

Superintendent's News

Beginning of the School Year Reminders



Welcome Back to School! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer! The teachers and staff have been working hard to prepare for the new year! With school being back in session we've been able to rekindle relationships and meet our new students as well! We are very happy to welcome all of our new Hawks to our school!

We were very fortunate to add some very talented staff members this year! In 5th grade Mrs. Kayla Orr has joined our staff! She has had some great experience in Hyannis and the Gordon Rushville school districts. In our secondary Language Arts class, we have added Mrs. Frankie Johnson as our teacher. She is very familiar with our students and district and is excited to help our students grow in Language Arts. Mrs. Digmann is our new Pre-K – 12 Principal. She had 3 years of assistant principal experience in Alliance before coming to Hay Springs. Finally, we have added a para professional, Carrie Elliott who will be working with our elementary students. Ms. Elliott came in with excellent experience from working in the Valentine School District.

Some of the changes this summer that you have probably noticed is that our student handbook has been revised and we have added a discipline matrix. The goal with these changes is to simplify and clarify the language in the handbook for our students and parents. We have the goal to continue to have our high standards, be transparent with our actions and to be consistent in all we do! The most exciting thing that happened this summer is that the district purchased a charter bus for our activities. The bus was purchased with grant monies so no local tax monies were spent on the purchase! The school board directed me to get a quality bus for our students, and I think we were able to do that! We want to thank everyone who has submitted ideas for the bus wrap. Plans are being reviewed and finalists will be submitted to the school board for their final input once cost of the wrap is determined.

I look forward to having a successful and exciting 2023-24 school year! Please come out and support our students in all they do! We appreciate your support as parents and community!

Reminder: All visitors must enter through the main office doors.

Principal's Blurp

By Mrs. Oigmann

I cannot believe August is already over. Being new to the district, I have spent the last month learning students' names and meeting parents as well as making my way into several classrooms. I can assure you everyone here is working hard; I have been so impressed by the students and the staff.

I would like to thank our staff for all their efforts: our building looks amazing, technology is all up and running, lunches are fantastic, and teachers are challenging our students. Change can be hard, and I appreciate how willing everyone has been to make the changes I am asking. It is wonderful to have a staff who will come in and have open conversations about what changes need to be made or what we can do better.

As we move into September I would like to remind parents that parent/teacher conferences are coming up on September 14, 4:30 -8pm. I encourage you all to attend. I also want to make you aware that we will begin NWEA/MAPS testing September 5th and 7th for kindergarten and 1st grade and September 11-14 for grades 2-12. Students will take one assessment each day. Please encourage your students to do their best!

I am so excited to be a Hawk!



September 4th—NO SCHOOL

September 12th—CSC Career Day (Seniors)

September 14th— Parent Teacher Conferences

October 10th— Volleyball PINK OUT/Parent's Night

October 10th— School Pictures Begin

October 12th—Quarter Ends

October 17th—Dental Day

October 19th— Football PINKOUT/Parent/s Night

October 25th—CSC Scholastic Day

October 26th—K/1 and 2/3 Fall Concert



Students and staff would like to invite you to Salute the Troops night during our September 22nd football game, to show appreciation for your service to our country.

Homecoming is set for the week of October 1st

Cafeteria News

Welcome Back! Here in the lunchroom, we are excited to bring a few new recipes into our menu this year! We are still offering the chef salads as an alternate daily, and either pb&j sandwiches on Monday and Wednesday or a Deli Sandwich (either turkey or ham) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

To better serve the students, we are asking that parents fill out the Accommodation Forms in the newsletter to let us know about allergies and/or medical needs. Even if your student doesn't normally eat lunch with us, please fill a form out if your student has special food needs (ex: peanut, chocolate, or gluten allergies) because it will be good to have on file for the teachers when they plan holiday parties! Please make sure to also fill out the Free/Reduced Meal Application – even if you aren't sure if you qualify.

Please make sure that your EZPay School Lunch Account has an acceptable balance for your student. You can pay through the school office or online and can set yourself up for balance alerts so that you never go below a certain amount. Once an account goes into the negative, seconds will no longer be allowed. Even if you qualify for free or reduced meals, things like sec-

onds, a la carte items, and snack milks are still charged to your student's account as they don't count as complete meals. Please help us to make sure your student meets their nutritional needs by keeping a balance in their lunch accounts!

We are looking forward to a great year – see you in the lunchroom Hawks!

Kelly and Laura

**The Hay Springs Public School
all activity calendar is available
in the school office for \$5.
Come get yours now!**



Order your "Pink Out" shirts to help support PBIS! The Pink Out games are October 10th for Volleyball and October 19th for Football. Hurry, the store closes September 3rd! Check the website for ordering information!

HS Music Notes

By Mrs. Varvel

In a blink of an eye, summer is over and here we are nearly a month into school. The beginning of the school year is such an exciting time. It's so much fun to get to know your students again, and then to get back to the business of making music!

The Kindergarten & 1st grade will be performing "Old McDonald's Farm." The 2nd & 3rd grade classes will be performing "Laugh It Up." The concert will be held on Thursday, October 26th at 7pm in the auditorium.

5th grade band is almost in full swing! Students are now learning how to put their instruments together and making their initial sounds! It may not be lovely right now, but give it time-with positive encouragement they progress quickly and improve by leaps and bounds!

CONCERT DATE CHANGE!! Please change the date of our Night, The Lights and Music concert (and the Santa Soup Cook-off) to **Thursday, December 7th**. This concert will only include 7th & 8th grade students as well as high school band & choir.

Upcoming dates:

Thursday, September 7th 7:00 pm FB-Pep Band (6:30 call time)-*High School Band ONLY*

Friday, September 22nd 2:30 pm FB-Pep Band (2:00 call time)

Saturday, October 7th CSC Homecoming Pep Band-High School Band ONLY

Thursday, October 19th 7:00 pm FB-Pep Band (6:30 call time)

Thursday, October 26th 7:00 pm Kindergarten-3rd grade Fall Program



Winter is coming, make sure you are signed up for REMIND.



NPBIS (Nebraska Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports)

Hay Springs Public School has entered its sixth year of NPBIS (Nebraska Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports). PBIS is a universal school plan to establish a POSITIVE culture in our school community for students and staff. Research has shown that positive interactions with students directly impact positive school culture. PBIS also gives us continuity! Every staff member is using the same language in regards to behavior, building unity within our school community!

We are again doing Super Passes for High School students. Here are the requirements for the Super Pass for 2023-2024 Quarter 1.

Requirements

- Fewer than 2 tardies
- No electronics violations
- Eligible for the quarter
- No office referrals



9th—12th Grade Super Pass recipients will be given a choice of a free period first hour or 5th hour on designated day (late start or long lunch). Student must let the office know ahead of time what their choice is.

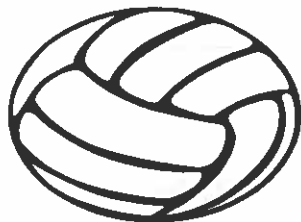
IF YOU SEE A STUDENT THAT YOU FEEL THAT DESERVES RECOGNITION FOR SOMETHING THEY HAVE DONE, PLEASE GO TO WWW.HSHAWKS.COM AND NOMINATE THE STUDENT FOR STUDENT OF THE QUARTER. NOMINATIONS ARE DUE OCTOBER 12TH!

For more information, please contact the school principal or the district office. We are proud to be a part of the community and support our students.

**Complete sports schedules are located on www.hshawks.com
under the activities calendar tab.**

High School Volleyball

By Coach Merritt



After a successful summer of volleyball league and open gyms, the Lady Hawks hit the floor running on August 7th, the first official day of practice. There are just 12 players on the roster this season, but Coach Merritt and Coach Turman are super excited to watch the progress of this small squad.

The Hawks opened the season at Thedford with a win over Banner County in two sets and lost a two set contest with the host Sandhills-Thedofrd Knights. The Hawks will be in action again on August 29th in Harrisburg. The season really ramps up in September as the schedule get much busier. The Hawks will host their first home contest on September 5th in a triangular with Hemingford and Crawford. See you in the gym!

Cross Country

By Coach Bequin

This will be my first time ever coaching cross-country. Last year I was an assistant track coach for Hay Springs Schools, I coached hurdles. The school was looking for a new cross-country coach for this year and hadn't had anyone apply yet, so I applied to make sure the kids had a coach. It is a new experience for me, and I am learning a lot and hope I can help guide the kids to better themselves.



Parker and Mason are my only high school runners this year. Their experience running has been a great help as they are stepping up as leaders and giving the Jr high kids tips, encouragement, and pushing them to do their best. I believe both Parker and Mason have a good shot at making it to state this year.

Parker was able to make it to state last year and Mason was very close to making it as well. If they continue to push themselves and keep improving, they will make it to state. We have five Jr high runners this year. Grant Wellnitz will be my only returning Jr high runner this year. The other 8th grader I have is Rigger Binger, who is new to cross-country. My 7th graders are Gage Didier, William Gaswick, and Arian Mata. All our newcomers have been showing improvement compared to day one and I'm excited to see how they will do this year.

FFA

By Mr. Ginkens

- ◆ September 18th is the **EDGE** at Bridgeport (change from calendar on location) all members can go other than JV football and volleyball players due to the JV games.
- ◆ September 19th is District Range in Kimball County—1 team going
- ◆ September 30th at Bridgeport Invitational Livestock Judging @ Bridgeport
- ◆ October 4th is the District Livestock Judging at Hemingford

I would like to give a huge thank you to the community for the support of the Fly-in over Festival weekend. We really appreciate this and cannot thank you all enough.



To our wonderful Community and
Security 1st Bank,

Thank you so very much for the supplies that were bought for our classes through The Tree of Love program. We are so thankful for the extras, they will be put to good use! Thank you again!



HAY SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOL

407 N. Baker Street
P.O. Box 280 | Hay Springs, Nebraska 69347
Mr. George Clear, District Superintendent
Mrs. Tera Digmann, Pk-12 Principal
Jason Badje, Activities Director
Kim Marx, Special Education Director



8/31/2023

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Hay Springs Public Schools:

1. Will make meal modifications prescribed by a licensed physician, advanced practice nurse with prescriptive authority or physician assistant to accommodate a disability.
2. Will make substitutions for dietary preferences, religious preferences, or cultural preferences.

NOTE: Meal modifications will only be accommodated for one of the reasons listed above. No other meal modifications will be accommodated.

The Medical Statement and Request for Meal Accommodation forms are attached to this letter. On the front of each form there are further instructions and information about the meal modifications that can be requested under federal regulations. Please read this information carefully before completing the appropriate form.

To ensure safe meal modifications can be made for your child, return the completed medical statement by 9/14/2023 to the Hay Springs Public Schools Office at 407 N Baker Street.

IMPORTANT: The only fluid cow's milk substitutions allowed by the USDA are (1) lactose-free fluid cow's milk (1% or skim) or (2) a non-dairy beverage with a nutrient profile equivalent to fluid cow's milk as specified in USDA regulation 7 CFR 210.20(d)(3), unless another substitution is noted on the Medical Statement for Meal Modification.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Hay Springs Public Schools at 308-638-4434.

Sincerely,

Tera Digmann
Hay Springs Public Schools
Principal

HOME OF THE HAWKS

Phone (308)638-4434 Fax (402)915-5126 www.hshawks.com

2023-2024 FACULTY AND STAFF LIST

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

George Clear	Superintendent
Tera Digmann	Pk-12 Principal, Curriculum
Staci Wolken	Business Manager
Adriene Kelly	Administrative & AD Secretary
Dawn Pinn	Pk-12 Counselor
Jason Badje	Activities Director, Woods, Construction
Kim Marx	Special Education Director, Assessment, 6-9 Science

CERTIFIED TEACHING STAFF

Rachel Rasmussen	Early Childhood/ Preschool
Sammy Meeks	Kindergarten
Kyli Helting	1st Grade
Crystal VanderMay	2nd Grade
Emma Strotheide	3rd Grade
Jessica Mintken	4th Grade
Kayla Orr	5th Grade
Nichole Marcy	Title, Library, K-3 Library/ Computers
Raime Varvel	Pk-12 Music, Band
Rachel Mandelko	Pk-12 Physical Education
Jessie Anderson	Middle Level Math, Algebra I
Linda Kudrna	6-8 English, 7-8 Reading
Jodie Garrett	Reading 6, Social Studies 6, Spanish I & II, Title/ Interventions
Brad Bounous	7-12 Social Studies
Frankie Johnson	9-12 English, Journalism
Kodi Young	Geometry, Algebra II, Math IV, Biology, Earth Science, Physics
Trevor Jenkins	Ag, Welding
Melissa Sommerville	Business
Paula Holtmeier	Special Education

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Twila Weyers	Title
Mindie Starke	Kindergarten
Linda Raymer	Middle Level
Cara McKillip	1st Grade
Carrie Elliott	AM - Elementary, PM - Pre-K

CAFETERIA STAFF

Kelly Richardson	Head Cook, Food Manager
Laura Leander	Head Cook, Assistant Food Manager

CUSTODIAL STAFF / MAINTENANCE

Ricky Wohl	Head Custodian, Head Maintenance
Nate Cochran	Custodian, Maintenance
Malinda Smith	Custodian

TRANSPORTATION

Ricky Wohl	Transportation Supervisor, Activity Bus Driver
Brett Skinner	Activity Bus Driver
Sandi Abbott	Bus Route Driver

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Greg Helting	President, Finance, Building, Grounds & Transportation
Justin Anderson	Vice President, Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction
David Russel	Secretary, Finance, Building, Grounds & Transportation
Miriam Kearns	Treasurer, Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction, Building, Grounds & Transportation, Lister-Sage
Katie Stock	Americanism, Curriculum & Instruction, Lister-Sage
Jim Varvel	Finance

2023-24 FEES/PRICE LIST

ADMISSION PRICES AND PARTICIPATION FEES

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Varsity Events					
Adult	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Senior Citizen	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Student (K-12)	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Pre-Kindergarten	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
JV or Jr. High Events					
Adult	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Senior Citizen	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Student (K-12)	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Pre-Kindergarten	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
Passes -Family Pass includes: Parents and students 0-12th grades residing in the same household.					
Family Pass	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Adult Pass	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Student Pass (K-12)	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Participation Fees (includes free admission to home activities)					
High School	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00
Middle School	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$65.00
LUNCH PRICES					
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023
Hot Lunch Meal					
Adult	\$3.65	\$3.65	\$3.65	\$3.65	\$4.60
6 th – 12 th Grades	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25	\$3.25
PK-5 th Grades	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75
Breakfast PK-12th Grades					
Adult	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75
	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$2.25	\$2.25	\$2.75
Seconds/Extras					
Main Dish	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Dessert	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Milk	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
OTHER FEES					
			2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Elementary Supplies					
			\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
Copies					
Black & White		\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Color Copies		\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Lamination					
Any width	\$2.00/linear foot				



Sign up for important updates from HSPS and Mr. Clear.

Get information for Hay Springs Elementary School right on your phone—not on handouts.

Pick a way to receive messages for Hawk Parent/Student Notices:

A If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/hawkpar

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.



The illustration shows a smartphone screen with the Remind app's sign-up interface. At the top, there is a logo and the URL 'rmd.at/hawkpar'. Below this, the heading 'Join Hawk Parent/Student Notices' is displayed. There are two input fields: 'Full Name' with the placeholder text 'First and Last Name', and 'Phone Number or Email Address' with the placeholder text '(555) 555 5555'.

B If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @hawkpar to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @hawkpar to (757) 337-4602.

** Standard text message rates apply*



The illustration shows a smartphone screen displaying a text message. The 'To' field contains the number '81010'. The 'Message' field contains the text '@hawkpar'.

Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/hawkpar on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

SEPTEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Menus are subject to change.						
3	4 Labor Day	5 Breakfast Pizza Walking Tacos, Black Beans, Corn	6 Biscuits, Gravy Chicken Fried Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Corn, Roll	7 Pancakes and Sausage BTS Burgers, Baked Beans	8	9
10	11 Omelets, Toast Chicken Tenders, Sweet Potato Fries, Baked Beans	12 French Toast Tornadoes Nachos, Black Beans, Corn	13 Eggs and Sausage, Toast Grilled Chicken Sandwich, Green Beans	14 Doughnuts Spaghetti and Garlic Bread Stick	15	16
17	18 French Toast Sticks Hot Dogs, French Fries	19 Cream Cheese Bagels Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Corn	20 Pancakes, Sausage Grilled Ham and Cheese and Tomato Soup	21 Biscuits and Gravy BTS Burgers, Baked Beans	22	23
24	25 Breakfast Pizza Pizza, Apple Crisp, Corn	26 Omelets, Toast, Potato Triangles Orange Chicken, Rice, Peas, Fortune Cookie	27 Pancakes Dino Nuggets, Smiley Fries, Roll	28 Biscuits and Gravy Sloppy Joes, French Fries	29	30
NOTES: Choice of 1% White Milk, Skim Chocolate or Skim Strawberry Milk served daily. Alternate Lunch choices are Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich (Mon, Wed) and Deli Sandwich (Tue, Thur), choice of Chef Salad is available Daily. Menu subject to change without notice.						



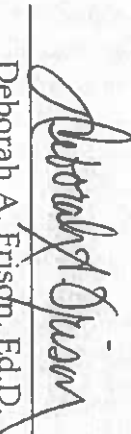
Certificate of Accreditation

The Nebraska Department of Education
Recognizes

Hay Springs Public Schools

AS AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024

BY THE OFFICIAL ACTION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION


Deborah A. Frison, Ed.D.
Deputy Commissioner of Education

September 2023
Vol. 35, No. 1

Elementary School Parents

Hay Springs Public Schools

make the difference!



Five things families can do to help students thrive in school

Every family—and every child—is different, but there are ways all families can set children up for success. Studies show that students are more likely to achieve in elementary school and beyond when their families provide a supportive environment.

To set your child up for a great school year:

1. **Set the bar high.** Insist on your child's personal best, but don't demand perfect grades. Praise effort and progress—even if your child falls short.
2. **Assign chores.** Children who have household responsibilities learn how to be responsible. Make a short list of weekly tasks and expect your child to complete them.

3. **Teach social skills.** A productive learning environment hinges on students' ability to get along with others. Promote cooperation and courtesy.
4. **Nurture your relationship.** Make time to have fun together. Share a hobby. Play catch in the yard. Express your love by being attentive and supportive.
5. **Take care of yourself.** If you're always stressed, your child will be, too. Carve out time to relax, exercise or curl up with a good book. A calm, peaceful home starts with you.

Source: R. Gillett and R. Premack, "Science says parents of successful kids have these 11 things in common," *Business Insider*.

Teach your child how to be conscientious



Conscientiousness is a student's ability to set and meet goals, make informed choices, and fulfill

responsibility to others.

While this trait should naturally develop as your child grows, studies show there's an easy activity that can hone it. And believe it or not, it's schoolwork!

Here's how to help your child strengthen conscientiousness with assignments:

- **Remind your child not to rush.** Students should take their time and complete tasks carefully.
- **Ask your child to check work.** After finishing an assignment, have your child spend a few minutes going back to confirm answers are correct.
- **Cheer your child on.** Is that art project challenging? Is that math assignment taking a long time? Encourage your child to keep at it and not give up! Conscientious students do their best to meet deadlines even when the going gets tough.

Source: R. Gollner and others, "Is doing your homework associated with becoming more conscientious?" *Journal of Research in Personality*, Elsevier Inc.

It's time to get your family back in the school groove



The start of a new school year is a fresh start for families and students. Here are some practical ideas to help you and your family gear up for a productive year of learning:

- **Make a weekly schedule.** Include time for schoolwork, play, activities and family.
- **Establish a family reading time** where everyone reads for at least 30 minutes.
- **Keep a family calendar.** Mark each family member's activities in a different color.
- **Reestablish bedtimes** and wake times for weekdays. Allow plenty of time to get ready in the morning.
- **Scale back passive screen watching.** Set a weekly limit for watching TV, movies and videos.

- **Create flexible learning spaces.** Allow your child to work where most comfortable—whether that's at the kitchen table or on the couch. Just make sure that the space has adequate lighting and is as distraction-free as possible.
- **Collect important contact information** for teachers. Update your work, medical and emergency contact numbers with the school.

"I hope you realize that every day is a fresh start for you. That every sunrise is a new chapter in your life waiting to be written."

—Juansen Dizon

Communication is the key to a strong family-school team



Research shows that family engagement in education has a positive effect on students' academic success. When

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

- **Set the tone.** It's natural to have questions for your child's teachers. When you ask them, show support for your child and the class. Encourage the teacher to keep you informed.
- **Be positive.** Talk with the teacher about your child's strengths. But also prepare to hear about weaknesses and how to address them. 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, have an interpreter join you. Still worried? Using email may put you at ease.
- **Choose words carefully.** It's more effective to make polite requests than demands. A helpful tip is to use the word *we* instead of *you*. "How can we stay in touch to help Jordan?" works better than "Call me immediately if Jordan is falling behind." You and the teacher are teammates, and effective teamwork is a win for your child.

Are you helping your child have healthy habits?



Healthy habits make it easier for students to concentrate and learn during the day. Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions

below to see if you are promoting wellness for your child:

- ___ **1. Do you enforce** a regular bedtime? Elementary school kids need at least nine hours of sleep each night to function at their best.
- ___ **2. Do you make sure** your child eats breakfast every morning? Kids' brains need fuel to learn.
- ___ **3. Do you encourage** your child to get moving every day? Studies show that exercise improves kids' memory and focus.
- ___ **4. Do you remind** your child to wash hands frequently? Hand washing reduces the spread of illness.
- ___ **5. Do you make sure** your child understands rules about safely interacting with others?

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean you are instilling physical habits that support learning. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

Elementary School
Parents
make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents
to Help Their Children.

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.

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Show your child that reading is enjoyable and rewarding



Strong reading skills make it easier to learn every school subject. But literacy experts say that to build reading abilities, children

must *want* to read. Unfortunately, many kids just aren't interested.

To inspire your child to read:

- **Listen to audiobooks.** This is an effective way to show a reluctant reader how interesting books can be. Download audiobooks from the library, or record yourself reading aloud. Your child can follow along with the book while listening.
- **Follow current events.** Is there a developing news story that interests your child? Read the latest reports together each night.

- **Sign your child up for a pen pal.** Kids love receiving mail and learning about life in other countries. Ask your child's teacher or a librarian about how to get involved.
- **Take a virtual field trip.** Challenge your child to research online about attractions in your area, such as museums. Then ask your student to be your tour guide through their websites and share interesting facts.
- **Give reading coupons.** Show your child that you think reading is special by giving reading coupons. Some might be for 30 minutes of reading with you. Others might be good for a new book. Reading coupons also make great rewards for good behavior.

Brainstorming is the solution for your child's writer's block



Some students don't like to write because they think it's boring. Others find it too challenging. They get frustrated trying

to think of ideas.

You can't force a child to *love* writing. But you can turn a reluctant writer around with brainstorming.

Brainstorming is fun and boosts creativity. It reduces stress and can help your child break through writer's block.

Brainstorming also teaches other skills that help with writing. By creating lists, for example, your child learns to break down complex ideas into smaller components. Brainstorming can help your child figure out a topic for a paper or think of ideas for a short story.

The next time writer's block hits, have your child:

- **Make lists.** Here are a few topics to get started: *Things I love. My favorite animals, places, toys or food. Things I know a lot about. Scary characters. Things adults say.*
- **Imagine.** Ask your child some questions that will spark new ways to think about people, events and scenes. "What would it feel like to be a car, a house or a dog? What would life be like if you had four hands?"
- **Use visual images.** Have your child look at a picture and write down what it brings to mind. Or, your child can take a walk and make notes about observations.
- **Think about actions to add to ideas:** What will happen next? How quickly?

Source: D.B. Reeves, Ph.D., *Reason to Write: Help Your Child In School and in Life Through Better Reasoning and Clear Communication—Elementary School Edition*, Kaplan Publishing.

Q: My fifth grader suffers from some serious self-doubt. "I can't do anything right!" is my child's current mantra. How can I help my child see the smart and capable person that I see?

Questions & Answers

A: As children get older and school becomes more challenging, self-doubt and insecurity can rear their ugly heads. Some students feel immense pressure to measure up, and it can be scary when they feel like they're falling short.

Although you probably can't make insecurity go away altogether, you can do things to help your child feel smart and competent. Here's how:

- **Find the right outlets.** Let your child experience success by recommending activities where success is the most likely outcome. If sports are your child's thing, encourage practice to perfect certain skills. If your child enjoys reading, suggest starting a book club with friends.
- **Assign responsibilities.** Your child may gripe about having to put away laundry, but that's OK. Completing chores is an effective way to make your child feel valued, because doing them helps the whole family. It can make your child more responsible, too.
- **Acknowledge accomplishments.** Did your child just do something wonderful? Offer your congratulations. Talk about your child's achievement, whether it was earning a good grade on a quiz or setting a beautiful table for dinner.

With a little help from you, your elementary schooler will begin to see the same resourceful person you see!