a public park. As you explore, point out any people you see who are helping to keep your community clean and safe—police officers, park workers, bus drivers.

TEST ANXIETY



Information for Elementary Parents

A little nervousness before a test is normal—and can even improve a child's concentration and alertness. However, sometimes feelings of anxiety are so severe that they interfere with a child's ability to perform well on tests.

Here's how to tell if your child has test anxiety, along with some tips on what you can do to help.

What is test anxiety?

Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety, similar to an athlete feeling extremely nervous before a big game, or an actor getting stage fright in front of a big crowd. When children are suffering from test anxiety, they may experience the following symptoms:

- ▶ feelings of worry and dread
- ▶ a nervous or upset stomach
- ▶ rapid or pounding heartbeat
- ▶ difficulty concentrating
- ▶ feeling sick before and/or during tests
- ▶ trouble sleeping the night before a test
- ▶ trouble recalling answers they know

Any child can experience test anxiety, but children who already suffer from generalized anxiety may be more prone to it. If your child's test anxiety seems extreme, reach out to a counselor or your child's teacher.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Information for Parents

Although standardized tests vary from district to district and state to state, all students are likely to take a standardized test at some point. This guide will address some frequently asked questions about standardized tests, and give you some tips on how to help your child prepare.

What are standardized tests for?

Standardized tests are used to measure how individual students perform in certain subject areas, such as reading, writing, and math. Standardized tests also examine how well all students in a school, district, or state perform as a group—and where educational improvements are needed.

What will these tests show?

Standardized tests show how your student's achievement compares to the achievement of other students in your state and the nation. These tests also identify a student's strengths and weaknesses, and alert teachers and parents to areas where students need support. A child's test performance will not affect their grades in any way.

What tests will my student take?

Your child's school will inform you about any tests your student will take. The school will also provide you with test results, along with information on how to interpret your child's scores.

AI What Parents Need to Know



Parents play a crucial role in guiding their children's understanding and interaction with artificial intelligence (AI). Here is some key information that parents should know.

What is AI?

AI refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, creativity, and decision-making.

The types of AI

There are two main types of AI: narrow AI and general AI. Narrow AI is designed to perform a specific task or a narrow range of tasks. Narrow AI is what is available today. Examples include Siri and Alexa, chatbots, and self-driving cars.

Artificial general intelligence (AGI) is what many are currently working to achieve—AI that possesses human-like intelligence and can perform any intellectual task that a human can.

AI in education

Many schools are now taking advantage of AI capabilities to enhance student learning.

AI tutoring, virtual assistants, and chatbots can provide students and parents with intelligent, human-like tips, feedback, and advice. AI programs can also analyze students' strengths, weaknesses, learning pace, and preferences to create personalized learning paths.



All About Mental Health

Information for Elementary Parents

Mental health refers to one's social, emotional, and psychological well-being. Just as you look after your child's physical health, it's important to look after their mental health as well.

Support your child's mental health

Make sure your child gets enough sleep.

The amount of sleep a child gets impacts their mood and attitude. Make sure your child gets 9–11 hours of sleep a night.

Encourage physical activity. Physical activity improves both physical and mental health. Look for fun ways to integrate physical activity into your child's daily routine.

Have calming routines. A warm bath, bedtime stories, or listening to calming music are some good ways to help your child wind down and relax.

Teach gratitude. Help your child recognize things in their everyday life to be thankful for.

Help others. Helping others has been shown to improve mental health. Donate books and toys or shovel snow for a neighbor. Give your child ample opportunity to develop a giving spirit.

Eat healthy. Food fuels the body's health, including the brain. Research shows that nutrients found in foods like vegetables, fruits, fish, and nuts can improve brain function and mental health.



Coping with Stress

Information for Elementary Parents

Stress is the body's reaction to change, demands, and difficult situations. While we tend to think of stress as something teens and adults deal with, it's not uncommon for elementary children to experience stress. Helping your child develop healthy ways to cope with stress will benefit them now, and for years to come.

Signs of stress in children

When it comes to your child's mental health, keeping the lines of communication open is crucial. However, children aren't always able to verbalize how they feel, which is why it's important to pay attention to nonverbal signs like the ones below.

Here are some common signs of stress to watch for in your child.

- ▶ emotional outbursts and irritability that go beyond what is normal for your child
- ▶ an increase in headaches and/or stomachaches, and/or a change in appetite
- ▶ trouble falling or staying asleep, or a sudden onset of nightmares
- ▶ problems at school, such as difficulty focusing, a drop in grades, discipline issues, and trouble with friends
- ▶ a desire to spend more time alone
- ▶ an increase in defiant behavior



Managing Anxiety

Information for Elementary Parents

Anxiety doesn't just affect teens and adults. Children can experience anxiety too, and it can have similar negative effects on their mental health and wellness. Here's how to identify anxiety in your child, and how you can help.

Types of anxiety in children

It is normal for children to have fears and worries. While these fears and worries are generally mild and manageable, they can be severe enough to interfere with daily life.

These are some of the types of anxiety that children commonly experience.

Separation anxiety – fear of being separated from a loved one, usually a parent

Social anxiety – being very uncomfortable in social situations, and afraid of being embarrassed, ridiculed, or judged by others

General anxiety – worrying excessively about everyday things, and being preoccupied with what *could* happen

Panic attacks – an intense fear that comes on suddenly and causes physical symptoms, such as a rapid heart rate, trouble breathing, dizziness, shaking, and sweating

Phobias – an extreme fear of a person, place, thing, or situation



Supporting Mental Health

Information for Elementary Parents

Your child's mental health is just as important as their physical health. Here are ten ways you can help your child protect, improve, and maintain their mental health.

1. Love your child unconditionally.

In order for your child to feel secure and accepted, they need to know that your love doesn't depend on good behavior or accomplishments. Regularly tell your child that you love them. This is especially important when things are hard and your child is not at their best.

2. Nurture your child's confidence.

Encourage your child to try new activities and master new skills. Give them opportunities to show you how capable they are, and help them learn from the mistakes they make.

3. Limit time on electronics.

While some TV shows and video games can be educational and beneficial, children need physical activity and play in order for their brains to make crucial, healthy connections.

4. Teach calming techniques.

It's helpful for children to know how to calm themselves when they are upset, angry, or worried. For a few simple calming techniques, watch this short video.



VIDEO



Building Self-Esteem

Information for Elementary Parents

Self-esteem is the perception of one's worth. Students who have good self-esteem feel liked and accepted. They have the confidence to try new things, and they are better able to cope with setbacks. Having good self-esteem helps students succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Ways to help build self-esteem

Encourage new experiences. Whether it's trying a new sport or learning how to use a camera, allowing your child to try different things and conquer new challenges will help boost their self-esteem.

Delegate responsibility. Give your child age-appropriate household tasks, such as taking out the trash, helping put away laundry, taking care of a pet, or making their bed each day. Make sure that tasks are completed, and praise your child for their effort. Conquering even simple tasks can lead to big gains in self-confidence.

Demonstrate perseverance. You are your child's most important role model, and having your child see you overcome adversity and achieve personal goals is invaluable.

Praise wisely. Praise is the most meaningful when it has been earned. Boost your child's self-esteem by praising them for good effort, hard work, and good behavior.



Calming Techniques

Information for Elementary Parents

Anger, stress, fear, and worry are complicated emotions for children, and calming techniques can help them recenter and relax.

Here are some tips on helping your child cope with these complex feelings, and some calming techniques you can try at home.

Validate your child's emotions

The first step to helping your child manage their emotions is to acknowledge and validate them.

Be accepting of negative emotions. Some children believe that negative emotions are unacceptable, so they let these emotions build up inside until they erupt and are hard to control. Explain that it's normal to have a range of both happy *and* sad feelings, and encourage your child to notice and acknowledge them.

Label emotions. Encourage your child to label their emotions—both positive and negative. For example, *"I'm upset because I don't understand how to do this math problem."* When you notice that your child is struggling, ask them to describe, in their own words, what they are feeling.

Don't minimize emotions. Show your child that you understand how they're feeling and that you want to help, even if whatever your child is upset about seems like a small thing to you.

Work with Your School

Parents Make the Difference

Everyone in your school wants your child to have a positive, successful year. Here are some things you can do to work with your school—and help your child succeed!



Work Together as a Team

Communicate with your school.

Know the best way to contact your child's teacher(s)—email, phone, or text. If you ever have ever a question or concern, don't hesitate to contact them.

Stay informed. Attend all parent programs, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Also, regularly check your school's website for news and updates.

Know your school's support personnel. Many schools have tutors, aides, counselors, and social workers to assist students and parents who need help.

Work to resolve conflicts. If you ever disagree with a teacher or principal, try to resolve your disagreement calmly. Also, watch what you say in front of your child.

Prioritize Homework

Parents Make the Difference

Establishing the importance and routine of doing homework helps students develop study habits that will help them to succeed in elementary school and beyond.

Make sure that your child understands the importance of completing homework accurately and on time.



The Benefits of Homework

Homework aids in learning.

Homework gives students the opportunity to practice the skills they learn in school.

Homework teaches responsibility.

When students are required to keep track of their assignments and complete them independently, they learn to be responsible. They also develop important skills, such as organization and time management.

Homework helps keep you informed. Homework is a great way for you to stay up-to-date on what your child is learning in school.

Expect Regular Attendance

Parents Make the Difference

Regular attendance puts students of all ages on the road to success. However, regular attendance in elementary school is especially crucial.

Elementary children are absorbing new knowledge and developing new skills every day. Missing just a few days of school can put a student behind.



Why Attendance Matters

Academic skills. Missing two days per month negatively impacts a student's academic performance and test scores.

Social growth. At school, students make friends, learn to interact with others, and build relationships with adults outside their family.

Literacy skills. Frequent absences in elementary school have been shown to significantly affect a student's reading skills.

Routine and structure. Going to school every day provides consistency, and gives children a sense of security.

Help Your Child Get Organized

Tips for Elementary Parents

Being organized will help your child succeed in school, feel more in control, and be a better student. Here are some tips to help your child get organized.



Provide ways to organize papers.

Help your child use a system of folders and/or binders for organizing papers such as handouts, homework, and information that comes home from the school/teacher. You may want to consider having one folder for "home" and one for "school" for items that need to travel back and forth.

Have an area for homework.

Designate a place in your home for your child to study and do homework, and keep it stocked with any supplies they may need. Show your child how to keep this area neat and organized.

Eliminate clutter.

Encourage your child to periodically go through their backpack, homework area, folders, and binders and throw away any papers or materials they no longer need.

Develop routines.

Routines help the day run more smoothly for everyone. Have a nighttime routine that includes getting everything ready for the next day, and a morning routine that includes a good breakfast and getting to school on time. Also, create a schedule that makes homework a part of the daily routine.

Ways to Help Your Child with Math

Information for Elementary Parents

As students develop new math skills, they need their parents' involvement and support. Here's how you can help.



Be positive

Encourage a positive attitude toward math by praising your child's efforts and celebrating their achievements. Remind your child that being good at math isn't a skill you're born with—it's something you improve with practice.

Integrate math into daily activities

Integrate math into everyday life by involving your child in activities like cooking (measuring ingredients), shopping (calculating prices), or setting the table (counting and organizing).

Play math games

As a family, play games and do puzzles that involve math concepts, such as board games, card games, or online math games. This can make learning math fun and engaging.

Use apps and online resources

If your child has access to an electronic device, consider downloading age-appropriate math games and apps that they can play during screen time. Also, check out Khan Academy's free online math lessons for fun, or to help with concepts. Visit khanacademy.org to learn more.

Coping with Bullying

Information for Elementary Parents

Bullying is aggressive behavior that's harmful, intentional, and repeated. Here's what you need to know about bullying, along with some tips on what to do if your child is dealing with a bully.

Types of bullying

Physical – using physical force to harm others

- ▶ pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking
- ▶ stealing or damaging someone's property

Verbal – using words to hurt others

- ▶ making intimidating or threatening remarks
- ▶ taunting, insulting, or embarrassing others

Social – hurting someone's social standing

- ▶ spreading rumors and/or lies
- ▶ purposely harming another person's self-esteem or reputation
- ▶ excluding someone from a group

Cyberbullying – using technology to cause harm to others

- ▶ posting hurtful or embarrassing words or pictures online
- ▶ sending rude or threatening messages

Is it teasing or bullying?

Teasing is generally playful and happens between children who like each other. When it's bullying, you see the following:

1. There is a power imbalance.
2. It occurs repeatedly.
3. There is an intention to do harm.

Get Ready for

Middle School

Information for Parents

Middle school is a big step, for both students and parents. If your child will be in middle school next year, use this year to help your student plan and prepare for the transition.

To help your child get ready for middle school, follow the tips and advice below.

1. Help your child get organized

With more classes, homework, and activities, middle school students need to be organized. This year, work on helping your student devise a system for organizing papers and encourage the daily use of a school planner. By the time they get to middle school, these will be established habits.

2. Identify your child's weaknesses

Does your child tend to procrastinate or need help with time management? Does your child struggle in math? When you know what areas need improvement, you can anticipate the kinds of difficulties your child may have in middle school—and work on a plan to address them now.

3. Set up a home study area

Help your student set up a study space in your home that is quiet, well-lit, and comfortable. It should also have all the supplies your child will need, such as paper, pens, highlighters, and index cards. Help them get in the habit now of using this space daily for homework.

Show your student how to study smart with this short video

