

January 2019

Superintendent's News

Start of 2nd Semester

Wow! 2018 is history and we are beginning the second semester of 2018-19 with eager students and a busy schedule of school activities. I would like to wish each of you a very Blessed, Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2019. I continue to feel blessed to be a part of this community and have the privilege to work with a very dedicated staff, board of education and your wonderful children. As we begin the final semester of the school year I want to remind all staff, parents and students that by working together we can all accomplish more. It is imperative that as we dedicate ourselves to the improvement of education for our children that we all work very hard to keep the lines of communication open. Parents please communicate with your child's teachers and coaches if you have concerns. It is impossible for our staff to respond to student and parent concerns if we are not all willing to communicate directly and honestly with each other. As the administrator, my door is nearly always open and never hesitate to give me a phone call. I am always willing to listen to your concerns, however our policy dictates that the first order in the resolution of a problem is direct communication between parent and/or the student with the teacher and/or coach about your concerns. If we are going to hold true to our mission, vision, and goals for the district we truly have to continually work together in this effort.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Superintendent News	2
Junior High G/BB	3
Music Notes	4
Eller's Wisdom	5
Cafeteria News	6
College Planning	7
STUCO News	8
Finance Challenge	9
Menu	17
Activity Calendar	18

Be the first to find and call the school or email hawk.contact.org with this issue's strange phrase and you will be the winner for this issue.

Don't miss your chance to win!



As we return from our Christmas and New Year's break and time with family and friends I am reminded of how so blessed as Americans we are to have the diverse educational opportunities we provide for our children. As an adult when I reflect on the educational system that served me well in my youth, I readily realize that the education of today must be much more and continue to improve and challenge our students. With the advancement of technology, and the social changes that have taken place in our country our educational systems continue to play an increasingly important role in the lives of our children. Please know that the employees at Hay Springs are very dedicated to providing your children with the best possible opportunities to learn. If we do not have some struggling students, then we clearly do not have the bar high enough. It is my hope that the majority of our students are academically challenged on a daily basis. With challenges comes the additional need for encouragement and support from staff and parents.

As our students move through our educational system and move on to additional educational opportunities or the world of work they will continue to deal with challenges in their life. How we confront our challenges in life has a great effect on the quality of life we will enjoy. We have a choice every day, to appreciate the opportunities we have in life or to dwell on our challenges. If we can get in the habit of choosing to look at our blessings and opportunities, we will be amazed at how we begin to see many more positive things around us. The reality is things around us don't change, we are the ones who will change and when we look for good, we find it. It continues to be one of my goals to help our entire staff and student population focus on the many blessing we have in life and support each other in positive ways as we work together to pursue our Mission, Vision and Goals at Hay Springs School. The initiation of the NPBIS (Nebraska Positive Behavior Intervention Support) program at Hay Springs School is an effort to identify the positive behaviors of our students. By doing so, we encourage an increase in positive behavior by staff and students as we move into the final semester of 2018-19.

Superintendent's News

(Continued)

Our "After School Program" (ASP) continues to provide academic support for our K-5th grade students. ASP seems to be very effective in providing additional academic assistance and some fun and experiential activities from 4:00 until 5:30 Monday through Thursday afternoons. The program begins with recess from 4:00 – 4:15 for the younger students, then from 4:15 until 5:00 all students will focus on academics with a snack at 5:00 followed by educational, experiential learning activities until 5:30. If your students are involved in this program please be prompt to pick them up at 5:30 at the cafeteria door. Our staff will not be providing student supervision after 5:45.

Our Friday school requirement for 6th through 12th grade students will continue to provide academic support for struggling students. Students that fail to attend Friday school without making other arrangements to make up the time will be expected to make up comparable academic efforts at school before or after school during the week. Please support your students in the attendance of Friday school when we provide additional academic support for their academic success.

The Hay Springs January board meeting is set for January 14th and will be our re-organizational meeting as well as installing new board member David Russell to the Board of Education. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome David to the board and thank him for his willingness to serve our community. I would like to also acknowledge and thank our current Board of Education members, Brenda Johnson, Marilyn Reed, Miriam Kearns, Shavona Henry, and Greg Heiting for their service to our community. Serving on the Board of Education is a very, very important position in all communities. It can be rewarding but is also a thankless position, so if you get the opportunity, thank these individuals for serving your community. I also want to thank Everette Langford for his many years of service on the Board of Education. As he retires from his role on the Board of Education, his leadership, knowledge, insight

and support will be missed by our group.

In closing I thought I would update you on some of my family blessings over the past year. Sue and I celebrated our 47th anniversary together at home during a snow storm, my mother just celebrated her 97th birthday, and we also celebrated the graduation of our baby from UNK, the 8th of eight to complete their college degree. We have also been blessed with 18th (Kenzie in April) and 19th (Jayne in November) grandchildren in the past year. We continue to feel appreciated and supported by the wonderful community of Hay Springs, so it is evident that we are truly richly blessed on a daily basis. Thanks to everyone for your continued support of our Hay Springs educational system.

Mission Statement

The Mission of Hay Springs Schools in cooperation with families and community, is to empower students within an emotionally supportive and physically safe environment with the academic, social, physical and technological skills to achieve success as responsible, self-disciplined citizens of a global society.

Vision Statement

"Empower Students to Achieve Lifelong Success."

Hay Springs Goal

All students will demonstrate an increase in math proficiency across the curriculum.

NOTICE!!!

EARLY

**DISMISSAL AT
12:45 PM**

JANUARY 8th

**FOR A TEACHER
INSERVICE**

NO AFTERNOON PRESCHOOL



Girls Junior High Basketball

By Coach Kudrna

The Junior High Girl's Basketball team took 1st place in the Panhandle Conference Tournament on December 11th! The girls defeated St. Agnes in the first round with a score of 42 to 21. Gabby Twarling led the Hawks with 15 points, followed by Mia Skinner 12, Reese Turman added 8, while Sam Toof added 5, and Hally Johnson put up 2 points. The Hawks went on to beat Sioux County in the semi-finals with a score of 34 to 12. Reese Turman led the Hawks with 22 points. The girls met up with the Hemingford Bobcats in the championship game. The girls struggled offensively, but managed to walk away with a 15 to 14 victory! The last time the Junior High Girls won PANCO was in 2006. Way to go Hawks!



Kindergarten's Museum Trip

By Mrs. Mintken

Kindergarten went back in time. On November 20th, Dave Perkins, helped us remember what it was like a long time ago. The students loved many of the exhibits in the Hay Springs Museum. They liked the doll collection, the Hay Springs Hawk memorabilia and the old fire truck. Their absolute favorite was the one room school house. Many decided that sitting in those desks and having to write with ink wouldn't be much fun. They really didn't like the idea of having to go outside to the outhouse to use the bathroom!



JUNIOR WRESTLING

Signups are Jan 2nd. Practice will begin Jan. 3rd in Lister after school.



Music Notes

By Raima Varvel



Congratulations to Ashley Tobiasson, Sam Hindman, Joce Varvel and Gabe Varvel for being selected to Oregon Trail Honor Band held in Kimball, NE on Monday, January 7th. They will be in rehearsals all day with a concert that evening. If you see one of these students be sure to congratulate them!

The ML/HS pep band will be performing at the following basketball games.

Thursday, January 24th vs. Sioux Co.

Thursday, January 31st vs. Edgemont

Friday, February 8th vs. Garden Co.

Upcoming dates:

Oregon Trail Honor Band Kimball, NE Monday, January 7th

Pep Band Thursday, January 24th

Pep Band Thursday, January 31st

Pep Band Friday, February 8th

Speech News

By Raima Varvel

Speech team meetings continue every Thursday during lunch. Students are now preparing individual and group events. "I'd like to help you out. Which way did you come in?" The following is a tentative schedule of the meets we will be attending.

Gering Invite January 12

Scottsbluff Invite January 19

Alliance Invite January 26

Chadron Invite February 2

Ogallala Invite February 16

Gordon/Rushville Invite February 23

Mitchell Invite March 2

Districts-Hemingford March 9

State Speech-UNK March 22



Girls and Boys Basketball Senior Night

Will be Friday, February 8th, 2019

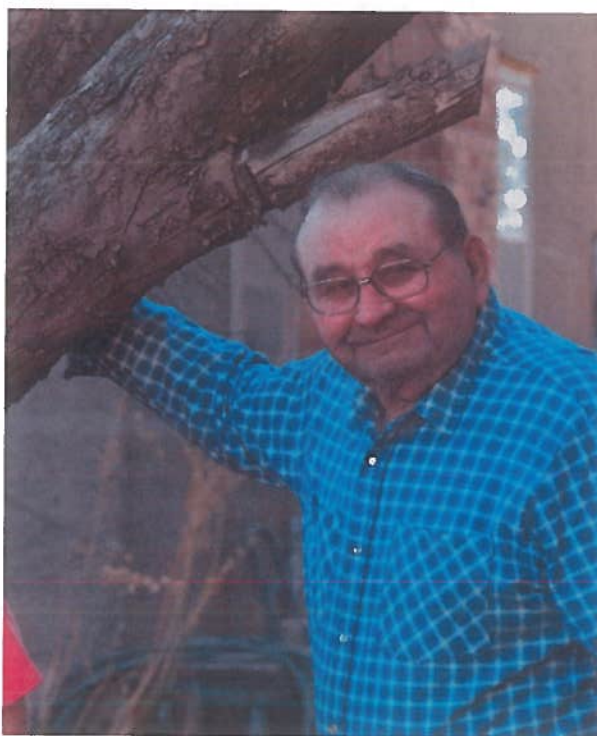
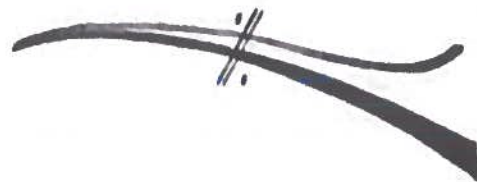
We ask that all senior parents meet in the locker room hallway before the varsity girls' warm-up begins.

Remember, we will be recognizing only the senior athletes and their parents.

Home of the Hawks!!



Elder's Wisdom 2019
Honorees are Bryan Burrows and Lois Hughes.
We will be honoring them on April 18, 2019.
Mark your calendars!



News from the Cafeteria

by Ms. Young



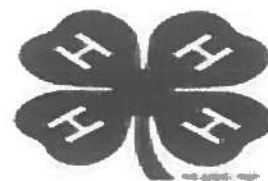
A very special "Thank You" goes out to Don & Mary Vannatta with S&V Livestock and Tom & Kim Marcy with Marcy Cattle Co. for their generous beef donation for our beef to school program! Also, a huge "Thank You", to The Brain Forney Family for the transportation of the beef to the school! This Is An Awesome Program For Our School! Again, Thank You!

*Magic Plate Winners Were Abbey Russell, Sawyer Davis and Stacia Krzycki

*Please RSVP For The Super Bowl Dinner On Jan 31st By January 24th. Thank You!

4H Opportunities

By Melissa Mracek



January Baking Basics and Sewing

The January Baking Basics will be held on Friday, January 18th starting at 9 am. The youth will experiment with ways to make waffles healthier and continue to work on their sewing projects. This workshop fee is \$5. Please contact Melissa Mracek at (308) 327-2312 to register prior to January 14th.

Niobrara Trap Shooters

The club will have a meeting in January and will start practicing on February 1st. The group usually practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Stuart Hardin at 308-360-0175.

Robotics Exposition

On January 12th the Hay Springs and Gordon Robotics groups will be hosting an Exposition to help them prepare for their competition in Sidney. The exposition will be held in the Hay Springs Auditorium from 1pm until 3 pm. The event is open to the public and will be a great opportunity for families to see what their youth have been doing or people who are interested in robotics to check it out. Please contact Melissa Mracek at (308) 327-2312 if you have questions.

EducationQuest Foundation College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

January 2019

Winter break: a good time for college prep!

Take advantage of free time over the holidays to do some prep work for college. Here are a few things you can do!

Seniors, complete your FAFSA

If you haven't already, complete your [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Need help? Use our free [FAFSA Tools](#) or call us to make an appointment for free help: Omaha - 888.357.6300; Lincoln - 800.303.3745; Kearney - 800.666.3721; or Scottsbluff - 800.303.3745, ext. 6654.

Juniors, prepare for the ACT

All Nebraska high school juniors will take the ACT Test this spring. Here's a [list of resources](#) to help you prepare.

Search for scholarships

Use our free [ScholarshipQuest](#) tool to find Nebraska-based awards. You'll also find links to national scholarship sites.

Update your Activities Resume

Our free [Activities Resume](#) is an easy way to track your extracurricular activities, accomplishments, volunteer work, and part-time jobs. The information is then readily available when you apply for scholarships and employment.

Volunteer

In addition to giving back to your community,

your volunteer work can lead to scholarship opportunities. Make sure you track your involvement on your *Activities Resume*.

January "To Do" List

Seniors:

- If you haven't already, complete the [FAFSA](#).
- Apply for scholarships; see [ScholarshipQuest](#) for Nebraska-based awards.
- Update your [Activities Resume](#).

Juniors:

- Update your [Activities Resume](#).
- Check out [ACT prep resources](#).
- [Register](#) by January 11 for the February 9 ACT.
- [Register](#) by February 8 for the March 9 SAT.



Migrant Education Program is available to assist students of all ethnicities and races who qualify with educational services, support and resources. If your family works in agricultural and has moved within the last three years, contact us. We may be able to give free educational supports to your children. Contact Danielle Cole Director of Migrant Education at dcole@esu13.org or (308) 635-3696.

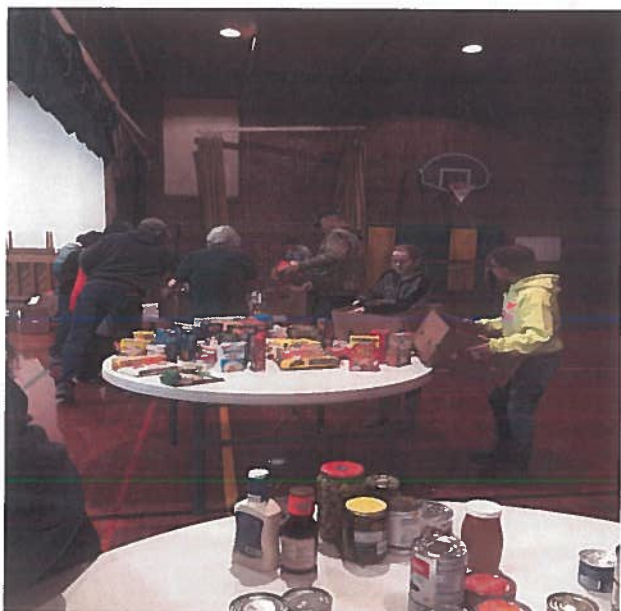
STUCO NEWS

Christmas Food Drive

Thank you, thank you, thank you, students and families!

The students gathered 681 items for the Christmas boxes!

Congratulations to 6th grade! They won the pizza party for contributing the most items, 10.2 items per student! Fourth grade came in right behind them with 9.1 items per student. Fifth grade held onto third with 7.2 items per student. A special thank you to Student Council and Brodey Planansky for helping to pack and load boxes!



Fall 2018 Nebraska Personal Finance Challenge

The High School business students participated in the Fall 2018 Nebraska Personal Finance Challenge in November. Their team was ranked number 2 out of the 439 teams that participated in the High School division! Team members Erin Kadlecek, Jarret Pieper, Rebekah Holtmeier and Hannah Wohl.

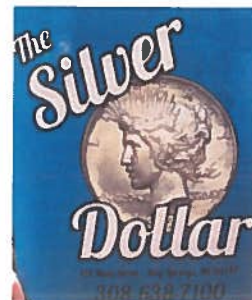
PBIS

There will be a teacher workday on Tuesday, January 8th from 1-4:30. ALL students will be dismissed at 12:45. No afternoon preschool. Lunch will be served.



The following students were given \$5 Chamber Bucks for NO tardies during the first semester of classes. Please congratulate these students for their time management skills! Zahaven Henry, Kaylee Kaiser, Noah Kelly, Abigail Russell, James Scherbarth, Reese Turman, Jessica Badje, Ashley Burrows, Ruth West, and Rylee Wolken. Great Job!

Football Tailgates sponsored by:



Thank you for supporting the Hawks!

January 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Menus are subject to change.		NO SCHOOL.	2 Breakfast: Breakfast Casserole Lunch: Sloppy Joes/Pigs Blanket/Baked Beans	3 Breakfast: Dutch Waffles Lunch: Beef To School Burgers/Chicken Patty/Chips		5 Lunch menu choices available each day are: PBJ/Nacho Bar/Pizza
6 Breakfasts include: Main Meal/Cereals/Cereal Bars/	7 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza Lunch: Variety Of Soups/Bread Stick	8 Breakfast: Blueberry Sheet Cakes Lunch: Beef To School Tacos/Potato Tri	9 Breakfast: Breakfast Burritos Lunch: Pulled Pork/Smiley FF	10 Breakfast: Omelet/Sausage Lunch: Cooks Choice	1	
13 Fresh Fruit & Veggie Bar Offered Every Meal	14 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza Lunch: Chicken Strips/Corn Dogs/Baked Beans	15 Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwich Lunch: Hamburger Gravy & Biscuits	16 Breakfast: French Toast Lunch: Beef To School Cheeseburger Casserole/Corn	17 Breakfast: Biscuits & Gravy Lunch: Beef To School Burgers/Chicken Patty/Chips	18	19
20 We Will Not Serve Nacho Bar On Beef To School Burger Day	21 Breakfast: Pancake on a stick Lunch: Beef To School Spaghetti/Garlic Toast	22 Breakfast: Waffle Sticks/Sausage Link Lunch: Walking Taco	23 Breakfast: Breakfast Casserole Lunch: Fried Chicken/Mashed Pot/Gravy	24 Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza Lunch: Ham & Cheese Noodle Bake/Green Beans	25	26
27 Milk & 100% Juice Is Offered Every Meal	28 Breakfast: Biscuits & Gravy Lunch: Mandarin Orange Chicken/Rice/Portune Cookies	29 Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwich Lunch: Chicken Quesadilla/Churro	30 Breakfast: Breakfast Burritos Lunch: Chicken Noodle/Mashed Pot/Corn	31 Breakfast: Pancake On A Stick Lunch: Super Nachos/Brownie		
Thank You!!! A Very Special Thank You Goes To Don & Mary Vannatta w/S&V Livestock and Tom & Kim Marcy w/Marcy Cattle Co. For Their Generous Beef Donation! Also A Huge Thank You To The Brian Forney Family For The Transportation Of The Beef To The School! This Is An Awesome Program For Our School! Thank You Again!						

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).



Hay Springs School Cafeteria
 *Breakfast menus
 * PK - 12 Lunch Menus
 * All menus are served with milk. Water is available in the lunchroom area.
 *Garden Bar is offered daily unless posted.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		New Year's Day 1	**Return to School** Speech Workshop @ Gering Freshman Academy 2	3	4	HIS WR @ Garden Co. 9am JII B/BB @ Sioux Co. 10am *G/B BB home vs. Leyton 1pm 5
6	Oregon Trail Honor Band @ Kimball 7	EARLY DISMISSAL @ 12:45 G/B BB home vs. Gordon/Rush 4 pm Report cards available 8	Health Professions @ Alliance ASVAB Testing 1pm 9	*G/BB home vs. Cody-Kilgore 3pm 10	11	HIS WR @ Sandhill's 9am Speech Meet @ Gering TBA G/B BB @ Potter-Dix 1pm 12
13	G/B BB @ Crawford – PANCO TBA 14	15	"Hawk Talk" 16	17	HIS WR @ Chadron (2-day) 11:00 am Teacher In-Service 18	HIS WR @ Chadron Speech Meet @ Scottsbluff 19
20	JII B/BB @ Gordon/Rush 5pm 21	22	23	*G/B BB home vs. Sioux Co. 3pm JII B/BB @ Hemingford 5pm 24	25	HIS WR @ Ainsworth 9am Speech Meet @ Alliance 26
27	*JH B/BB PANCO @ home TBA UNK Honor Band 28	G/B BB @ Hyannis 3pm 29	CSC Business Competition (Best of the West) 30	Super Bowl Lunch *G/B BB home vs. Edgemont 4pm 31		

JANUARY

2019

Happy
New Year

NOTES:

Christmas Vacation – Dec. 21st – Jan 1st

Jan. 8th – Early Dismissal for Teacher In-service @ 12:45 pm. Lunch will be served. No Afternoon Preschool.

Jan. 8th – report cards available for pickup

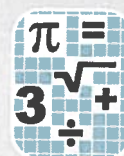
Elementary School Parents[®]

Hay Springs Public Schools

make the difference!



Use toothpicks to reinforce math concepts



A box of toothpicks is all you need to teach your child some valuable math skills—reasoning,

number sense and even basic geometry. Toothpick math is also a fun way to make time go faster while waiting at an appointment.

Here are some fun ways to put a box of toothpicks to use:

- **Last one wins.** This is a great game for two people. Lay out 12 toothpicks. Taking turns, players may remove one or two toothpicks. The player who takes the last toothpick wins. (Try to leave three toothpicks on the table to guarantee a win on your next turn.)
- **Can you copy this?** Using five toothpicks, create a design. Let your child look at it for only three seconds. Then cover it up and see if your child can recreate it from memory.
- **Tricky triangles.** Give your child seven toothpicks. How many triangles can he create?

For even more toothpick fun, head to www.education.com/activity/article/Toothpick_Math and download a page of toothpick puzzles to try!

Review the school year and make necessary adjustments

It's the beginning of a new calendar year—and nearly the halfway point in the school year. So it's a good time to take stock of your child's habits and make needed adjustments.

Talk with your child about how she thinks the school year is going. If the two of you had set learning goals at the start of the year, review those goals now. Is she making progress? How can she make the rest of the school year even better?

Then, help your child make some resolutions. Here are three to consider:

1. **Recommit to routines.** Has your child's bedtime begun to slip? Are mornings more rushed? Is her regular study time now not quite

so regular? Sleep and study routines make life easier—and help kids do better in school.

2. **Spend more time reading.** There is no skill that will help your child more in school. And reading ability, like other skills, gets better with practice. Encourage your child to read every day. Let her read about anything, from sports to her favorite movie character.
3. **Spend less time on screen media.** Talk about the amount of time your child spends in front of screens. How much time does she spend watching shows and movies? Playing online games? Browsing the internet? Set and enforce limits.

Share tips to help your child master reading assignments



Some kids rush through the reading assigned for homework and think, "That's it. Finished!"

Reading the chapters the teacher assigns is essential. But homework doesn't end there.

To truly learn from the text, your child must study as she reads. Strong study skills will also help her prepare better for tests.

So show your child how to:

- **Skim chapters** to find important themes and key points. She should first look at headings and subheads. Then she can take note of boldface and italicized words. Material in the margins is important, too.

- **Take notes** in her notebook as she reads. Or, if allowed, your child can highlight key passages right in the book or on the handout.
- **Pay attention** to illustrations, graphs, tables and charts. These can clarify important concepts.
- **Write a short summary** of the material in her own words. She can also tell you about what she's read.

"Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential."

—Liane Cordes

Doing chores helps kids develop important values and skills



In the past, children had to do their chores. With everyone doing their part, the family was able to survive.

Today's kids don't always have family responsibilities. And that's too bad. There are significant benefits for children who do chores—and those benefits also carry over into school.

Chores help children:

- **Become "stakeholders."** When your child does some of the tasks that keep the household running, he makes a real investment in your home. A child who swept out the front hall is less likely to walk through it in muddy soccer cleats.
- **Develop skills.** Each time you give your child a new chore, he learns how to do the job and also learns skills he'll use throughout his life.
- **Understand** that the world doesn't revolve around them. We all know

people who expect others to clean up the messes they make. Your child won't grow up to become one of those people.

- **Learn to work well with others.** If you have more than one child, ask them to do a chore together. Or, encourage them to create a weekly chore chart and alternate responsibilities.
- **Develop self-discipline.** There will be lots of things throughout your child's life that he'll need to do, even though he won't want to.
- **Develop a sense of pride.** If your child is responsible for doing his laundry, having a stack of clean shirts is an accomplishment. He can take pride in what he has done.
- **See that they are an important part of the family.** Your child will know he is helping to keep your home running smoothly.

Are you teaching and practicing listening skills?



The most important part of communication isn't talking—it's *listening*. And listening skills are crucial for your child's

success in school.

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to see if you are helping your child become a good listener:

- ___ **1. Do you try to give your child your undivided attention** when he's talking? If you're busy, say, "I'd love to talk about this after I cook dinner."
- ___ **2. Are you patient** when you listen? Sometimes, it may take a while for your child to actually say what he wants to say.
- ___ **3. Do you avoid interrupting** your child when he is talking and ask him not to interrupt you?
- ___ **4. Do you "listen"** to your child's behavior? A child who is acting up is communicating a need.
- ___ **5. Do you avoid chiming in** with the "right" answer? Instead, let your child try to sort out what to do.

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you're raising a good listener. For each *no* answer, try that idea.

Elementary School
Parents
make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents to Help
Their Children. ISSN: 1523-1275

For subscription information call or write:
The Parent Institute, 1-800-756-5525,
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474.
Fax: 1-800-216-3667.

Or visit: www.parent-institute.com.

Published monthly September through May.
Copyright © 2019, The Parent Institute,
a division of PaperClip Media, Inc., an
independent, private agency. Equal
opportunity employer.

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.
Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.

Seven strategies can make your family read-aloud time a success



Some parents stop reading aloud as soon as their children learn to read. But reading aloud can continue to be fun,

and it builds reading skills, too.

To make your read-aloud time successful:

1. **Do it every day.** When you read aloud daily, you demonstrate that reading time is much too important to miss.
2. **Pick a regular time.** When reading is already part of your daily routine, you won't have to think about trying to fit it into a hectic day. Choose a time when your child will be most receptive, such as after playing outside or before bed.
3. **Read the book first**—before you read it aloud. Reading aloud is performing. You'll do a better job if you're familiar with what you're going to read. Previewing a book may also keep you from getting bogged down in a book that neither you nor your child enjoys.
4. **Read books you like.** If you like a book, odds are your child will, too. Start by reading books you enjoyed as a child. Often, your enjoyment will be contagious!
5. **Accentuate the first line.** The first line of any good story will grab the reader's attention. Your reading should make your child want to sit up and listen.
6. **Use facial expressions.** Widen your eyes to show surprise. Squint a bit to show you're thinking.
7. **Leave your child wanting more.** Stop your day's reading at a point where you are both eager to hear what happens next.

Q: My daughter spends hours playing online games. From the minute she walks in the door until she falls asleep, she wants to be playing one of her games. She is rushing through her homework and her grades are suffering. How can I get her to start living in the real world again?

Questions & Answers

A: Used responsibly, online games can be a fun way for kids to relax. Some games promote physical activity, some encourage play with others and some even build important academic skills.

But studies show that children are spending more and more time in front of screens. And since video game designers know how to create games that keep players hooked, parents must step in to set limits. As a matter of fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urges parents to limit children's recreational screen time.

Clearly, the amount of time your daughter spends playing online games is interfering with her responsibilities. If her grades are suffering and she is spending little or no time with friends and family, it's time to take action:

- **Talk with your child** and let her know that you will be setting limits on the amount of time she spends online.
- **Establish times** when online games are never allowed, such as during homework time, meal time and family time.
- **Provide alternatives.** Plan daily family activities, such as reading aloud, taking a walk or playing a board game. All these will replace some of the screen game time with more productive activities.

Practice tests reinforce learning and help your child study



What is the best way to study for tests? Many experts believe that taking practice tests is an ideal way to study.

The act of recalling information is a learning activity. By studying this way, students may also retain the information better.

Practice testing can occur in several ways, including:

- **Taking quizzes in class.** Help your child understand that quizzes are opportunities to practice recalling information. Simply taking a quiz can improve learning and future grades. When class quizzes are returned, have your child correct any wrong answers and use the quizzes for further studying.
- **Working with others.** Consider allowing your child to invite classmates over to study and quiz one another. You can also help your child study by calling out questions.
- **Studying independently.** Your child can use flash cards and make his own practice tests. Discuss how to create questions by looking over textbooks and handouts. He should notice the section headings, vocabulary words and review questions. And don't stop at one quiz. Research shows that quizzing five to seven times reinforces learning even more!

Source: J. Dunlosky and others, "Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, Association for Psychological Science.

It Matters: Discipline

Try positive discipline for positive results



The discipline strategies you use at home can increase your child's likelihood of succeeding in school.

And experts agree that the best discipline methods are positive, not harsh. Studies have shown that physical punishments may actually increase children's risk for mental health problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents:

- **Develop loving, supportive relationships** with their kids. This gives children a strong foundation and motivates them to behave well. When kids feel loved and respected by their parents, they are more likely to cooperate at home and at school.
- **Focus on the positive.** Compliment what your child does right—and be specific. "You started your homework without my reminding you. Great job!"
- **Use time-outs** and other non-physical consequences when needed. A child who speaks disrespectfully may need some time alone in her room. A child who puts off homework may miss other fun activities.
- **Let natural consequences** do the work. If your child forgets to bring her homework to school *again*, don't bring it to school for her. Instead, allow her to get a zero. She will be more likely to remember her homework tomorrow!

Source: P. Holinger, M.D., "Physical Punishment—and Violence: A Serious Health Problem," *Psychology Today*, nswc.com/elem_physical2.

Predict, prepare and practice for the most effective discipline

No parent would wait until their child burned down the house to talk about the danger of playing with matches. Yet when it comes to discipline, parents often wait until *after* a problem arises to take action. Preventing problems in the first place is much more effective.

Follow these steps:

1. **Predict.** Think about a behavior you would like to change. Perhaps your child gets up so late in the morning that he often misses the bus.
2. **Prepare.** Since you can predict the behavior, you can also think about ways to prevent it. Instead of waiting until your child straggles down to the breakfast table, think of ways to avoid the late start. Is he tired in the morning because he's been up too late at night? An earlier bedtime could change that. Is he rushing around trying to get



organized for school? Spending time the night before could save precious minutes in the morning.

3. **Practice.** Help your child practice the prevention strategies until they become habits.

If you predict, prepare and practice, you can also prevent many behavior problems from recurring.

Focus on respect to support a positive learning environment



When students have respect for teachers and classmates, they help create the positive academic environment

all kids need in order to be successful.

To promote respectful behavior:

- **Discuss respect.** What is it? Why is it important? How does it feel to be treated with respect or disrespect?
- **Be a role model.** Do what you want your child to do. If you want her to say *please* when asking

for something, remember to say *please* yourself. If you want her to knock before entering your bedroom, do the same for her.

- **Criticize constructively.** When you need to correct your child, do it privately and respectfully. "Next time, please hold the door for Grandpa. That will make it easier for him to get through the door."
- **Notice times** when your child is respectful. "You listened to the coach even when other kids were joking around. I was impressed."

BUILDING READERS®

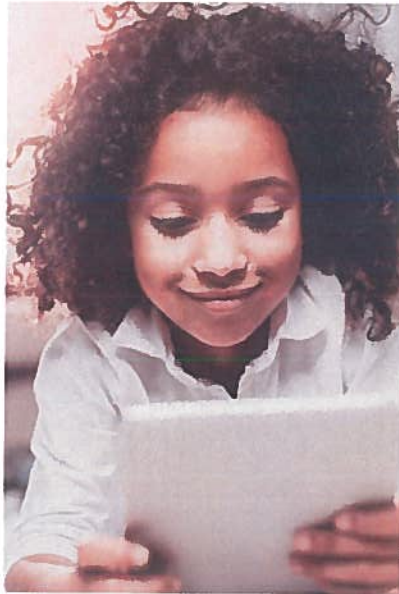
How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Hay Springs Public Schools

Help your child get the most benefits from digital reading

While technology is an important part of education today, reading on a screen does not provide all of the same benefits that reading a traditional book does. When children read text on a tablet or computer screen, they tend to:

- **Skim** the text instead of reaching a deep understanding.
 - **Abandon** specific strategies that improve reading comprehension.
- But learning to read with technology is important to students' success. To support your child:
- **Review** reading strategies and encourage her to use them when she is reading on a screen. For example, she can take notes and summarize what she reads.
 - **Show** her how to find answers to questions or definitions of difficult words while she's reading.



Recharge your child's reading habits

January is the perfect time to assess your child's reading progress. It may be time to increase the level of difficulty or variety of his reading materials.

To help your child improve his reading habits:

- **Recommit** to a regular reading time. Make sure he sets aside time every day to read.
- **Challenge** your child to increase the amount of time he spends reading or the number of books he reads. Have him set new goals and help him reach them.
- **Introduce** advanced reading materials gradually. Read them together first so you can help if your child has any difficulty or questions.
- **Lead** by example. Show your child how much you enjoy your reading time.

Read up on the weather

Check out the weather page of your newspaper (or a weather website) for an activity that combines reading and science. Have your child read today's forecast. Does it match the current conditions? What's the forecast for tomorrow and the rest of the week?



Focus at first on simple words, like *cloudy* and *rainy*. Then, introduce and practice more challenging words, such as *forecast* and *predict*, or even *Celsius* and *Fahrenheit*.

Practice reading directions

To succeed on tests, your child must understand what he reads—including the directions. To give him practice:



- **Play board games.** Have your child read the directions before you play.
- **Read homework directions** together. What words are used often? Practice any that give your child trouble.

Consider characters' feelings

To help your child get a feel for main characters, suggest that she make a "mood chart." Have her write down two details from each chapter:

1. **The main character's** mood.
2. **The reason** why the main character may have felt that way.



Encourage your child to notice how the character's mood changes throughout the book.

Boost your child's decoding skills

After learning the sounds that letters make, the next step in reading is *decoding*—figuring out written words. Readers decode a word by sounding out each of its letters and blending them together.

To help your child improve her decoding skills:

- **Show her a word.** Point to each letter from left to right, saying its sound. Then, say all the sounds together to pronounce the word.
- **Play word games.** Write words on index cards. Take turns selecting a card and decoding the word. Make a sentence using the word.
- **Have a treasure hunt.** Hide words written on slips of paper throughout your home. Then, have your child find the slips and decode the words.



Handwriting Day celebrates the 'write' stuff

January 23 is National Handwriting Day. That's because on January 23, 1737, John Hancock was born. According to the legend, Hancock had problems with writing as a youth. The ink from his quill pen was always dripping and creating a mess. After years of practice, he became more proficient—as seen in his signature on the Declaration of Independence.

To help your child celebrate penmanship, have him:

- **Practice his signature.** See if he can add flourishes to his letters, like John Hancock did.
- **Choose a favorite saying** by Hancock or another famous person and write it in his best handwriting. Post the saying in your home.
- **Read a book** written in "handwriting," like Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Ask your librarian for other suggestions.



Q: My child's teacher says we should work on "sight words" at home. What does this mean?

A: Sight words are written words that readers see often, such as *I, me, dog, open* and *school*. Becoming familiar with them is important because it makes reading easier. Ask your child's teacher for a list of sight words. Then use homemade flash cards (with simple pictures at first, if you wish) to help your child practice reading them.

Check out book suggestions from teachers and kids

Having trouble finding a good book for your child? The International Literacy Association can help. Visit www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/reading-lists. There you'll find "Choices" reading lists. They include book suggestions from teachers and children.



For lower elementary readers:

- **Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion** by Mo Willems. Trixie and her family are on their way to Holland—but her favorite stuffed animal Knuffle Bunny is accidentally put on a plane to China!
- **Lissy's Friends** by Grace Lin. When Lissy is lonely at lunch, she makes a paper crane. And soon she has a whole collection of origami friends.



For upper elementary readers:

- **The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate** by Jacqueline Kelly. Growing up in Texas in the 1900's, Callie Vee was expected to learn to cook and sew, but she wanted to learn about science!
- **Hothead** by Cal Ripken, Jr. and Kevin Cowherd. Connor loves baseball, but his temper puts his game at risk. In order to win, he must overcome his anger.

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.

Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.

Copyright © 2019, The Parent Institute®
(a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.)

P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3302

www.parent-institute.com