



Resource 2

Things You Can Do at Home to Help Your Child Succeed

Try these ideas of how you can include learning in your home routine.

Learning doesn't just happen at school, it can happen anywhere. There are a number of skills that you can easily incorporate into your home routine. This list is just a start. Ask your child's teachers for other things you can do at home to support your child's learning.

Talk with your child

Talk about the things that are important to your child and your family. Talk about books you read or what you see on TV or in the world around you. Always try to make connections between what your child already knows and what they hear and read. For kids of all ages, talking, listening and discussing issues together not only helps language development, but shows you're genuinely interested in what she has to say.

Reading

When reading a book or watching a television show or a movie, ask young children to repeat the plot, the story's characters (including the main character) and the setting. Ask him to retell what happens in the beginning, middle and end. After you read a book together, ask him questions about what happened. For older students, be aware of what your child is reading. Ask your child to tell you about his reading and his feelings about it.

Language Arts

Work on increasing your child's vocabulary by using and defining more difficult words in everyday speech. Use a dictionary to check meaning. Practice using antonyms and synonyms. Have your child become proficient at alphabetical order by organizing materials that way -- books, kitchen supplies, videos, etc. For older students, make sure to ask open ended questions, rather than just yes or no questions. This encourages your child to use language and vocabulary for self-expression.

Math

Help your child see that math is everywhere and that we use mathematical skills everyday. Encourage young children to learn to count by twos, threes and fives. Play number games, make up word problems and use manipulatives or objects that they can count and move. Create graphs based on family activities and practice reading graphs together. Practice time and money concepts. For older students, take an interest in the area of mathematics your child is currently studying and have her explain the concept to you.

Science

Observe and discuss the world around you such as plants and animals and the weather or night sky. Encourage questions and look for answers together. Classify and organize information, set up simple experiments and discuss and predict what they think might happen. For older students, discuss the concepts your older child is studying in science, whether it be physical science, life science or earth and space science.

Social Studies/History

Share your family history with your child by telling stories about yourself or older family members. Read with young children about historical people and events. Help your child understand that people who make history are real. For older students, help them explore family and community history as well as government structures.

Arts

Encourage your child's participation in local music, drama, art and museum programs. Allow your child to bring a friend along and give it a try. Ask your child to read a review of a play or musical performance. Then ask him to write a review of a favorite or new CD, movie or TV program. Listen to the CD or watch the movie or program together and discuss the review.

Writing

You may have heard the term "writing prompt" used at school. A writing prompt is simply a suggestion for an idea, a form or a story to structure a writing activity. It can be lots of fun to develop writing prompts into home writing activities, and you'll be helping children develop skills that they can use in the classroom. Consider these possibilities:

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about an issue of concern to your community.
- Write a letter of complaint about a toy or game that didn't live up to your expectations.
- Write an e-mail message requesting information about a certain product.
- Write a movie review and send it to your local newspaper or entertainment weekly.
- Think about a time that you were really scared, really sad or really happy. As a parent, write a paragraph about that time. Ask your child to do the same. Then compare and contrast the events and the emotions surrounding them.

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