**Helping Your Child Learn At Home**

As parents, you not only know your child best, but are also your child’s first and most important role model. Therefore, it is vital you support him or her in extending learning at home through homework, academic discussions, and activities that inspire a curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Show your child you place value on education and homework, encourage good study habits, talk about assignments and activities, and offer praise as well as constructive feedback. Take note of when your child is becoming frustrated, allow for breaks, and talk about some strategies that may help him or her work through the task. If a particular subject area or type of assignment becomes a frequent and consistent source of frustration, feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss some possible solutions. Students should be completing the assignments as independently as possible, with parents providing assistance but not by giving your child the answer. If your child is struggling and asks for help, try to guide your child to a solution. For example, suggest a different way to think about the question, or help search for where they might find clarification or an answer by referring to the directions or examples.

If you would like more resources or suggestions on ways to help your child with a particular subject, topic, or skill feel free to contact me - I would be happy to have a discussion and provide you with more ideas!

**A Checklist for Helping Your Child With Homework**

1. **Show you place value on education and homework**

\_\_\_ Do you set a consistent time daily for homework?
\_\_\_ Does your child have the necessary materials need to complete the assignment?
\_\_\_ Does your child have a well-lit and quiet place to study away from distractions?
\_\_\_ Do you set a good example by showing your child that the skills he/she is learning are an important part of the things he/she will do as an adult?

1. **Monitor assignments**

\_\_\_ Do you know what the homework assignments are?

\_\_\_ Do you know what role you as parents should play in each assignment?
\_\_\_ Do you ensure your child begins and completes assignments putting forth their best effort?
\_\_\_ Do you read the teacher’s comments on assignments that are returned?
\_\_\_ Is TV viewing or video game playing cutting into your child’s homework time?

1. **Provide guidance**

\_\_\_ Do you help your child to get organized?
\_\_\_ Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (for example, scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)?
\_\_\_ Do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does he or she understand them?

**Language Arts Activities:**

* Set aside time for reading- reading to your child, having your child read to you, reading silently, taking turns reading, any kind of reading!
* Read a variety of materials- newspapers, magazines, poems, folk tales, fairy tales, , road signs, and different types of books
* Ask questions, especially “wh” questions – who, what, when, where, why- when reading
* Make predictions when reading
* Connect events in texts to real life
* Have your child retell the story in a few sentences (summarize)
* Turn on the closed captions on the television
* Play with words: Discuss and solve riddles, which make sense when you understand that words have multiple meanings. Point out how you can use context clues, words the unknown word or pictures, to figure out the correct meanings of words (Why are fish so smart? They swim in schools- schools can describe a place of learning or a group of fish)
* Keep family journals from trips or special events
* Singing: Music promotes language acquisition, listening skills, memory, rhythm, fluency and more
* Play letter sound games
* Help your child learn new words often
* Have your child write the grocery list, thank you letters, birthday cards, or friendly letters to family members
* Play games that require describing items
* Play “antonyms” (adult says up, child says down) or “synonyms” (adult says small, child says little)
* Play rhyming games
* Encourage your child to write books
* Have your child create real and make believe words using manipulatives, such as letters cut out of magazines/newspapers, stamps, etc.
* Choose a word and see how many other words you and your child can make from those letters (If the word is “reading” you can make the words ran, ring, red, dear, dig, rag, etc.)
* Help your child use a dictionary
* Visit the library with your child
* Read and re-read books
* Act out stories, poems, or songs

**Math Activities:**

* Use a family calendar
* Make a family schedule
* Have your child help you cook- measuring ingredients, using a timer
* Have your child count change or help add up bills (at a restaurant, grocery store, in the newspaper)
* Look for patterns and shapes everywhere
* Look for objects that show symmetry (can be divided into two or more exact mirror images such as a butterfly or the capital letter H)
* Play card games or board games that require counting or patterns
* Estimate items- the number of items in your cart at the grocery store, pieces of clothes in the laundry, scoops of dog food that will fill the bowl
* Comparisons- which is the heaviest, tallest, most expensive, etc.
* Sort items into various categories- toys, groceries, clothes
* Put together puzzles
* Record the temperature by using a thermometer
* Estimate and measure items (length, height, width, depth, weight) using a variety of tools (ruler, tape measure, yard stick, scale)
* Play number guessing games (My number is between 1 and 15, it is a two digit number, it is an even number)
* Practice skip counting- by 2’s 5’s, 10’s
* Practice addition and subtraction facts- use flash cards, real objects such as buttons or toys, verbally
* Ask your child what time it is, on an analog (clock with a face) and digital clocks
* Use fractional terms- half, whole, quarter, one-third
* Search for numbers everywhere
* Help your child understand there are many different ways to think about and solve one problem
* Talk about and show your child how you use math in everyday life
* Let your child teach you what they learned in math that day
* Look for, talk about, and create charts or graphs in newspapers, magazines, or other sources

**Social Studies Activities:**

* Discuss and practice cardinal directions- north, south, east, west
* Discuss and point out landforms and geographical features- hills, ponds, lakes
* Discuss your neighborhood and communities
* Use and talk about maps, point out various features- compass rose, roads, towns, capitals, state borders
* Use a globe or atlas
* Talk about your family history
* Create timelines- use photographs or draw pictures with labels about special events in your family life
* Visit and discuss historic sites
* Play games or sing about the fifty states
* Complete puzzles of the United States
* Participate in community service projects
* Discuss democratic ideals, rights, and responsibilities that are important to our country such as patriotism, freedom of religion, equality, justice, etc.
* Talk about government officials and their jobs- president, governor
* Discuss holidays, their origins, how and why they are celebrated, when they occur
* Allow for choices through a democratic voting process- present a few choices for dinner and have family members vote, relate this to the process of elections
* Discuss with your child whether you provide a good or service in your job, what about other jobs
* Talk about money in the role of business- goods and services cost money, where is money made, etc.
* Look at labels of items in your house, such as food or clothing, and locate the various places on a map
* Discuss current events in the newspaper, magazines, radio, and television
* Read and stories about historical events

**Science Activities:**

* Use open ended questions to encourage critical thinking, curiosity, and discovery about objects around us
* Sort items into groups by characteristics
* Encourage questions and discuss or research the answers- why do rainbows only happen when it rains, why does my skin wrinkle in water
* Make predictions based on questions and test them- how long will it take for an ice cube to melt in my hand, will it take longer on the counter
* Do simple science experiments together- what objects will float in the bathtub, what objects will stick to the fridge, which type of paper airplane will fly better and why, will plants grow in sand instead of dirt
* Read non-fiction texts about various topics- animals, weather, natural disasters
* Take a nature walk- listen to various sounds, notice different smells, look for animals, collect leaves for leaf rubbings, observe rocks and shells, compare and contrast- how is a fish different from a bird
* Discuss plants and animal habitats, needs, and adaptations which help them survive
* Plant various flowers, fruits, vegetables- observe how they grow, what they need to grow
* Talk about and notice different seasons and the changes that occur during each
* Use a magnifying glass to look at various items
* Have your child explore with magnets
* Read the weather section in the newspaper or watch it on the news, discuss and interpret the weather
* Use a rain gauge or thermometer
* Observe the sky- look at the different shapes of clouds, when and where the sun rises and sets, the phases of the moon, stars and constellations
* Visit museums, zoos, aquariums, parks, and planetariums
* Talk about each of the five senses- notice how your pupils change size in varying types of light, how your ears hear differently when you change their shape, how it plugging your nose affects what you taste

**Health/Physical Education Activities:**

* Discuss eating healthy- what are the food groups, how much of each type of food our body needs and why
* Talk about why we need sleep and ensure you and your family get enough sleep each night
* Practice proper hand washing and discuss germs
* Talk about and practice ways to keep your mind healthy
* Participate in active play with your child and family- play soccer, catch, do yoga, talk a walk, go for a bike ride
* Stress good sportsmanship
* Model good exercise and eating habits
* Practice two-handed catching
* Talk about how the body works and why it needs exercise
* Talk about and practice food safety- not sharing food with others because of allergies, washing fruits and vegetables before eating them
* Discuss safety with your child- car safety, stranger danger, emergencies and first aid
* Ensure your child knows how to be safe using technology and monitor their use of the internet and phones
* Talk about and practice sun safety- wearing sunglasses, using sun screen, staying hydrated
* Practice and discuss good hygiene habits, such as proper teeth brushing
* Discuss doctors, dentists, nurses, hospitals, and other places that provide health care
* Talk about healthy ways you deal with your feelings and communicate with others
* Discuss the changes your child is experiencing as he or she grows up
* Discuss how to have healthy interactions with friends and family members, teach your child how to use a good support system
* Help your child develop high self-esteem and model a positive self-image and self-respect
* Talk about alcohol and drug abuse prevention- ensure they are aware of the difference between doctor prescribed medicines and other drugs, are aware of how and why to say no to drugs and alcohol should the situation arise
* Review what to do in emergency situations- such as calling 911