Elementary School Parents®
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Warwick School District
Student Services Department
make the difference!

Share the wonders of science with your elementary schooler

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to teach your child about science. Just do some simple things like these:

- **Encourage your child** to collect and organize objects, such as leaves, rocks, shells or bottle caps.
- **Encourage investigation.** Give your child a magnifying glass. Ask him, "What things do you see?" "What's similar and what's different?"
- **Talk about the science** that happens in your home. For instance, which cereals get soggy? Why do foods in the refrigerator get moldy? Why do some plants need more water than others?
- **Show an interest** in science. Look at the moon and the stars with your child. Weigh snow. Mix paints.
- **Include your child**—as an observer or, better yet, a helper—when you make household repairs or work on the family car.
- **Nurture curiosity.** Ask your child questions. "Why do you think ... ?" "What might happen if ... ?" and "How can we find out ... ?"
- **Go to the library.** Check out books on different scientific topics.
- **Give your child something** to take apart—a ball point pen, a candle, an old toy. Encourage him to figure out how it works.
- **Talk about the weather.** Have your child record the temperature each day for a month. Note whether the day was sunny, cloudy or rainy. Which was the hottest day? How many rainy days were there?

Family meals are linked to school success

Busy schedules can make it hard to find the time for family meals. However, studies show that kids who eat meals regularly with their families tend to earn better grades. They are more likely to talk with parents and are less likely to use drugs and alcohol.

This school year, strive to eat dinner as a family at least once a week. To get the most out of family meals:

- **Ask your child to help.** Get her involved in planning and preparing the meal.
- **Turn off the TV** and keep mobile phones and tablets off the table.
- **Talk about everyone's day.** Ask each family member to share something that happened that day.
- **Keep the conversation** positive. Don't use this time to lecture your child about something. Make family meals and dinnertime conversations something everyone in the family looks forward to!

Source: A. Fishel, Ph.D, "The Importance of Eating Together," The Family Dinner Project, niswc.com/elem-familydinner.

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November is a great month to teach and learn with your child

Education doesn't just happen at school—it happens everywhere! And November is a month full of learning opportunities:

- **Nov. 4**—King Tut Day. With your child, check out a book or go online to learn more about the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb.
- **Nov. 8**—Election Day. Talk to your child about rights, responsibilities and why it is important to vote.
- **Nov. 13-19**—American Education Week. Try to visit your child's school one day this week to show your support for education.
- **Nov. 16**—International Day of Tolerance. Talk with your child about the importance of being respectful to people who have beliefs that are different from yours.
- **Nov. 20-26**—National Family Week. Spend extra time as a family this week. Play games, cook meals and read together!
- **Nov. 24**—American Thanksgiving. Have family members make a list of all the people and things they are thankful for.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you."

—B.B. King

Brainstorming is the solution for your child's writer's block!

Some kids don't like to write because they think it's boring. Others find it too challenging. They get frustrated trying to think of ideas.

You can't force a child to *love* writing. But you can turn a reluctant writer around with brainstorming.

Brainstorming is fun and boosts creativity. It reduces stress and can help your child break through writer's block.

Brainstorming also teaches other skills that help with writing. By creating lists, for example, your child learns to break down complex ideas into smaller components. She can use brainstorming to figure out a topic for a paper or to think of ideas for a short story.

The next time your child can't think of what to write about, have her:

- **Make lists.** Here are a few topics to help her get started: *Things I love. My favorite animals, places, toys or food. Things I know a lot about. Scary characters. Things adults say.*
- **Exaggerate.** Ask your child some questions that will spark new ways to think about people, events and scenes. "What would it feel like to be a car, a house or a dog? What would life be like if you had four hands?"
- **Use visual images.** Have your child look at a picture and write down what it brings to mind. Or she can take a walk and make notes about what she sees.
- **Think about actions** she could add to her ideas: What will happen next? How quickly?

Source: D.B. Reeves, Ph.D., *Reason to Write: Help Your Child in School and in Life Through Better Reasoning and Clear Communication—Elementary School Edition*, Kaplan Publishing.

Are you making read-aloud time the best it can be?

Time spent reading aloud is critical to helping children become better readers. It's also fun! Are you making the most of your read-aloud time? Answer *yes* or *no* to each of the questions below to find out:

___**1. Do you have** a regular read-aloud time with your child that lasts at least 20 minutes each day?

___**2. Do you let your child** take a turn reading aloud to you?

___**3. Do you make** read-aloud time fun for your whole family by taking turns picking books you want to read together?

___**4. Do you stop reading** at an exciting place so your child will want to read again the next day?

___**5. Do you sometimes stop** to talk about what you've just read or to make predictions about what's about to happen?

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean you're making the most of the time you spend reading aloud with your child. For each *no* answer, try that idea in the quiz.

Elementary School Parents make the difference!

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Downtime is vital for your child's health and academic success

Some parents schedule every minute of their children's time in an effort to prepare them for success in later life. But studies suggest that kids benefit from enjoying unscheduled free time.

When days are packed with lessons, sports and other structured activities, children can become overwhelmed and stressed out. As a result, they don't do as well in school and are more likely to get sick.

To determine if your child's schedule is balanced, ask yourself:

- **Does my child** have time to play with friends? Practices that are planned and run by adults don't count. Kids need time to relax and just "hang out" with other children.
- **When does my child** do homework? Does she work on it while traveling from one activity to the next? Schoolwork takes concentration, and that takes time.
- **Why is my child** in these activities? Sometimes, parents are the ones who want their child to take a class or participate in a sport.
- **Does my child** get enough sleep? Children between the ages of six and 12 need nine to 12 hours of sleep each day. Without that sleep, their brains don't function as well.

School is your child's most important job. If too many activities are getting in the way, ask your child to choose only one or two she truly enjoys. She'll be happier and healthier—and she'll do better in school.

Source: C. Hennig, "The Lost Art of Play: How Overscheduling Makes Children Anxious," CBC News, niswc.com/elem-downtime.

Three simple strategies can boost reading comprehension

As your child gets older, he will be expected to read and understand more complex text. He will transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn.*

To support this transition, share these reading comprehension strategies with your child:

1. **See the big picture.** Before he starts to read an assignment, have your child think about what he will be reading. What is the title of the chapter or assignment? Does it offer any clues about the content? Suggest he look for other clues, such as subheadings, words in boldface or italics, pictures or graphs.
2. **Take notes.** Taking notes while reading will make it easier for your child to comprehend and remember information. It will also make reading active and engaging. Your child should write down the most important ideas in the reading assignment. He should also write down any words he doesn't know so he can look them up later.
3. **Make connections.** The best way to remember new information is to relate it to something already learned. When your child finishes reading, have him answer questions such as: How is this topic similar to something else I know? What key ideas did I already know? What new information did I learn?

Q: My son gets average grades, but I know he could do better. Some parents pay their children for good grades. Is this something I should consider?

Questions & Answers

A: Parents want their children to do their best in school—and they are constantly looking for effective ways to motivate their kids to achieve. But there are serious drawbacks to offering money for grades.

Paying for grades:

- **Doesn't allow your child** to enjoy the satisfaction of learning. Kids don't need bribes to *want* to learn. They are natural learners. As they master new skills or memorize new facts, they gain self-esteem and self-confidence. However, when you pay your child for grades, you actually run the risk of *decreasing* your child's self-confidence.
- **Doesn't recognize effort.** Your child should focus on doing his best. If he's tried his hardest and he's learning, neither he nor you should worry too much about grades. If he's trying but still struggling with the material, talk to the teacher.
- **Decreases motivation.** Kids who get paid for doing some things may expect to get paid for doing everything. Pretty soon, your child will have his hand out every time you want him to do something, from mowing the grass to taking out the trash to feeding the dog.

So what can you do to get your child's grades up? Help him focus on what he is learning. Help him keep track of his new skills. And praise him for working hard and doing his best!

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It Matters: Homework

Understand the hidden value of homework

Homework gives your child an opportunity to practice the skills he is learning in school. But did you know that homework also teaches him valuable life lessons?

When your child completes homework on his own, he learns skills such as:

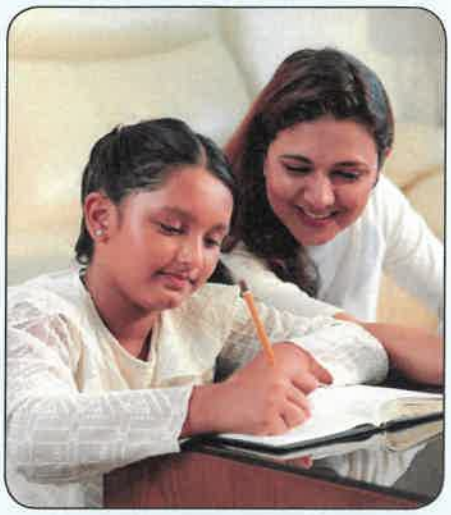
- **Organization.** Keeping track of due dates and assignments will help your child learn the value of being organized. Show him how to use organizational tools, such as a daily planner, folders and binders.
- **Responsibility.** Your child learns the importance of fulfilling his obligations. He also learns that he is accountable for his mistakes and his successes.
- **Initiative.** Due dates can help your child learn how to be self-motivated. When he chooses to start working on his social studies project as soon as it is assigned, he is showing initiative.
- **Perseverance.** Most parents want to protect their children from frustration. However, making your child's life easier now may make it harder in the future. Sticking with a tough assignment and refusing to give up helps your child gain confidence and develop perseverance.
- **Time management.** Breaking down large tasks and prioritizing responsibilities in order to complete homework on time helps your child learn how to manage his time effectively.

Give your elementary schooler the right kind of support

Homework is a vital link between home and school. Teachers assign homework to help students understand and review classwork. When parents are involved in homework, they find out what students are learning.

But being involved does not mean doing your child's homework *for* her. Instead, you should:

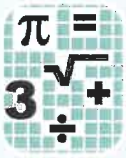
- **Make sure your child understands** the assignments. Look over the instructions together. Then have her explain the assignment to you in her own words. Ask questions to check her understanding.
- **Review homework every day.** Even if you're not present when your child does her homework, always ask to see it. Your interest sends the message that homework is important.
- **Encourage your child** to take a break if you notice she's struggling.



Then, try to help her with what is frustrating her.

- **Stay in touch** with the teacher. Be sure to let her teacher know if your child struggles with homework every day. Ask what you can do at home to help your child.
- **Remain positive.** Your attitude will affect your child.

A math strategy wheel can help your child get back on track



When your child gets stuck on a math problem, she might not remember how to get herself back on track.

That's where a strategy wheel can help. To make one, ask your child to list all the different things she can do to find the answer to a math problem, such as:

- **Reread the problem.**
- **Draw a diagram.**
- **Restate the problem** in my own words.
- **Guess an answer** and then check it out.
- **Think about how** I solved other problems like this one.

Then, have your child create a pie chart with each of her strategies listed. Post the chart where she does her math homework.

The next time your child is stuck, all she needs to do is glance at the wheel and then try one or more of the strategies.

Source: D. Ronis, *Brain-Compatible Mathematics*, Skyhorse Publishing.

Parent & Child Elementary School Activity Calendar

Warwick School District
Student Services Department

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Parent & Child Activity Calendar

Elementary School Parents make the difference!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 2019					**1** With your child, keep a record of the moon this month. Have her draw what the moon looks like each night.	**2** Set aside some time to spend one-on-one with your child today.
3 Make sure you don't overschedule your child. Kids need "down time" to think, imagine and play.	**4** Watch or read the weather forecast together today. Locate the hottest and the coolest locations on a map.	**5** Read a textbook assignment with your child. Then ask your child to tell you about it in his own words.	**6** Play Alphabet Mixup. Choose a word and put the letters in alphabetical order. Can your child figure out the word?	**7** Have your child write directions for making a sandwich. Then follow them exactly.	**8** Trace your child's hand on paper. Think of ways to be a helping hand. Write her ideas on the drawing.	**9** Show your child objects on a tray. Have him close his eyes and name as many as he can remember.
10 Ask your child what she would do if she were invisible for a day.	**11** Help your child make his own dictionary with spelling or vocabulary words.	**12** When you're in the store, ask your child to figure how much tax you will be charged.	**13** If you don't have time to read to your kids at night, read in the morning. It's a real "power breakfast."	**14** Ask your child to think of words that describe winter. Then ask her to draw a picture of winter.	**15** Talk about how your family can do something for others this season.	**16** Choose a recipe from another country or culture. Prepare it with your child.
17 Ask your child to pretend he's Mayor for a day. List three ideas to make your community a better place.	**18** Watch the news with your child. Choose a Person of the Week. Read more about that person.	**19** Today is the anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Read it aloud with your child.	**20** Create a word search. Hide words in a grid and surround with random letters. Let your child find the words.	**21** Share with your child something interesting you've read today.	**22** Plan a screen-free evening. Read or play games instead.	**23** Ask your child to help you organize something, such as a closet.
24 Talk with your child about a choice you've made and the consequences of that choice.	**25** Play a game of charades with your child. Use hand gestures and motions to describe your word.	**26** Challenge your child to do a secret good deed for a friend or neighbor.	**27** Together, write a poem about your family. Start each line with a letter from the word FAMILY.	**28** Tell your child three things that you love about her. Have her tell you three things that she loves about you.	**29** Ask your child to name something he has done in his life that he is proud of.	**30** Read a book with your child about your town or state.

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