

Educating students is a continuous partnership between parents and teachers.

We must support one another in and out of the classroom. Our partnership then becomes a mutual support system that sustains students in all they do at school and at home. Parents and teachers demonstrate their daily interest in educating students when their cooperative efforts place the highest priority on the needs of the individual child.

When your knowledge of your child is combined with the suggestions in this publication, the child's education will be reinforced. Discuss these practical home-oriented tips with your child's teacher and help build a better bridge to the future.

Together, we shall succeed.

**From the members of the
Tennessee Education Association and the
National Education Association.**



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Reading

1 Read to your child often. Make a pleasant experience of the event, making sure the session is relaxed and unhurried. Let your child choose a favorite story, explain pictures and answer questions about it. As time goes by, you can stop in the middle of a familiar story and ask what happens next. This encourages memory skills and reinforces the material in the text.

2 Begin talking to your child from infancy. Make sounds, call attention to sounds and connect them with objects and events. Talk to the child and explain activities as you perform them. Listen and encourage conversation. Answer questions patiently and as promptly as possible. Play listening games with your child. A good bedtime game is to listen quietly and identify as many sounds as possible – heartbeats, breathing, traffic. Listening attentively is essential in learning.

3 When your child is learning to read, try “labeling” household objects with the child’s name printed in bold letters on masking tape; encourage the reading of signs, posters, cereal boxes – everything.

4 Besides regular children's materials, read aloud from ordinary books, magazines, newspapers and advertisements. Your child will begin to recognize the fact that the printed word is a part of everyday life that conveys useful, interesting and amusing information. Set a good example by reading in the child's presence, thus establishing the idea that reading is an enjoyable and rewarding activity.

5 Introduce your child to the wonders of the public library at an early age. Stop by during shopping trips and browse there, answering questions about books and other printed materials. As soon as possible, a child should be allowed to apply for a library card and choose books. Encourage frequent use of the school library. Read and discuss books brought home for possible school projects or during family sharing periods. Subscribe to a children's magazine. Children love the idea of having their very own periodical. Buy books whenever possible.

6 Make certain the reading area is comfortable and well-lighted. Take special note of any signs of reading difficulty that may be caused by poor eyesight. If such problems are noted, take prompt action either through your own doctor or the school nurse's office.



7 Search out the better television programs for children. Public television, especially, provides a wealth of interesting and educational programming. Take the opportunity to watch some of the shows along with your child. Discuss the programs. Note comments and try to answer questions. When words are shown, ask that they be read to you, or you read them to the child. Try setting aside one night to turn off the television or limit viewing to one hour. Use this time to read and talk.

8 Before you select books as gifts, ask the school's media specialist or the teacher for advice. Books tailored for the child's age group and skill in reading, as well as those that dovetail with topics being studied in school, will make the book more readable and more enjoyable.

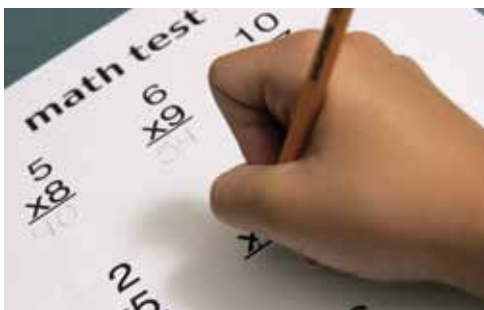
9 When your child is writing a school report, show that information from several sources is better than relying on just one book. This way the child will get to know the wide world of sources that are available on any given topic.

10 Hang up a large chalkboard on which to write messages. Have a family bulletin board too. Occasionally pin up cartoons and short magazine articles you think your child will enjoy.

11 Encourage writing and addressing personal greeting cards, invitations and thank you notes, writing grocery lists, or keeping a journal or diary. Suggest a backyard "mailbox" for exchanging regular letters with the child next door. Write notes, letters and emails to your children. Encourage a written reply. Give praise for all efforts in writing.

12 Word games like “Scrabble” can help increase your child’s vocabulary and improve spelling. There are many games that have junior versions. Ask the salesperson.

13 If at any age your child seems “turned off” by reading, don’t make an issue of it. Casually leave “irresistible” books around — books on whatever the child’s current interests are.



Mathematics

14 Give your child practical experience using math at home. Mention the size of containers, such as pints of cream and half gallons of milk. Encourage help when you bake, lay carpet or tile, seed or fertilize the lawn, and allow your child to actually measure ingredients, areas and quantities of material.

15 Before a shopping trip, have your child read newspaper ads and price the cost of items to be purchased. Encourage comparison of prices and quantities marked on containers to determine the best buys. Allow the child to purchase an item and figure the change to be received. Help children apply their growing knowledge of mathematics to practical situations by letting them double check the addition on grocery receipts, manage an allowance, read thermometers, or stop watches. Let them calculate age, weight, height and dimensions, or figure gas purchases and mileage, tolls and other trip expenses.

16 Bingo, dominoes, toy telephones, card games, board games, calendars and clocks with large numbers all can help familiarize your child with the world of numbers.

17 Put your preschool child's counting ability to work. In preparation for meals, let the child count out forks for the table, napkins, pieces of cake or any other item.

18 If your child is having difficulty with addition and subtraction and multiplication tables, buy or make flash cards and use them on a regular basis. Children will enjoy giving answers they know and will learn more complex problems through drill. Let your child explain the math papers brought home from school and take time to help with correcting and understanding mistakes.

19 Above all, ask and listen to your child describe daily experiences. Communication is the key to successful learning.



Creative Arts

Creative arts become interesting and exciting activities when they stimulate thinking and encourage creativity.

20 Keep your child supplied with sheets of paper, crayons, finger paints, modeling clay, burlap, paste, marking pens, scraps of cloth, styrofoam, yarn, scraps of wood and water colors. Provide work space for the child and encourage the creation of works of art.

21 Proudly display your child's best creations on the wall, door, bulletin board or refrigerator. Give frequent opportunities for the expression of artistic ability — making Valentine and greeting cards or scrapbooks. Encourage their help with holiday decorations.

22 Encourage musical activity in the home and on family trips. Family songs are fun for everyone. Let your child make up songs.

23 Let the child be a music maker as well as a listener. A toy piano, drum, flute/recorder, tuned bells, or harmonica can help teach the basics of rhythm and tone.

24 As soon as your child is old enough to operate a CD or MP3 player, purchase one along with some children's recordings. Purchase videos/DVDs for children that will develop an interest in the performing arts.

25 If your child plays an instrument, help budget practice time and make uninterrupted practice time available. Listen to those tunes the child thinks are good. Encourage your child to perform. Genuine praise does wonders.

26 Allow your child to observe forms of art in nature and his/her surroundings. Observation and experimentation open the doors to confidence. Be positive about the child's attempts and encourage development of interests. Help your child really see the subtle variations in nature. Point out differences in intensity of colors.

27 To encourage creative writing, jot down stories your child tells or songs they've "made up." Show them to the child later. Suggest they be illustrated and published for grandparents or other relatives as gifts.

28 Be subtle in helping your child learn. Keep things light-hearted and fun — never grim or tense. Make learning fun for both of you. And, remember, listen to your child. Don't stifle curiosity. Don't brush off questions or, after a while, you won't be asked.



Bilingual Education

If your child studies English as a second language:

29 Provide opportunities to listen to songs, poems, stories or plays in English through the use of CDs, DVDs, television, radio or a computer.

30 Read books or magazines with your child that attract his or her attention.

If your child is learning a foreign language:

31 Ask the local bookstore clerk for games or flash cards in that language.

32 Borrow simple foreign language videos or CDs (recommended by the teacher) from the public library. Locate apps, Internet sites for children that offer activities for learning other languages.

33 Encourage your child to acquire an overseas “pen pal” in a country of particular interest to the child or the language being studied.



Social Studies

34 Help your child learn all that is possible about the natural world in which we live. Encourage curiosity in geography, land formations, climate and weather. Try to answer questions when your child is young and, when older, show how to find the answers. Discuss current events, encourage reading newspapers and periodicals and watching local and national news programs.

35 Provide your child with social studies research materials, including computer software, dictionary, atlas, globe and almanac. A city map and road maps are excellent for plotting trips and helping the child understand geographic relationships. Keep the research items conveniently close to the TV for use during news and documentary programs.

36 Widen your child's horizons with visits to the airport, the docks, the courthouse, the museum, a historic landmark, a factory, a newspaper — whatever is available in your community. Some television stations and local newspapers schedule guided tours.

37 On trips, provide your youngster with notebooks, pencils and colored markers. Encourage the child to draw pictures and make notes of things of interest along the way. Help collect samples to take back to the classroom.

38 Map puzzles are good “learn as you play” items for youngsters. Distinctive shapes of states, countries and continents form pictures in the child's mind that help him/her learn and remember.

39 Discuss the world of work with your child, including the demands of various jobs and professions and the work and training necessary to do it. Stress the idea that training can begin at an early age and attention to school work is vital for future success. Explore notions about future career plans, including personal preferences, inclinations and natural skills.

40 Teach your child the importance of being a good citizen by discussing local candidates for public office, issues and problems of the community. Help children understand the difference between fact and opinion. Give books that reflect the diversity of American culture. Don't be afraid to guide conversations with your teenager into the fascinating realm of ideas. Junior high and high school students love to brainstorm on serious topics.



Science

41 Stimulate your child to make use of all senses in discovering the world. Encourage curiosity about the feel of textures and materials, characteristic smells, sounds, tastes, the weight and size of things. Train your child to look carefully and see beyond the surface appearance of the environment.

42 Children are naturally curious and should be encouraged to find answers to questions by patient observation and the use of references, either at home or in libraries and museums. Let the child manipulate and learn about familiar objects: a dripping faucet, the household water system, a nutcracker, an old doorbell, locks and door hinges, household plants and gardens. When making household repairs, servicing the family car or other equipment, include your child as an observer. Natural scientific and mechanical skills can be discovered and developed in this way, and many scientific principles can be demonstrated in firsthand and practical ways.

43 Make certain you teach your child rules of safety in the handling of electrical, mechanical and chemical equipment. A whole range of educationally approved toys and games are on sale for gift giving to the budding young scientist in your family. Consider giving a subscription to a science magazine, an easy-to-assemble radio earphone set, a general science kit, an ant farm or toy farm that grows real crops, binoculars, an aquarium or terrarium, a chemistry set, a model airplane, a biography of an inventor, a microscope, a telescope, a magnifying glass, or a computer.

44 Work with your child on projects such as making bird feeders, caring for pets, setting up a home weather station, observing the night sky, or preparing a family vegetable or flower garden. Take the opportunity to confer with your child's science teachers. They welcome such parental interest and can offer many useful tips to help you reinforce your child's formal science class.

45 Encourage your child to be a "collector." Provide a place for collections, even if it is just a dresser drawer, a box or a shelf in the bookcase — anything that provides space for "display" of rocks, insects, leaves, stamps or shells. An inexpensive picture frame can display summer collections of flowers, leaves or even insects.





Health, Safety and Physical Education

46 Your child's health affects his or her learning and should be cared for by you and your physician and dentist. Any condition of a serious nature should be reported to the school. Emphasize personal hygiene and cleanliness. Diet is of prime importance. A good breakfast to start each day is essential. Follow through on eye and ear screenings and routine immunizations. Consult your child's physical education teacher concerning physical development and coordination and how you may assist.

47 See that your child has enough sleep each day and is properly dressed for weather conditions. Keep your child home from school if definite signs of illness, such as a rise in temperature, a suspicious rash or a severe cough are noted. Send a note to explain the absence when the child returns to school. Be alert for signs of poor vision such as squinting, frowning or red, watery eyes. Faulty hearing can be indicated by earaches, chronic inattention or too frequent requests to repeat statements.



48 Encourage the habit of vigorous daily activity. Active play builds strong muscles which are basic to good health and posture. Join your child in active games and stress good sportsmanship. Encourage participation in creative activities and individual as well as team sports.

49 Children should be taught their full name, address and telephone number at an early age. Select the safest, most direct walking route to school and check to see that your child uses it. Explain any traffic hazards along the way. Teach your child to stop at the curb or at the side of the road; to look in both directions to be sure there is no traffic or that traffic has stopped before crossing; to WALK across the road in the crosswalk; and to obey a student patrol or adult crossing guard if there is one. Warn your child never to get in a car or accept a ride with a stranger. Work with other parents to establish neighborhood “safe houses” for children in emergency situations.

50 If your child has to travel to and from school on a bus, the fundamentals of bus safety — to stand well back from the road while waiting for the bus; to always remain seated while the bus is moving; and to keep head and arms inside the bus at all times — should be taught. When it is necessary to cross the street to board the bus, teach your child to STOP, LOOK and then WALK across the street to the bus only after the bus driver has signaled it is safe. Children learn very quickly from experience. Why not ride a bus with your child and demonstrate the fundamentals of bus safety? If your child is permitted to ride a bicycle to school, be sure the child knows and obeys bicycle laws. The bicycle should be checked frequently to be sure the brakes are working properly and the handlebars and seat are not loose. Be sure your child always wears a helmet when riding a bicycle.

Closing Thoughts

51 Does your child “hate” a certain subject? Find out why. Your child may need extra help, or maybe your own aversion to a certain subject has caused it. Seek the reason behind the dislike, then enlist the teacher’s help so you can work together to conquer it.

52 Learn as much as you can from the school principal and staff about school curriculum, teaching methods and club activities. Then you can give your child help that fits into everyday learning programs.





Remember:

- Listen with interest
- Encourage and ask questions
- Be generous with praise, enthusiasm and sympathy

***Together* we can build
a better tomorrow!**

Parent Resources:

For lists of age-appropriate books and periodicals, consult your school's librarian, your public library, or the American Library Association online at ala.org.

