

Welcome to:

Supporting your child's learning

Sponsored by:



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

www.bctf.ca

Did you know...?

From ages 0–5 years is the period of most rapid growth in a child's life?

Research indicates that one of the main predictors of a child's success in school is the extent to which parents are involved?

Handout #1

Questions to Ask of Your Child's Teacher

1. Do you publish a copy of your class rules and expectations? How can I access these?
2. How do you communicate homework expectations to my child?
3. What is your process for letting my child and me know when he/she has missing assignments or is having difficulties?
4. What can I do to help my child learn?
5. What can I do to help you?
6. How would you prefer to be contacted?

Handout #2

Intermediate/Secondary suggestions

- Review day's work
- Highlight important notes
- Use index cards for memory work (use colour and pictures for brain friendly)
- Make mind maps with connections
- Compare notes with a friend
- Make up sample test questions
- Preview tomorrow's chapter
- Read extra material for background
- Discuss what you are learning with a friend, parent, or relative
- The brain learns best in colour—use colour and symbols for easy recall

Make connections—we remember things that we connect to our prior knowledge.

Handout #3

Study skills at home—Basic study/homework habits

- make homework a daily activity—assigned and reviewed
- have a well lit, cool area with all necessary supplies (pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, stapler, etc.)
- work in short spurts with breaks (movement, food)
- plan or a longer project—chunking, time chart, task analysis (OH#9)
- talk out loud
- buddy up
- use review strategies when there is no homework, e.g., SQ3R (OH#10), question and answer, note-taking, mnemonics, e.g., "HOMES" = Lake Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior, Guitar string names "EADGBE" = every apple does get big eventually
- tackle hard/easy subjects first

Positive study behaviours

At Home

- ✓ set a "study time" separate from homework time
- ✓ study more frequently for shorter time periods (four half-hour study sessions are much better than one two-hour session)
- ✓ study most difficult subject early in study session
- ✓ use "active" study techniques (recite, write, visualize, make study review cards, and so on)
- ✓ review class notes each night by reciting or writing marginal notes or questions (to increase retention)
- ✓ organize self each night for the next day (file papers, check schedule and calendar and weekly goals).

Time management

- ✓ make a study schedule over the weekend for the following week
- ✓ begin to study at the time planned
- ✓ study earlier in the day (before dinner) whenever possible
- ✓ use some weekend time for studying if home late on school nights because of school sports
- ✓ use a calendar for recording due dates and setting "weekly goals"
- ✓ break large assignments into smaller parts and set deadlines for finishing each part. Use the calendar.
- ✓ limit television and recreational computer time

Study environment

- ✓ study in a quiet environment
- ✓ study the same subject in the same place at the same time each day
- ✓ organize desk, drawers, and paper (use folders)
- ✓ remove visual distractions from study location
- ✓ provide enough light to read by without strain
- ✓ have all materials needed for homework or study **nearby** (paper, ruler, tape, stapler, dictionary, and so on)
- ✓ put up a bulletin board to post a calendar, schedule, reminder cards, etc.

Handout #4

Proofreading checklist

- The paper is well organized with a clear introduction.
- Each paragraph has a topic sentence. Every sentence within the paragraph is related to that topic sentence.
- The paper contains specific facts and information as needed.
- I have checked the paper for punctuation. Commas, periods, apostrophes, semicolons, and quotation marks are all properly located and marked.
- I have capitalized words as needed.
- I have used descriptive words to make my paper more interesting and more accurate.
- I have checked for run-on sentences and incomplete sentences.
- I have checked for spelling errors.
- I have done at least one draft of the paper.
- I have chosen an appropriate title for the paper.
- This is my best work.

Handout #5

Reluctant Readers—Ideas for encouraging children to read

1. Model reading—you read a page or a paragraph, and then they re-read it, so that they gain confidence and fluency and are reading in a supportive environment.
2. You read a page, then they read a page, to keep the comprehension moving and keep interest high.
3. Read the beginning of a story, stop at an exciting part, then suggest they finish it for themselves.
4. Have them tape a story they can read for a gift or a keepsake.
5. Have them make predictions about the book and then read on to see if they were correct.
6. Stop periodically, and say, "Great! How did you know that word?" Have them tell you ("I looked at the picture," etc.), so they can become aware of the strategies they are using and reinforce how much they do know about reading.
7. Tell them they can have their light on for an extra 10 minutes if they are reading, or give them a flashlight and hope that they decide to sneak in some reading.
8. Have them read the TV Guide for planning TV time.
9. Ask them to read recipes while you cook.
10. Write notes to them—make a game of it.
11. Give them riddle books or joke books.
12. Let them read comic books.
13. Have treasure hunts with written clues for special treats.
14. Subscribe to a magazine they will enjoy.
15. Visit the library often and make the issuing of a child's first library card an important occasion.
16. Get them interested in a favourite author (e.g., Robert Munsch).
17. Surround them with books. Have them stashed in the car in case you are stuck in a traffic jam. Take them on picnics, to the beach, on trips, holidays...
18. Encourage them to write letters to friends and relatives. Encourage your relatives to write to the children.
19. Make your own books about big events, for example: going to the hospital, visits from relatives, a trip to the aquarium, a birthday celebration. Make them for gifts for Grandma or friends. **Note:** Children will read what they write!
20. Encourage keeping a family journal, with everyone taking turns.
21. Children love collecting things, so use hobbies as a stepping stone to reading by helping them look for books about cars, stones, etc., or whatever the current craze is.
22. Make stories a reward. "When you've cleaned up, I will read you a story." "You've been so good, I'm going to read you a story before I make supper."
23. Develop the book-buying habit. Remind yourself that children's paperbacks often cost less than junk food, and buy them for special treats. After all, you need to feed their minds as well as their bodies!

Handout #6

Math

Working at home with the basics of math can be as easy as following a recipe in the kitchen and as much fun as keeping score while playing a game.

- Be positive about math. If a parent says, "I wasn't good at math, so it's okay if my kids aren't," kids may be afraid of math and not motivated to do well.
- Play family games that use math to teach kids how to count and sort. Ask your children to keep score. Younger children can use markers, such as macaroni; they can move on to numbers.
- Have children do a daily weather report. They will learn new terms, a sense of geography, how to draw maps and charts and a good deal of math. What was today's high temperature? Today's low?
- Children can learn about weights and scales at the local market. Let them weigh a pound of apples. How many apples in one pound? In two? What is the cost of three pounds of apples and one pound of bananas?
- Give children opportunities to tell time. You can use the old question: How much time do you have before you go to bed? That's bound to start a stimulating discussion!
- Estimating is an important math concept. When driving, ask children to guess when you have travelled one mile.
- Estimate each family member's height or weight. Then check with a yardstick, ruler, or scale.
- Ask, "What do you think the outside temperature is today?" Check with a thermometer or by listening to the weather on radio or TV.
- Play math "Jeopardy." give a number and have your child find a question for which the number is the answer.
- When riding in the car there are many opportunities to count: cars, trucks, colours of cars, kinds of signs, etc.

Managing Money

Put math skills to work. Help your children understand living costs by discussing household expenses with them. For example, make a list of monthly bills—heat, electricity, telephone, mortgage or rent. Fold the paper to hide the costs and ask youngsters to guess the cost of each item. Unfold the paper. How do the estimates compare with the actual costs? Were they close?

Percentages and Decimals

Are they really necessary? Illustrate by asking your children to look through the newspaper to find and list as many percentages and decimal numbers as possible—advertised sale prices, sports scores, bank rates.

Living within your means

Practice budgeting skills. Teach children who have allowances or regular spending money under income. Under expenses, list what they expect to spend for movies, records, lunches, etc. Then, have youngsters add all the expenses and subtract the total from the income. If their expenses are greater than their income, ask them to think of ways to reduce their spending to keep within their budget. If their income is more than their expenses, suggest a savings plan.

Handout #7

Homework help online

Need some homework help in a jiffy? Try getting help using the Internet. Homework-help pages are available to provide information and support in a wide variety of subject areas. Use a search engine to help you find some of the many sites available. Here's a sample:

www.homeworkhelp.about.com—**About Homework/Study Tips**

This web page includes links to over 700 sites to provide you with the help you need. It also has live chat rooms where a knowledgeable instructor can help answer your homework question.

www.laser-imprints.com/homework.htm—**Jen and Alex's Homework and Reference Page**

This site is a fantastic collection of links that can provide useful information, organized by subject area (arts, literature, science, social studies, etc.)

school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/index.html—**B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper**

Put together by a father and son, this web site, which gets over 10,000 visitors a day, provides more than 600 links that correspond with common homework problems.

encarta.msn.com/encnet/departments/homework/—**Encarta Homework**

This site provides an excellent homework web directory. In addition, the site provides specific suggestions for test preparation, writing reports, how to improve your writing, and other helpful homework tips.

www.factmonster.com—**Fact Monster™ from Information Please®**

The Fact Monster site is unique in combining essential reference materials, fun facts and features, and individualized homework help for kids. Useful for parents and educators as well as kids, it offers access to the full range of *Information Please* almanacs.

Source: School Power

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Handout #8...Cont'd.

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Sources: nea.org/parents/ppower.html
www.aft.org/parents/index.htm

