

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

Hay Springs Public Schools

Ms. Kim Max, Early Childhood Education Director



## KID BITS

### Safety first

Help your child stay safe at school with these clothing tips. Make sure she wears shoes that fit properly and either tie or have Velcro. They're less likely to cause accidents than floppy shoes like sandals or clogs. Also, avoid baggy clothes and cords or strings on clothing that can get caught in playground equipment.

### Sizing things up

Take a walk around your neighborhood with your little one, and use objects you see to encourage him to compare sizes. Ask questions like "Is that mailbox taller or shorter than you?" or "Is the white rock bigger or smaller than the gray one?"

### Helping hands

Trace around your child's hands on paper, and ask her to name different ways she is helpful. Maybe she takes care of her dog by feeding him and helps you by dusting. Together, write each example on a separate finger. Then, hang up her "helping hands" to remind her how helpful she can be.

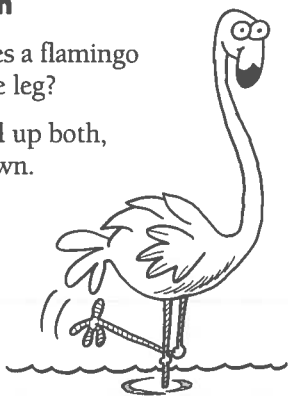
### Worth quoting

"Wonder. Go on and wonder."  
William Faulkner

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why does a flamingo hold up one leg?

**A:** If he held up both, he'd fall down.



## Keys to self-control

How can you teach your little one to handle big emotions like anger, frustration, and disappointment? Work on increasing his self-control with these strategies to help him think before he acts.

### Talk it out

Give your child words to use when he is upset. For example, if you can't find your glasses, you might say, "I feel so frustrated! Where did I last have them?" Then, when he's aggravated (say, he misplaced his favorite book), encourage him to use similar words. ("I feel upset because I want my book. I was looking at it in the living room—maybe it's there.") He'll learn to talk through his problems and be less likely to cry or whine.

### Think ahead

Prepare for situations where self-control comes in handy. You could say, "We're going to your cousin's house. Let's think about what you can do if she's playing with a toy you want." He may ask to join her, or he could ask to play



with another toy until she's finished. Having a plan can help him avoid grabbing the toy or yelling at his cousin.

### Calm down

When your child begins to get upset, help him find ways to keep his cool. For instance, he might take a deep breath, count to five, or draw a picture of how he is feeling. The distraction may be enough to settle him down. And once he's used to these techniques, he'll be able to do them without a reminder from you.♥

## Family playtime

Has the grown-up world left you too tired to play? Consider these ideas that will let you connect with your youngster—and unwind after a long day:

- Show her what you liked to play when you were her age. You could teach her a card game, a jump rope rhyme, or a magic trick, for instance. Next, ask her to teach you a game or an activity she enjoys.
- Step into a role. You might each pretend to be someone else (a cashier and a customer, a bird and a squirrel) while carrying on a conversation. Encourage your child to think about what her character would sound like and what she would say.
- At bedtime, shine a flashlight on the walls, ceiling, and floor. Have your youngster "chase" your beam with her own flashlight. Then, trade roles. ♥



# Parent & Child Activity Calendar

## Elementary School

Hay Springs Public Schools



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE®

### Parent & Child Activity Calendar

Elementary School  
**Parents**  
make the difference!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>September 2017</b>					<b>1</b> A planning calendar can help your child stay organized this school year. Buy or make one with him.	<b>2</b> Have a "goodbye to summer" picnic today. Talk with your child about the great times you had together over the summer.
<b>3</b> Write upcoming school events on your family calendar. Make plans to attend as many as you can.	<b>4</b> A good breakfast helps kids learn. Be sure your child starts the day with a healthy breakfast at home or at school.	<b>5</b> Talk to your child about peer group pressure. Practice ways to say <i>no</i> to drugs and alcohol.	<b>6</b> Write your child's name vertically. Have her use each letter in her name to begin a line of a poem.	<b>7</b> September is Library Card Month. Make sure everyone in your family has a library card.	<b>8</b> Turn off the TV this evening! Plan on reading or playing games instead.	<b>9</b> Have your child set a weekly goal. Write it down. Could you do this, too?
<b>10</b> Make sure you and your child know school rules. Ask for a list of rules and post them on your refrigerator.	<b>11</b> Have your child write a letter to a friend or relative about the beginning of his school year.	<b>12</b> Watch the news together. Help your child use a world map to locate one place that was mentioned.	<b>13</b> Think about the rules you have for your child. Are they appropriate for his age? If not, make some adjustments.	<b>14</b> Keep a basket as a home base for library books. You'll save money on overdue fines!	<b>15</b> As a treat, let your child stay up 30 minutes past his regular bedtime to read in bed.	<b>16</b> Give family members some marshmallows and toothpicks. See who can build the tallest tower.
<b>17</b> Tonight, talk with your child about the week ahead. Plan to do this every Sunday night.	<b>18</b> Look over your child's homework. Give some compliments and some helpful criticism.	<b>19</b> Challenge your child to do a secret good deed for a friend or neighbor.	<b>20</b> Look through some help wanted ads with your child. What jobs look interesting to her?	<b>21</b> Discuss a few of the weather changes that take place in the fall. (Days are colder and shorter.)	<b>22</b> Play board or card games as a family tonight.	<b>23</b> Let your child see you keep your temper when you are angry. Instead of yelling, calmly talk about how you feel.
<b>24</b> Have each family member write a funny sentence. Put them together to make a story.	<b>25</b> Help your child find his best time to do homework. Some kids do best right after school; others do best after dinner.	<b>26</b> If you haven't met your child's teacher yet, plan to do so. Talk about your visit with your child.	<b>27</b> Talk with your child about why students who do homework earn better grades.	<b>28</b> Ask your child to calculate the average age of family members. Add up ages, then divide by number of family members.	<b>29</b> Have dinner by candlelight tonight.	<b>30</b> Visit the library with your child. Check out a book about science.

## Focus on kindness and respect to promote academic success



According to a recent study, kids whose parents value kindness over achievement tend to do better in school than kids

from families where academic success matters above all else.

In fact, putting pressure on your child to score high marks can have the opposite effect. It can cause his grades and self-esteem to suffer, and lead to depression and anxiety. But when parents promote kindness and respect, students tend to perform better in class. This may be because they feel more secure and know their parents' approval doesn't hinge on their getting good grades.

To show your child how much you value respect and kindness:

- **Demonstrate courtesy.** When talking to others—from neighbors to the

cashier at the grocery store—let your child see you being polite. Say *please* and *thank you*. Be respectful. These may seem like small things, but they make a big impression.

- **Praise positive behavior.** When you notice your child doing something nice or loving, let him know! There's no need to go overboard, though. A simple pat on the back will remind him how much you value kindness.
- **Promote healthy relationships.** Encourage your child to connect with his teachers and classmates. The more support he gets from those around him, the less he'll depend on things like grades and awards to help him feel good about himself.

Source: L. Ciciolla and others, "When Mothers and Fathers Are Seen as Disproportionately Valuing Achievements," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Springer US.

## Communication is the key to a strong parent-teacher team



Research shows that parent involvement in education has a positive effect on student success at school. When teachers

and parents work together, the results can be powerful. To foster effective two-way communication:

- **Set the tone.** It's natural to have questions when the school year begins. Ask questions respectfully. Show support for your child and the class, and encourage the teacher to keep you informed.
- **Be positive.** When you talk with the teacher, enjoy hearing about your child's strengths. But also prepare to hear about her weaknesses. Remember to remain calm. You and the teacher both want your child to

do well. Addressing struggles is the only way to find solutions.

- **Role-play.** Some parents are nervous about talking with the teacher. If this describes you, consider practicing with a friend. If you aren't comfortable speaking English, bring an interpreter with you. Still worried? Using email may put you at ease.
- **Choose words carefully.** It's more effective to make polite requests instead of demands. A helpful tip is to use the word *we* instead of *you*. ("How can we stay in touch to help Jordan?" is less aggressive than "You should tell me if Jordan is falling behind.") Remember: The teacher isn't your opponent; she's your teammate.

**Q:** My daughter is in fifth grade. This year, her three best friends have another teacher. She says she has no friends in her class and she hates school. Should I ask if she can be moved to the other class?

### Questions & Answers

**A:** Kids learn lots of lessons in school. One lesson your daughter will learn this year is that she won't always get to choose the people she works with.

She may feel like it is the end of the world, but you can help ease her mind if you:

- **Talk about your own life.** Have you ever had to work with people you didn't know? Share that story with your daughter. Let her know that learning to make new friends is also a skill she'll need when she goes to middle school.
- **Encourage her to get to know the students in her class.**

Together, practice conversation starters that will help her find kids who share her hobbies and interests. For example, "Hi, I'm Jane. I like your horse T-shirt.

Do you like horses? I love them." Or there might be someone in the class who once played on a soccer team with her. When she meets someone she likes, help them make plans to get together outside of school.

- **Talk with the teacher** and let her know about your child's situation. Does she have suggestions for helping your daughter connect with some of the students in the class?

Finally, remind your daughter of the classic song: "Make new friends, but keep the old." She can always be friends with the girls in the other class. But this year, she has an opportunity to make some new friends, too.



# It Matters: Responsibility

## Overprotective parents hinder responsibility



When children are born, it's the job of parents to protect them in every way they can. Once they reach elementary school, however, they become more capable and are able to do lots of things for themselves.

Unfortunately, many parents still try to protect their children from *everything*. And all of that well-intended "protection" can smother their children's budding independence.

Overprotective parenting makes it difficult for children to learn essential skills for success in school and life—such as communication, negotiation, perseverance, responsibility and decision making.

To avoid the many pitfalls of overprotective parenting:

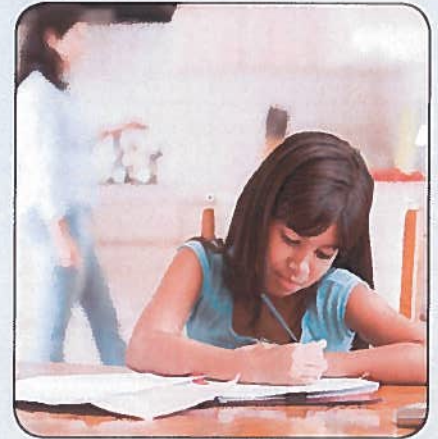
- **Don't do everything** for your child. Let him do things for himself. Will he make mistakes? Probably. But he will learn from those mistakes.
- **Don't drop everything** to rescue your child when he forgets things. If he leaves his homework or gym shoes at home, don't rush them up to the school. Instead, let him face the consequences.
- **Don't try to negotiate** a better grade for your child. If you or your child are confused about a grade he receives, let your child talk to the teacher about it first.
- **Don't call the parent** of a child your child is complaining about in school. Give your child a chance to work it out. However, if it is a serious problem, contact the school immediately.

## Create a homework routine at the beginning of the year

**Y**ou want to help your child take responsibility for completing her homework—and creating a homework routine at the start of the school year can do just that.

To establish an effective routine, make sure your child has:

- **A well-lit study area.** This can be at a desk or tabletop. If it's at the kitchen table, make the kitchen off limits to others during study time. Turn off the television, too.
- **A set study time.** When does your child prefer to do homework? Right after school, leaving the evening for free time? Or does she prefer to blow off some steam right after school and begin homework after dinner? Experiment, then schedule the time that works best for her.
- **A homework survival kit.** Include all of the supplies she might need



to complete her homework—pencils, pens, paper, sharpener, erasers, crayons, markers, glue stick, scissors, ruler, etc.

- **Standby support.** Encourage her to get phone numbers of classmates she can call when she has homework questions.

## A checklist of responsibilities promotes independence



Whether it's keeping track of textbooks or remembering to turn in homework, responsible behavior is a must for school success. And the best way to *teach* your child responsibility is to *give* her responsibilities.

The new school year is the perfect time to sit down with your child and decide on a few tasks she's ready to handle on her own. Then make a checklist of everything you expect her to do. Agree on small rewards for a job well done, and consequences for times your child shirks responsibility.

Here is a starter checklist of responsibilities you can adapt:

- Going to bed on time.
- Getting up on time.
- Fixing breakfast.
- Selecting an outfit.
- Packing lunch.
- Completing homework.
- Returning signed forms.
- Maintaining grades.
- Getting along with siblings.
- Keeping room clean.
- Completing assigned chores.
- Reading at least 15 minutes a day.
- Taking care of personal hygiene.
- Feeding/caring for pets.

# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

Hay Springs Elementary School  
Mr. Jason Cline, Principal

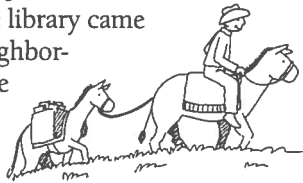
## Book Picks



### Read-aloud favorites

#### ■ *Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia* (Jeanette Winter)

What if the library came to your neighborhood on the back of a donkey?



This is the true story of a Colombian school-teacher's traveling library, that brought books to children in remote villages. (Also available in Spanish.)

#### ■ *Dragons Love Tacos* (Adam Rubin)

When a little boy discovers that dragons like to eat tacos, he decides to host a taco party for them. But if a fire-breathing dragon accidentally gets a bite of spicy salsa, look out! A silly story about a dragon party that turns into a disaster.



#### ■ *Just a Second* (Steve Jenkins)

In just a single second, a bumblebee flaps its wings 100 times and the earth travels 18½ miles. This nonfiction book will help your child think about time in fascinating ways. She'll also discover different methods of measuring time.

#### ■ *Bedtime Is Canceled* (Cece Meng)

Maggie and her brother write their parents an official-looking note: "Bedtime is canceled." Somehow, the note blows out the window, lands in a newspaper office, and ends up in a headline. Soon, bedtime really is canceled, and exhausted children quickly discover the importance of sleep.

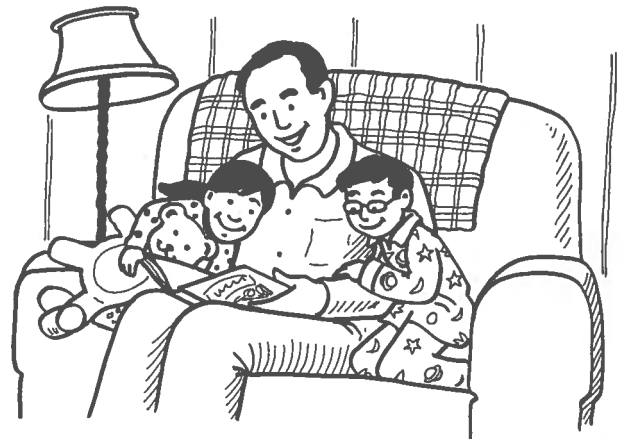


## Time for a story

Want to spend time with your youngster, build her reading skills, and help her learn to love books? You can do all three when you read aloud. Here are suggestions.

### Read regularly

Try to read to your child every day. You might aim for 10–15 minutes of bedtime reading for a peaceful end to the day. Bring along a book, and read to her during a sibling's sports practice. Or curl up together with a book when you get home from work.



### Take turns choosing books

Your youngster may want to hear old favorites again and again. Use your turn for new titles and variety (nonfiction, poetry).

### Let her participate

Ask your child to turn the pages while you read. Also, she can finish sentences that rhyme or fill in words she knows. Go slowly so she has time to understand

the story and look at the illustrations. She'll enjoy read-aloud time more if she plays an active role.

### Be playful

You can use different voices for different characters (a high, squeaky voice for a mouse or a deep, booming voice for a horse). Or substitute your youngster's name for the main character's name, and use family members' names for other characters.

*Note:* You don't have to be an expert reader—your child will love it when you read aloud because it's *you*.♥

## Writing that makes sense

As your child first learns to write, his stories may not always make sense to others. Help his writing flow logically with these two ideas.

**1.** Even if your youngster isn't writing sentences yet, he can tell you stories. As he describes the new class pet or something funny that happened at lunch, you can jot down his tale.

He'll practice relating events in a logical order, and that can help when he puts his thoughts and ideas down on paper himself.

**2.** Let your child read his stories to you. Ask questions to encourage him to add information ("What did you do with your friends at recess?") or to clear up a confusing part ("Who said, 'Let's go home'—you or your brother?").♥

