Tips for Parents

PARENTS, WE NEED YOU AT SCHOOL

How parents can help at school and home
- Lend a hand at open days and fetes.
- Organise fundraising events such as trivia nights.
- Offer your professional expertise or trade skills.
- Coach a school sporting team.
- Supervise your child’s homework each day.
- Attend parent-teacher nights.
- Welcome new teachers.
- Give guest talks.
- Set aside time and talk to your child about learning.
- Have your say in meetings and focus groups.
- Help in the classroom with reading or music.
- Join school working bees.
- Assist with school excursions, camps and retreats.
- Represent your occupation at a school careers night.
- Be active in the parents’ association.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO LEARN
- Read to them.
- Let them read to you.
- Encourage them to tell you the same story in their words.
- Ask them to talk about what they have learnt today at school.
- Ask them to talk about something that interests them (sport, music, a TV program, a drawing).
- Talk about community activities.
- Talk about religious festivals and their meaning.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH TV?
Researchers agree that children should watch no more than two hours of carefully selected television programs a day to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

TV TIPS
- Don’t allow televisions or video games in children’s bedrooms.
- Create a family agreement about the amount of TV time allowed each day.
- Swap screen time for active time, starting with 20 minutes less TV a day.

GETTING INVOLVED
- Communicate regularly with your child’s teacher.
- Read the school newsletter and other school notices.
- Attend school open days, family events and other special activities at school.
- Help out with fundraising activities, excursions, sports days and other events.
- Be involved with the parents and citizens association.
yourtutor – AUSTRALASIA'S LEADING ONLINE TUTORING SERVICE

yourtutor is a unique learning service that connects your child via the Internet to a qualified tutor for individual conversations about homework, assignments, exam preparation and study questions. The service is provided by Tutoring Australasia, an Australian-owned and based company. Hundreds of libraries and schools across Australia subscribe to the service to support their students and generate improved learning outcomes.

yourtutor’s Online Classroom allows expert tutors to review specific homework and assignment questions with your child using controlled chat, an interactive whiteboard, a file sharing tool and web browsing. Today’s children use yourtutor because the technology fits in with their online lives. It’s immediate and anonymous, allowing kids to feel comfortable asking questions they might not ask in class. It’s also safe and secure, featuring comprehensive privacy and security policies to ensure the safety of your child.

How can yourtutor help my child?

yourtutor is designed to help your child get “unstuck” with questions about the following subjects:
- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- Research
- Study Skills

Visit yourtutor.com.au to find out more.

TOP 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. When your child wants to show you something, stop what you are doing and pay attention to your child.
2. Give your child lots of physical affection.
3. Talk to your child about things he/she is interested in and share aspects of your day.
4. Give your child lots of descriptive praise when they do something that you would like to see more of.
5. Children are more likely to misbehave when they are bored so provide lots of engaging indoor and outdoor activities for your child.
6. Teach your child new skills by first showing the skill yourself. For example, speak politely to each other in the home.
7. Set clear limits on your child’s behaviour. Sit down and have a family discussion on the rules in the home. Let your child know what the consequences will be if they break the rules.
8. If your child misbehaves, stay calm and give them a clear instruction to stop and tell them what you would like them to do instead. If they do not stop, follow through with an appropriate consequence.
9. Have realistic expectations.
10. Look after yourself. It is difficult to be a calm, relaxed parent if you are stressed, anxious or depressed.

From Triple P – Positive Parenting Program
www.triplep.net

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH NUMERACY

Some good questions to ask your child:
- How do you know that the answer is correct?
- How could we do this another way?
- What might happen if we changed this to…..?
- Do you need an exact answer here or will an estimate do?
- Would it be best to do this in your head, with a pencil and paper or use a calculator?
- What kinds of maths will help us here?
- When else might you have seen a problem like this before?
- Where would be a good place to start when trying to solve this problem?
WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

**DO**
- Work with the school to fix the problem.
- Arrange a meeting with your child’s teacher.
- Teach them to deal with the bully by saying ‘leave me alone’ and walking away; staying away from bullies; making new friends; reporting bullying to a teacher they trust.
- Listen; be supportive; get the facts.
- Help your child to learn about good behaviour.
- You can also meet with the school’s counsellor.

**DON’T**
- Tell your child to fight back.
- Try to fix the problem by talking with the other children or parents.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING A BULLY?

**DO**
- Stay calm and work with the school to fix the problem.
- Help your child to learn about good behaviour.

**DON’T**
- Try to fix the problem by talking with the other children or parents.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP STOP BULLYING AT MY CHILD’S SCHOOL?

**DO**
- Report any bullying (even if it does not involve your child.
- Tell them why bullying is wrong.
- Encourage them to make and keep happy friendships.

**DON’T**
- Accept bullying in the house.

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TEACHING CHILDREN TO USE MONEY RESPONSIBLY

- Show children that happiness in life doesn’t depend on possessing things and on material satisfactions. Try to be cheerful when you have what you need and when you don’t. Children need to see that the values you talk about actually do make a person happy.
- Don’t use money or expensive presents to bribe your children to get them to do what you want.
- Don’t talk too much about money. Parents who try to focus their words more on people and less on things raise their children to see people as more important than things.
- Teach that money is only a means to an end. That it is good and brings happiness only if it is used to pursue worthwhile goals.
- See that kids don’t have a lot of money in their pockets
- Encourage older children to get part-time work, but talk about guidelines for how the money will be saved and spent.
- Have children wait for things that they are pestering you to purchase.


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WAYS IN WHICH PARENTS CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN’S HOMEWORK

- Interact with the child’s school or teacher about homework.
- Establish appropriate physical and psychological support structures for the child’s homework performances.
- Provide general supervision of the homework process.
- Respond to the child’s homework.
- Engage in homework processes and tasks with the child.
- Provide management and instruction to ensure that tasks match the knowledge, skills and ability of the child.
- Establish strategies which help the child to adopt study habits and attitudes which are conducive to achievement.

From *Homework: What are the upsides and downsides?* By Naomi Alanne & Rupert Macgregor
HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESSFUL EVENTS

What’s going on for your child?
• Your child may feel frightened, vulnerable and insecure at times of stress or change.
• Do not assume your child understands what is happening. This can be a very confusing and unsettling time.
• Children can feel responsible for ‘bad’ things happening to people they care about.

Children respond to stress or change in a number of ways:
• They may act younger than their age. This is their way of telling you that it is all too much and they need you.
• They may be clingy, demanding, or disruptive in an effort to gain attention, care, support and information from you.
• They may have disturbed sleep, nightmares or bedwetting.
• They may become very withdrawn or easily upset.
• They may try very hard to make everything better for the family.
• They may find it hard to tell you how they are feeling because they do not want to worry or upset you further.

What to do.
• Reassure your children constantly that you love them.
• Tell your children that what is happening is not their fault. You may need to do this a number of times.
• Let them know that even though you may be upset yourself, you are in control.
• Be honest and clear with your children about what is happening.
• Where possible include your children in decisions that affect them.
• Give your children time to talk. If they can’t talk to you encourage them to talk to someone they trust.
• Let your children know they may experience a range of feelings. Reassure them that it’s ok and give them ways to express how they are feeling.
• Take time to try and understand how they are feeling and why they are behaving the way they are.
• Be patient and tolerant.
• Try to stick to familiar routines.
• Make sure there are people around to support both you and your children.


KEEPING KIDS SAFE ONLINE

With the school holidays just around the corner, kids are busy planning their activities – emailing friends, instant messaging, downloading information from the internet or updating their MySpace profiles.

It’s important as parents and carers, that you guide your children in making smart choices about who they speak to and what they access online.

By setting some ground rules for internet use, you can help your kids to use the internet safely.

• Be involved – spend time exploring the internet with your children and get them to show you their favourite websites, including any social networking sites they use such as MySpace, Facebook or Bebo.
• Be open – keep the computer in a room the whole family can access, not in your child’s bedroom. If your child changes the screen or turns the computer off when you enter the room, ask them about it.
• Be aware – tell your children to never give out personal information to people they don’t know, including their name, home address, phone number or school and to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they have only chatted with online.
• Be cautious – if you believe your child may be at risk, talk to them about the dangers associated with online conversations.
• Be there – remember that the best protection is parental supervision and guidance.

The Queensland Police Service have published a must read guide for parents – Who’s chatting to your kids? – that provides practical information about internet safety and how parents can reduce the risk of their child becoming a victim.


For further information on how to enjoy the internet safely, visit the Australian Communications and Media Authority web site at: www.cybersmart.gov.au
ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO LEARN BY:

- Writing a shopping list together.
- Cooking and following a recipe together.
- Getting a book out of the school or local library.
- Planning a birthday party and writing invitations together.
- Drawing a picture and writing on it, and sending it to relatives.
- Reading comics, magazines and newspapers.
- Making a book with pictures and words.
- Reading to your child in their first language.
- Getting your child to teach you about using a computer!

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT SCHOOL?

By becoming involved we can understand schools better, and find new ways for our children to learn:

- Talk to the teacher about helping your child learn.
- Talk to other parents about how to help your child.
- Help with reading programs at school (many schools have them).
- Attend parents’ meetings at the school.
- Visit the school library.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN

Baby talk:

- Accept that crying is the baby’s primary method of communication.
- Attend to their needs as soon as you can once they start crying, to let them know they have been acknowledged and understood.
- Spend some time actively listening to your baby’s cooing and noise-making by looking them in the eye and encouraging them with smiles and talk.
- Talk to your baby frequently about any and everything.

Toddler talk:

You can encourage your toddler’s language development in many ways:

- It is more important to listen attentively to your child than to correct their grammatical errors.
- Allow your toddler sufficient time to finish what they are trying to say.
- Don’t show impatient body language, such as sighing or foot-tapping.
- Answer any questions using simple language.
- Spend some time each day doing nothing else but talking exclusively with your toddler.
- A child that constantly interrupts adult conversations may be feeling starved of sufficient attention.

Older child talk:

You can show that you are actively listening to your older child in many ways:

- Make time every day to listen exclusively to your child without distractions.
- If your child tends to give ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers, try asking open-ended questions such as ‘What was the best thing about school today?’
- Allow your child to have differences of opinion and respect their point of view.
- Try not to interrupt, lecture or criticise.

Teenage talk:

Some suggestions on listening to your teenager include:

- Don’t expect them to always share your beliefs and values and try to appreciate their point of view.
- They are more likely to listen to you if you listen to them.
- Your attentive listening, empathy and understanding will encourage the young person to confide in you.
- Don’t be put off by their ‘grunts’ and disrespectful language. Keep the communication lines open at all cost.
- Model the communication that you want to occur and keep modelling, even when the responses are not what you would prefer.
- Let them know you are always available if they need to talk to you.
- Take an active interest in their life.

Things to remember:

- Listening to your child boosts their self-esteem and helps them to feel worthy and loved.
- Make time every day to listen exclusively to your child with no distractions.
- There are services available to help families with any type of communication problem.

SOME ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD TO DEVELOP THEIR NUMERATE THINKING:

- Play board games and card games to develop logical thinking and reasoning strategies.
- Estimate, measure and compare lengths and heights, how heavy or light things are and how much containers hold.
- Use everyday tools like tape measures or kitchen scales and discuss the unit of measure.
- Think of different ways to solve a problem.
- Ask “does that make sense?” , “Is the answer reasonable?” or “What other ways could we do this?”
- Discuss the use of numbers, patterns and shapes in your day to day life.
- Talk about occasions when you are using mathematics in daily jobs and real life situations.
- Explore situations using money.
- Observe and use timetable, calendars and clocks found in lots of different places for a variety of different purposes.
- Help children to work out how much things cost and if necessary develop a savings plan.
- Help children to work out how much change they will receive.
- Encourage children to make up number stories about what they have, see and do.
- Encourage children to use mathematical language e.g. how much, how big/small, how many.
- Play number games using magazines, books, newspapers, number plates.
- Organise, categorise and count collections of things like toys, books, clothing, and shoes.
- Encourage children to share equally. Talk about the same number and how many each person has, how many groups there are.
- Let your child have opportunities to talk about numbers.
- Look at the mathematics found in newspapers and discuss how and why it is used.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE INDEPENDENCE

- Allow your child to make simple choices from a range of options you are prepared to accept. For example, allow your children to have a say in which clothes they will be wearing each day, even if this is limited to basic colour selection. Let children make mistakes and support them to learn.
- Let children participate in household chores, such as vacuuming, dusting and making beds.
- Develop a responsibility chart so your children can keep track of the household chores they have completed.
- Let children know you are interested in their thoughts and ideas. Ask their opinions on things that are to do with them.
- Respect your child’s decisions wherever possible.
- Help children to understand the impact of their choices.
- Teach children problem solving skills – encourage them to think about what they could do to fix the problem rather than telling them what to do.
- Provide positive support for your child in situations that may be challenging.
- Encourage and praise children’s attempts to do things for themselves no matter what the outcome.
- Provide age-appropriate toys so that children can learn to play by themselves for short periods of time.
- Help children take responsibility for packing up their toys.
- Teach older children to use a watch and incorporate time in some directions you give. For example “You can go next door to play, but I want you to be home by 4:30.”
- Help children to set achievable goals and work toward achieving those goals.