

Helping Children Learn®

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District
School Board



November 2012

Go 'shopping' for math skills

Grocery store ads provide a great opportunity for some math fun with your child. With their bright pictures and large numbers, they are easy for even young children to read. Here are some ideas for using grocery ads and coupons to reinforce your child's math skills:

- **Look through the ads together.** Help your child find pictures of a few foods she likes. Cut out these pictures along with their prices.
- **Have her create math word problems** using the pictures she's cut out. "Emma bought one pound of bananas for 50 cents. How much would two pounds of bananas cost?"
- **Pretend she is going shopping.** Pretend she has \$50.00. Ask what she would buy. Help her make a shopping list. Then help her calculate how much she would spend if she bought the items on her list. If you have coupons, you can help her see how much she would save by using them.
- **Include your child when you do your shopping.** Show her your list. Allow her to help you find items on the list. Talk about how much the items cost.



As you help your child improve her math skills, you'll also be raising a savvy shopper!

Source: J. Hechtman and D. Ellermeier, *Teaching Math with Favorite Picture Books*, Scholastic Professional Books.



Daily routines are the best test prep

Whether it's the weekly spelling quiz or an exam on a textbook chapter, your child is sure to be tested on what he's learning. This will become an increasingly large part of his education. To help him succeed on all of his tests:

- **Establish a regular study time.** Keeping up with homework and regular review are the best ways for your child to learn.
- **Make sure he's in class.** When your child is there as the teacher presents information, he has a chance to ask questions. He can practice a skill and then have his teacher check his work.
- **Help him get organized.** Have your child mark test days on his calendar so you both know when they are. Encourage him to spread out his studying and assignments for a few days leading up to the test so he isn't cramming the night before.

Source: "Test Taking Tips for Parents," testtakingtips.com, www.testtakingtips.com/parents/index.htm.

Parents should set reasonable expectations

When parents push children beyond their limits, or expect them to be perfect, children may stop trying. To some kids, not doing anything and being ignored is better than being criticized for failing to live up to a certain standard. If your child struggles with school assignments or is receiving low grades, work with his teacher to come up with a plan for improvement.

Help your child grow a pumpkin inside a pumpkin

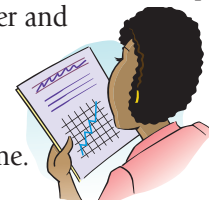
Pumpkins are everywhere in the fall. For some science fun, try scooping out the insides of a pumpkin. Have your child save some of the seeds. Then fill the pumpkin with soil and help your child plant the seeds. Soon you'll see a pumpkin growing in the pumpkin!



What can you do to get involved at school?

The research is clear. Students are more likely to succeed in school when their parents are involved. There are many different ways that you can be involved:

- **Communicate** and build a relationship with your child's teacher and school.
- **Volunteer** in your child's classroom or to help her teacher at home. You can also serve on school committees.
- **Work** with your child's teacher to find ways to reinforce important skills and continue learning at home.



Source: C. Dervarics and E. O'Brien, "Back to school: How parent involvement affects student achievement," The Center for Public Education, www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Parent-Involvement/Parent-Involvement.html.



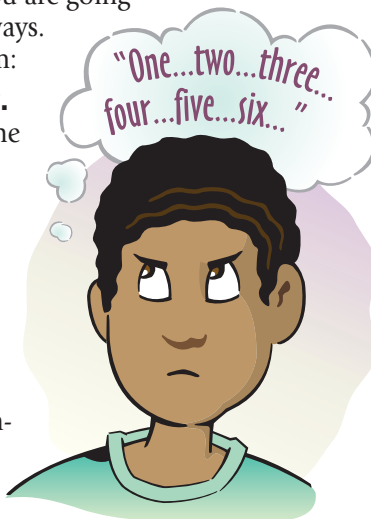
What can parents do to help control terrible tempers?

Q: My child has a terrible temper. It's a problem at home and at school. Sometimes he even hits other kids. What can I do?

A: The way your son expresses anger is clearly not appropriate. His school won't tolerate his behavior and you shouldn't either. What can you do?

Have a talk with him. Explain that anger is a normal emotion with healthy and unhealthy ways to express it. You are going to help him learn and practice the healthy ways. Share these anger-management tips with him:

- **Identify times when he gets angry.** How could he avoid those situations in the future?
- **Use words.** Insist that he name his feelings. "I'm angry that Jake took my toy."
- **Count.** When your son feels very angry, have him stop and count to 10. It may help him to take deep breaths as he counts.
- **Walk away.** Have your son remove himself from situations that make him angry. He may need to calm down in his room.



Talk with your son's teacher. Ask how she handles his angry outbursts at school. Together you can help your son learn how to handle situations that bring him to the boiling point.



Are you promoting good attendance?

Being in school every day—and on time—is key to your child's academic success. Are you supporting your child's attendance habit? Answer the following questions with *yes* or *no* to find out:

- ___ **1. Have you told** your child that you expect her to go to school every day? If you tell her it's important to you, it will become important to her.
- ___ **2. Do you ignore** weak excuses? Not feeling like getting out of bed isn't a good reason to stay home. It's a rule that she must go to school.
- ___ **3. Do you only keep** your child home if she's sick?
- ___ **4. Do you try** to schedule medical appointments and family trips outside of school hours?

- ___ **5. Do you help** your child set the alarm clock earlier if she has trouble getting to school on time?

How well are you doing? Each yes means you are supporting your child's attendance. For each no answer, try that idea.

"The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change."

—Carl Rogers

Have old-fashioned fun

Kids today spend hours watching TV and playing video games. Unplug the electronics and have some old-fashioned fun with your child instead.

You can:

- **Bake cookies.** Take some to a neighbor or an older relative.
- **Tell stories.** Share an amusing incident from your childhood or memories of a relative with an inspiring life story.
- **Sing.** Start with old favorites like "Row, row your boat." Make your own instruments from pots, pans and other things you find around your house.
- **Read aloud.** Kids are never too old for this. Take turns. Use funny voices.

R is for respect

Respect is something everyone should give and receive. To help your child understand this, set an example. Show respect for her, yourself and others. Remind her of the Golden Rule. Emphasize the importance of treating others the way she would want to be treated.



Playing by the rules is key

Whether in the classroom or on sports fields, it is essential for children to think about and follow rules. Teach your child the importance of respecting rules and authority by:

- **Being a good role model.** Let your child see you following the rules.
- **Setting guidelines.** This means, as basketball player Julius Erving once said, knowing how to "win without bragging and lose without crying."
- **Looking for teachable moments.** Discuss when someone does something that isn't right.

Source: C. Kendrick, "Tips to Play Fair By," www.parentingbookmark.com/pages/ArticleCK01.htm.

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