

The Central Valley Chronicle

April 2024

From the Desk of Mr. Todd Beck



Conversations about school

Reprinted from Home & School Connection

When you think of parent involvement, do you picture moms and dads volunteering in classrooms? That's one way to help - but research shows that supporting your child's education at home is even more important. Here are four conversations that will help you stay involved.

"Let's see what you brought home."

Look at completed work to find out what your youngster is learning and how well she's doing it. You could comment on her social studies report or pottery project, for instance. ("You know a lot about our state's history!") Also, respond to notes from her teacher, and sign her weekly folder or daily planner if required.

"Show me what you have for homework."

It's your child's job to do her homework, but you play a role, too. Make sure she knows what she's supposed to do by having her explain the assignments to you. After she finishes her homework, glance over the work to see that it's complete.

"Describe a book you enjoyed today."

This gives you an idea of what your youngster prefers to read. Then, build a daily reading habit by asking what she'd like to read tonight. Encourage her reading and listening skills by reading aloud to her and letting her read to you.

"Tell me what you learned that you'd like to know more about."

Use her interests as jumping-off points for activities to share. If she likes geometry, you might do tangrams together. If she's fascinated by how animals adapt to winter, take her to the library to research the subject or to the zoo to see live animals.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior. Eating dinner together is great, but other meals count, too. If you work at night, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. Or on a weekend, try a picnic lunch!

Worth quoting

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else!"

Mark Twain

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Inserts included in the hard copy newsletter are the menu, activity calendars and The Parent Institute articles. Menus and calendars may be found on the CV Home page.



JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*

- ♦ Friday, March 29 - No School, Spring Break
- ♦ Monday, April 1 - No School, Spring Break



Central Valley Elementary

April Newsletter

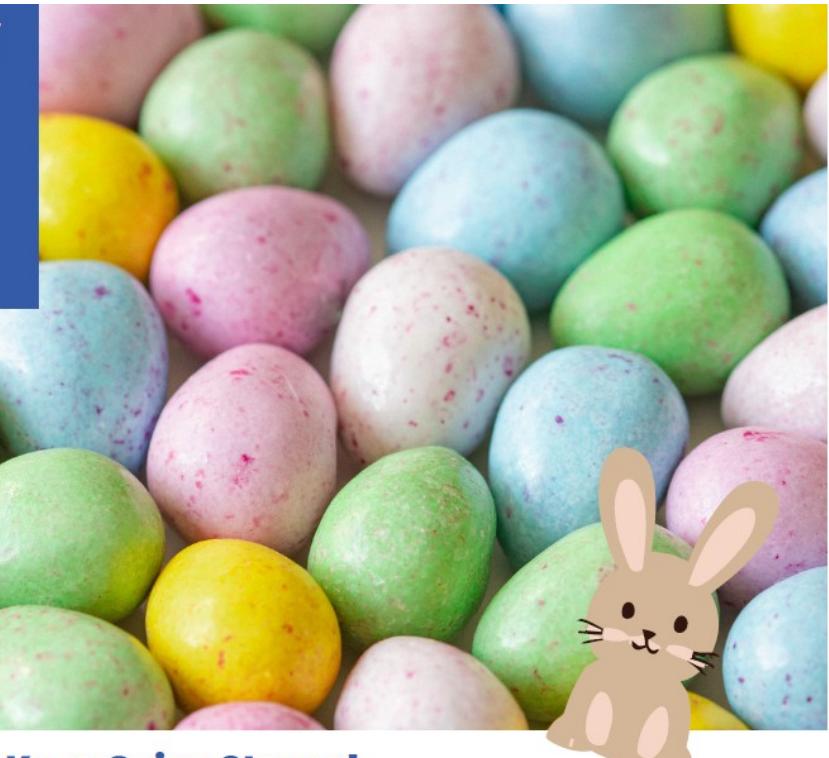
From the Principal's Desk: Mr. Nick Carlson

Cougar Community Recognition

February Star Student Winners



February Staff/Community Recognition Winners



Keep Going Strong!

As we approach the end of the school year, it is crucial to continue encouraging your children to stay focused and work hard until the very end. This final stretch of school is an essential time for them to consolidate their learning, demonstrate their knowledge, and finish the year on a strong note. As parents/guardians, your words of encouragement and motivation can make a significant impact on your child's attitude and effort. Celebrate their achievements, no matter how small, and remind them of the rewards that come with hard work and perseverance. Encourage them to stay organized, manage their time effectively, and prioritize their responsibilities. By keeping your children focused and working hard until the very end, you are teaching them valuable life skills such as resilience, determination, and the importance of finishing what they start. Your support and involvement in their education will undoubtedly contribute to their success.

Star Student Winners:

Kylee Bradshaw, Jentry Dugan, Laityn Poss, Kamden Jensen, Benelli Patrick, Izzy Klempner, Tessa Nordhues. NOT PICTURED: Blaikely Nekoliczak, Lawson Nekoliczak, Jaxon Olney, Ellie Clark.

Staff/Community Recognition Winners:

Traci Nekoliczak, D.W. Holley

Central Valley Elementary

April Newsletter

CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working

Upcoming Events

April 1st

Easter Monday - No School

April 3rd

Early Dismissal - 1:30

April 6th

Saturday - PTO Navy Gala

April 10th

Early Dismissal - 2:15

April 10th

PAC Meeting - Scotia

April 17th

Early Dismissal - 2:15

April 19th

5th Grade Field Trip - Explorit Center

April 24th

Early Dismissal - 2:15

April 25th

Cougar Community Recognition

April 26th

Kinder Field Trip - Kearney Children's M.

April 30th

Elementary Spring Concert



February Golden Spoon Award Winner: Ms. Sidney Wood's 1st Grade Class



Central Valley Elementary

April Newsletter

CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working

4th Quarter Goal:

4
0
0
0
0
0

Dojo
Points



4th Quarter Dojo REWARD

Thank you all for a wonderful family movie night. So proud of the student for working hard to earn over 45,000 Dojo points for being safe, respectful, and responsible. The new 4th quarter Dojo point goal will be set at 40,000 Dojo points, and the students get to decide what the reward will be. What's it gonna be, Cougar Nation?



Central Valley Elementary

April Newsletter

CVE Core Values: Respectful, Kind, Responsible, Positive, Honest, Hard Working



PANCAKE FUN!



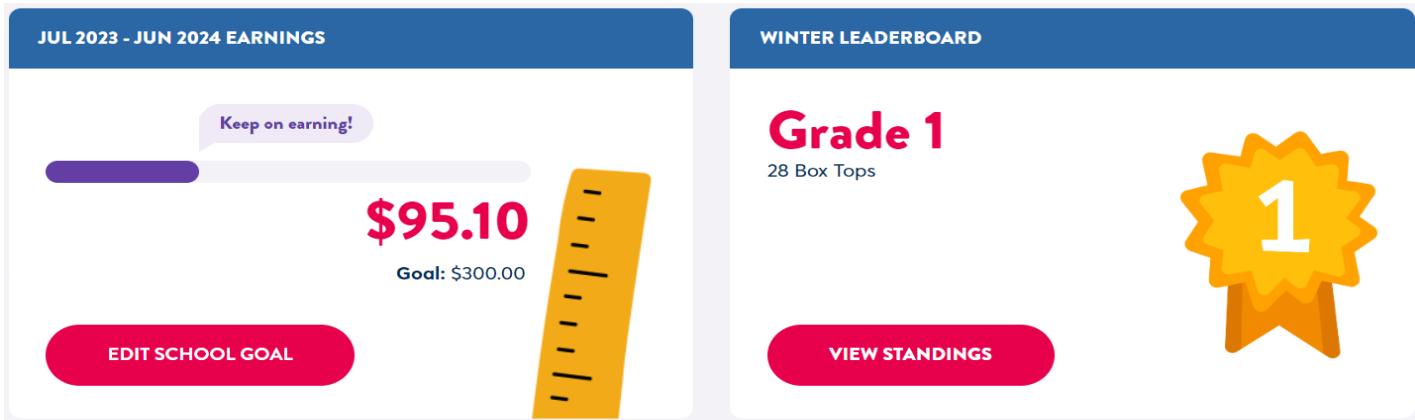
February Pancakes with the Principal



BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION TOTALS ~ Mrs. Joleigh Schimenti



Please consider downloading the Boxtops for Education app and scanning our receipts today! You can also leave your receipts at the Country Market in Greeley or send them to school and Mrs. Schimenti will scan them for you!!



Scholarship Blood Drive

Mrs. Kathleen Kennedy, Advisor

The FCCLA hosted a Scholarship Blood Drive on Wednesday, March 6. The Red Cross collected 44 units from 40 donors with one deferral.

First time donors were Dylan Beaty and Caden Burns. Gallons milestones were also met:

- 4 gallons - Jestin Beed
- 6 gallons - Peggy Jensen
- 7 gallons - Mary Fox
- 8 gallons - Vonnie Barr

Thank you to all of our donors for your continued support of the FCCLA Scholarship Blood Drives. Due to your generous support of donating a much-needed commodity for hospital services, we collected 131 units during the 2023-2024 school year. This qualifies Central Valley for a \$750 donation to the general scholarship fund.

The scholarship drives for the 225 seniors will be held in July 2024, September 2024, and March 2025. The dates are still to be determined. Again, thank you for your donations - we can't do it without YOU!

**2024 Central Valley
FFA Banquet**
Lauren Diessner, Reporter



The CV FFA Banquet will be held Tuesday, April 16 at the Central Valley Auditorium. Dinner will start promptly at 7:00pm.

This is a very exciting event as our chapter has had a very successful year. We have seen many accomplishments throughout the year. This year we have been fortunate enough to have several members qualify for state through Career Development Events in Welding, Livestock Management, Farm Management, Nursery Landscape and Floriculture. The things we have accomplished were not only due to our hard work, but from the constant support we receive from people like you.

Please do us the honor of joining us in celebrating our chapter's success.

Thank You

for supporting FFA!

CENTRAL VALLEY JR HIGH SPEECH

Coach Katie Davis

As one speech season comes to a close another one is starting up at Central Valley. We are all very excited to get the Jr. High Speech season started this year with about 15+ students in grades 6-8th.

We will be attending meets and also will be hosting the 2nd Annual Cougar Clash on April 24 at the Elementary School in Scotia starting at 3pm. So mark your calendar as the public is encouraged and invited to attend to cheer on our CV competitors.

We are also looking forward to taking a small team of students to Des Moines, Iowa in June to compete at the National Speech and Debate Association's National Tournament.

The Jr High competes in all the same events as the high school speech with the addition of a few other events: serious and humorous prose, informative, entertainment, extemporaneous and improv speaking, poetry, duet, drama, and declamation.

The team will attend the following meets:

- April 5-Boone Central April 6-David City
- April 13-Westridge GI April 19-Loup City
- April 24-CV Cougar Clash
- April 27-Raymond Central
- May 4-West Holt

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH

The Central Valley Speech team had a very rewarding season this year. While it was a smaller team of four amazing and talented ladies each of them competed in 3 events each. They saw much learning and growth with each meet as well as placings.

We traveled to a total of seven meets as a team, with the last meet of the season being Districts at High Plains where we finalled in OID and Poetry.

We are proud of Emalee Leth as she was the Champion in Poetry and represented Central Valley at State Speech on March 22 in Kearney.

While not breaking into finals, she had a rewarding day and she, along with the entire team, has goals of being there next year.

The following is placements at the meets attended this year.

ATKINSON WEST HOLT

- POETRY: Krissy Linder-3rd
- PERSUASIVE: Nevaeh Klemptner-3rd
- Krissy Linder-5th
- POI-Nevaeh Klemptner-4th
- SERIOUS PROSE-Nevaeh Klemptner-4th
- NOVICE TEAM PLACING-3rd

LINDSAY HOLY FAMILY

- POI-Nevaeh Klemptner-6th

BURWELL

- OID-5th Paige Berst, Jenna Baker, Krissy Linder, Emalee Leth

GOLDENROD CONFERENCE

- POI- Nevaeh Klemptner-5th, Emalee Leth-6th
- SERIOUS PROSE-Nevaeh Klemptner-5th
- POETRY-Emalee Leth-6th
- OID-6th Emalee Leth, Paige Berst, Krissy Linder, Nevaeh Klemptner
- TEAM PLACING-5th

CENTURA

- POETRY-Krissy Linder-5th Honors

DISTRICTS

- POETRY-Emalee Leth-1st
- OID-Krissy Linder, Paige, Nevaeh, Emalee Leth-5th



Central Valley seniors get a statehouse deep-dive

Should voting be compulsory in Nebraska? What is the role of each of our state's branches of government? How does a bill become a law? And if the Nebraska Legislature is a one-house body, who plays the role of the "Second House?"

These were just some of the questions Central Valley High School seniors debated on March 19 at the State Capitol as part of their annual Capitol Experience Day. An intensive daylong program tailored for their class, Capitol Experience Day immersed them in the workings of the Capitol and our state's unique form of government.

Hosted by Civic Nebraska, the program provides a hands-on way for students to get a deep dive into state government at the place where our laws are debated and made. Cougar seniors also interacted with state officials and learned the ins and outs of Nebraska government. They honed their advocacy, critical thinking, and civil discourse skills by role-playing as senators and citizens at a mock committee hearing.

"This is a great opportunity to see democracy in action, experience the everyday workings of state government, and learn how to participate in our democratic process," said **Kimbrie Vlach**, who teaches U.S. government and social studies at Central Valley. "As a teacher, I believe it's effective because students get to witness it, and then take what they've seen and practice it."

After a short tour, the seniors got a speed history of the statehouse, then looked on as senators engaged in debate on the floor of the Legislature. Inspired by the senators' interactions, they convened in a Capitol conference room and conducted a mock committee hearing on fictitious "LB2024" - a measure to make voting mandatory in Nebraska.

During the mock hearing, participants role-played as state senators and members of the public - a/k/a, the Second House. The class

deliberated the ramifications from different viewpoints and even considered an amendment to the mock bill. Eventually, the students who role-played as senators voted 6-1 to table LB2024.

"(The mock hearing is) a part of the day that is really important, because students have to think critically about a measure, practice civil discourse during the mock hearing, and then arrive at a decision," Vlach said. "Whether that's (at the Capitol), in the classroom, or around the kitchen table, it's how we as citizens productively shape our communities and our state."

Senior Kendra Cargill said the experience gave her the confidence to testify in the future about real-life issues and legislation she might care about.

"I was assigned in advance to play the role of an opponent, and as I did my research I realized that it wasn't the best idea," Cargill said. "I can see myself testifying in the future if the opportunity comes up."

Students also had private meetings with their district representative, State Sen. Fred Meyer of St. Paul, and their former representative, State Treasurer Tom Briese of Albion.

Civic Nebraska works to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans. For more information about Civic Nebraska's Capitol Experience Days, contact Audrey Nance at Audrey.nance@civicnebraska.org.



Steve Smith,
Director of Communications





Field Trip!

The Belfast Bakery hosted two groups of students March 18th.

Owners Wayne and Leah Crome welcomed the groups. After learning about bread dough and a demonstration of how to make a pizza crust, the students each made their own pizza.

The students thoroughly enjoyed themselves and loved eating the delicious pizza! The groups were also entertained by the pictures and information about the history of Greeley.



DR Cook showing off his finished product!!



L-r: Wayne Crome, Shawn Koperski, Mattie Schumacher, Darci Buck, Carter Dunlap, DR Cook

L-r: Mattie Schumacher, Owner, Wayne Crome, Carter Dunlap, flipping pizza dough, DR Cook





Mrs. Kayla Langer, Sponsor

This March the Science Olympiad Team competed at the annual ESU 10 Regional Science Olympiad Tournament. We had 14 junior high students and 6 high school students compete in different science-related events.

Congratulations to the following students who received a medal:

- Kerry Luscomb who placed 2nd in Anatomy and Physiology.
- Larretta Davis and Raynea Pokorny who placed 4th in Can't Judge a Powder.
- Loretta Davis who placed 2nd in wheeled vehicle.
- Zaden Wolf and Boston Wood who placed 6th in Write It Do It.

Mrs. Sarah Hansen, Sponsor

Our Junior High and High School Quiz Bowl teams have been busy during March! High schoolers competed at the UNK campus on March 4 and the 7th and 8th grade students competed on March 18.



High School Quiz Bowl students at UNK

Back row l-r: Zaden Wolf, Taesian Soto, Caleb Studley, Zavyer Wolf (Team Captain), Tyler Luscomb

Front row l-r: Boston Wood, Taylor McIntyre, Cayle Grossart, Brooklyn Perrott



Junior High Quiz Bowl students at UNK



Back row l-r: Addy Ryan, Payton Kniss, Ethan Lobner, Bentleigh Dugan, Maggie Kriewald

Front row l-r: William Pokorny, Laretta Davis (Team Captain), Raynea Pokorny



Junior High students work together to answer a bonus question during competition.



l-r: Maggie Kriewald, Payton Kniss, Ethan Lobner, Kerry Luscomb, William Pokorny, Bentleigh Dugan





Be a parent, not a peer, to your child

Your child is growing up physically and intellectually. He can understand concepts he couldn't last year. But he still needs to respect you, his teachers and other adults. To maintain your authority:

- Insist that your child speak politely to you and other adults. Don't allow him to speak rudely to you. Walk away and do not listen to him until he speaks respectfully.
- Require your child to follow your rules. He shouldn't need a huge list or rules, but enforce a few important ones with consequences for breaking them.
- Don't try to be the "cool" parent in the neighborhood. Be kind to your child and his friends, but don't act like a kid.
- Don't base decisions on what would please your child and his friends. Trust yourself as the adult and make decisions accordingly.

Family show-and-tell

Show-and-tell builds your child's speaking and presentation skills—and it's not just for school! Schedule special time each week or month for everyone to share a belonging, talent, or memory. Your youngster could share the stuffed animal he got for his birthday or read a poem he wrote, for example.



The definition of me

How kids see themselves plays a big role in their self-esteem. Ask your youngster to write a dictionary-style definition of herself that includes things she's proud of.

Worth quoting

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself."

"Ralph Waldo Emerson"



The Early Development Network provides early intervention services for families with children birth to age three with developmental delays and/or health care needs. Our program connects families with needed services and provides ongoing support. EDN has caring and professional Services Coordinators to serve families with an individualized and strengths based focus. These services are free to families and we welcome anyone who may have questions or concerns.

If you are concerned about a child's development or know someone who is please call EDN (308)237-2280 at ESU 10 for services in Region 10 or 1(888)806-6287 for referrals throughout Nebraska. If you are unsure which EDN office serves your area please call (308)237-2280 and we are happy to assist you in finding your best contact person.

To learn more about our program please visit esu10.org and choose the EDN tab in English or Spanish or visit edn.ne.gov.

Power struggles are a no-win

Demanding a particular action from your teen - "Finish your homework right now." - is likely to result in a power struggle if she has other ideas.

Experts recommend avoiding power struggles with teens. That doesn't mean you should let your teen do everything her way. Instead, involve her in finding solutions that will work for you both. Asking "What time will you do your homework so we can still watch the game tonight?" may eliminate a fight—and still get the work in on time!

Central Valley**Third Quarter
Honor Roll Students****SENIORS**

*Mia Butcher
*Kendra Cargill
Raegyn Jarman
*Alexis Johnson
*Dierks Nekoliczak
*Piper Shepard
*Tanner Sliva
*Taylor Sliva

JUNIORS

*Emma Corman
Morgan Johnson
Grady Kelly
Taesian Soto
Callie Wadas
Boston Wood

SOPHOMORES

Ky Cargill
Tyler Luscomb
*Taylor McIntyre
Zavyer Wolf

FRESHMEN

Abigail Adams
Dale Barr
*Cayle Grossart
Nevaeh Klemptner
Kristyana Linder
Kinley Nelson
*Brooklyn Perrott
Watt Rosander
Landon Shoemaker
Luke Shoemaker
*Gunnar Vanosdall
*Annaka Wood

EIGHTH GRADE

Laretta Davis
*Bentleigh Dugan
*Dalton Dugan
July Gotschall
Zoey Jensen
Brittany Johnson
*Trasa Klein
*Payton Kniss
*Maggie Kriewald
Ethan Lobner
Kerry Luscomb
*Lincoln Nekoliczak
Tenley Perrott
*William Pokorny

EIGHTH GRADE contined

Oaklan Soto
Nevaeh Vanosdall
Aubrey Winter
*Zevan Wolf

SEVENTH GRADE

*Drexon Dugan
*Maci Ford
Owen Malmstrom
Claire O'Connor
Raynea Pokorny
*Landen Poss
Taylor Rosander
Addison Ryan
*Lydia Studley
*Callan Vogeler
Craytyn Wagner

*Denotes All As

**How to prepare for IEP meetings**

If your child has an IEP (Individualized Education Program), here is advice for the next meeting you attend to review and update her plan:

- ◆ You're an important part of the IEP team, so plan to share information and ideas. Write up a summary of your youngster's strengths and needs. Also, list questions you have such as "How will you help her calm down if she's upset?"
- ◆ If possible, take a spouse, relative, or friend with you. There may be a lot of people around the table, so having a support person could make you feel more confident.
- ◆ Have a positive attitude. Remember that every member of the team has the same goal: to help your child do her best!

Helping Children Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

April 2024

Help your elementary schooler move forward after a setback

It's important for students to learn how to recover from setbacks, because they happen to everyone at one time or another.

Your reaction to a failure or setback can help your child move on to academic achievement. To help your elementary schooler bounce back:

- **Praise what you can.** A test grade may be low, but you may still be able to say "Hey, you got more answers right than wrong!"
- **Discuss what your child** can learn from the situation. Brainstorm together about things to do differently in the future.
- **Be realistic.** If your child has been trying, but isn't making progress, try not to seem unhappy. Instead, focus on creating a plan for improvement. Consult with the teacher for guidance.
- **Let your child take** responsibility for making changes. Discuss ways to improve, then let your child put them into action.
- **Set an example.** Try to handle your own mistakes and setbacks in positive ways. "That didn't work. I'm going to look up another way to do it."
- **Look forward.** Don't dwell on the failure or try to get the teacher to change a grade or a decision. Spending too much time talking about setbacks can make it harder to get past them, and children need to learn to respect teachers' decisions.



Enjoy some living history

When your child is learning about a historic person, try this role-play activity. Have your child learn all about the person. Then, you pretend to be a TV reporter, and have your child be the person. Ask questions your child will likely be able to answer: "Mae Jemison, when did you fly your historic mission into space?" Adding life to history makes it more fun!

Distribute math study time

Research shows that *distributed practice* is key for long-term learning. This means that instead of practicing math for an hour one day a week, your child should break up that time into shorter chunks and practice every day. Try these fun ways to practice together:

- **Play with coins.** Say to your child, "I have three coins. Together they are worth seven cents. What are they?"
- **Pretend** your calculator is broken. Say, "Imagine our calculator has no number 8. What other ways could you represent that number?" Your child could enter $10 - 2$, or $4 + 4$, or $24 \div 3$.



Source: G.M. Donoghue and J. Hattie, "A Meta-Analysis of Ten Learning Techniques," *Frontiers in Education*.



Foster your child's interest in reading

Books offer fascinating stories, interesting facts and all kinds of knowledge. But compared to colorful, flashing screens, they may not seem as appealing to your child. To generate an interest in reading:

- **Add a social element.** Have your child read to a younger sibling, grandparent or a favorite stuffed animal.
- **Offer variety.** Perhaps your child would like to read a mystery, a how-to book or a biography. Consider all types of books.
- **Encourage hobby reading.** Does your elementary schooler like baseball, gaming or crafts?
- Look for titles on topics your child is already interested in.
- **Go beyond books.** Short materials such as articles, comics and recipes count! Your child may also like listening to an audiobook in the car or while doing chores.
- **Find out about events** for children at the library. Ask about other reading-related activities, such as contests or games.

Put science skills to work

One easy way to support science learning is to encourage your child to use newly learned information in life. After watching a nature program or reading books about nature, for example, go outside together. Ask your child questions like: "That tree has needles instead of flat leaves. What's that type of tree called?" "The flowers we planted last year grew back. Are they annuals or perennials?" "Look at that fly. Do flies have four wings or two?"



Helping Children Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School



April 2024



How can I help my child feel less stressed-out?

Q: Lately, my 10-year-old has been bursting into tears and even yelling when something goes wrong. Study time is very stressful. This is not how my child used to be. What can I do?

A: Studies show that many children are feeling more stressed than they did a few years ago. They worry about grades, tests, deadlines and fitting in. They worry about events in the world around them. This stress can affect their school-work and their health.



To help de-stress your elementary schooler's life:

- **Stay calm when your child** loses control. Strong emotions from you will only add more stress. Try to take a deep breath, then offer support.
- **Encourage your child to express** feelings and concerns. Don't try to minimize them. Instead, acknowledge the emotions and express confidence in your child's ability to cope with stressful situations.
- **Encourage creative problem solving**—so your child can make the most of opportunities that might arise out of a stressful situation.
- **Help your child set realistic goals**, such as turning work in on time. Keeping up eliminates sudden overwhelming pressure to get things done.
- **Promote good nutrition and exercise.** Also teach your child some relaxation exercises—like concentrating on deep breathing.



Are you giving your child needed time?

Frequent, meaningful, undivided attention from the adults in their families helps children thrive in school and life. Are you spending time with your elementary schooler in beneficial ways? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Do you eat** meals together at least once a day? cause separation even when family members are together.
2. **Do you make** time for reading, relaxing and talking with your child every day?
3. **Do you include** at least five minutes in your child's bedtime routine for talking and listening?
4. **Do you schedule** one-on-one time with each of your children each week?
5. **Do you make** family time device-free? Digital devices can

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are giving your child quantities of quality time. For each no, try that idea.

"Even taking a child to school can be a time of togetherness where you can talk to each other..."
—T. K. Oliver

Prepare for peer pressure

You can help your child fend off pressure from peers to do things that break rules or don't feel right. Teach your child to repeat and remember these statements:

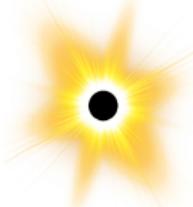
- **I can say no** to things that would put me or others in danger.
- **I can make** good choices for myself.
- **I can say,** "You are my friend, but I don't choose to do that."

Plan some April activities

April is the designated month for many activities that offer learning opportunities. Here are three to recognize with your child:

1. Global Astronomy Month.

On April 8, a total solar eclipse will be visible over parts of the United States, Canada and Mexico. Help your child learn more about eclipses.



2. National Poetry Month. Read "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams. Try to write poems using fewer than 20 words.

3. Financial Literacy Month. Have your child make and keep a spending log.

Add movement to reading

Did you know that movement can help students get more out of reading? Research shows that it can help children make connections—between letters and the sounds they make, and between printed words and real-life actions. Encourage your child to:

- **Choose a movement** for each letter sound, and move when decoding words.
- **Act out stories** after reading them, using words from the books.

Source: University of Copenhagen, "Whole-body learning can boost children's letter sound recognition—the first step toward reading," Science Daily.

Helping Children Learn®

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

1-800-756-5525 • www.parent-institute.com

Helping Students Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10



MIDDLE SCHOOL

April 2024

Three strategies can help your child boost long-term memory

Education gives students a body of knowledge they can draw on in the future. That's why the ability to retain and recall information—particularly in the long-term—is so critical to academic success.

To support long-term learning, help your middle schooler:



1. Practice recalling information. The act of retrieving information helps reinforce it in your child's memory.

Ask your middle schooler to teach the material to you. Offer to work with flash cards together. Or, challenge your child to write down as much as possible about a topic without referring back to class notes.

2. Make topics meaningful. Research shows that relating information to something meaningful is a more effective way to memorize it than simply repeating it over and over. To memorize vocabulary words, for example, your child could write a story using those words.

3. Put concepts into context. When your child is trying to remember the material in Chapter Four of a text, suggest spending a few minutes looking at the summaries of the surrounding chapters. This can help clarify how Chapter Four relates to the whole unit. Understanding that connection can improve your child's memory of the information in the chapter.

Source: G. DiTullio, "How to Engage Students' Memory Processes to Improve Learning," Edutopia.



Keep the lines of communication open

Finding out what's going on in the life of a guarded preteen can be trickier than talking to a chatty elementary schooler. Ask one wrong question, and your child may explode or stop talking altogether.

To keep communicating flowing:

- Ask open-ended questions.**

"What are you studying in science this week?" "What has made you feel proud recently?"

- Take your child's words** and feelings seriously. A problem that seems minor to you is very likely major to your child. If you dismiss it, your child will be even less likely to share next time.

- Arrange times** when your child knows you are available to talk. Stop what you are doing and listen if your child does open up.
- Encourage your child** to speak to other trusted adults if you aren't available. Whether it's a teacher, a relative or a friend's parent, your child needs to have someone to discuss school and life with.

Offer a digital way to read

Today there are more ways than ever for children to enjoy the benefits of reading. Like print books, audiobooks and e-books expose children to story structure, compelling plots and new vocabulary. And listening or scrolling through a digital book may have more appeal for a plugged-in middle schooler. Look for free titles to download on public library websites.



Is it a reliable source?

Advances in artificial intelligence mean that many websites and social media posts look "authoritative"—even when they aren't. Remind your child to check out sources before using them. An internet search on the source's name can help identify issues or show that other reputable sources cite it.

Source: S. Weinberg, "Students Are Easily Duped Online. We Can Teach Them Better," EducationWeek.

Explore career possibilities

One goal of education is to prepare students to do productive work as adults. Exploring careers now can help your child make the most of opportunities in school. To help:

- Ask your child's teachers** or counselor about career exploration and enrichment resources.
- Help your child** develop strengths and interests. Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities and volunteering.
- Learn together.** Read about education and skill requirements and salaries in fields that interest your child in the Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/ooh/.



Helping Students Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School



MIDDLE SCHOOL

April 2024



How do I get my kids to stop fighting and start solving?

Q: My children don't get along. Every disagreement they have seems to turn into a fight, and I always get caught in the middle. How can I help them learn to resolve conflicts peacefully?

A: Whether they are facing conflicts with siblings, classmates or eventually, bosses and co-workers, children need to know how to resolve them peacefully and respectfully.



You don't want to referee every squabble between your children, and you shouldn't. Instead, teach them to:

- **Discuss little issues** before they become big ones. When little things are ignored, they can grow into major disputes.
- **Speak in "I-messages."** Encourage your children to talk about their own feelings, rather than the other person's mistakes. Instead of "You always take my charger," your middle schooler could say, "I feel angry when you take something without asking to borrow it first."
- **Listen to the other person.** It is the only way to understand someone else's point of view.
- **Work together on a compromise.** If two people have a conflict, they each have a problem. To solve it, they will probably both need to make changes. Help your children focus on solutions, rather than placing blame.



Are you helping your middle schooler tackle academic challenges?

It's common for students to find one class more challenging than the rest. The reasons why differ, but the same steps can help to address the situation. Do you know what to do if your child is struggling? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

- **1. Do you talk** together about the class, and ask what your student thinks the problem may be?
- **2. Do you encourage** your child to talk with the teacher and develop a plan for improving?
- **3. Do you have** your child set aside time to study for the class every day?
- **4. Do you ask** your child's teacher or counselor about resources for help, such as tutoring?

- **5. Do you monitor** your child's work in the class and celebrate every sign of progress?

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are ready to help your child overcome difficulties in a class. For each no, try that idea.

"Life's a climb. But the view is great."
—Miley Cyrus

Prepare to cure test anxiety

Anxiety about tests can make it harder for students to show what they know. In most cases, a few things help ease it. When a test is announced, encourage your child to:

- **Ask questions.** What is the scope of the test? What does a high or low score mean for your child? What will the format be?
- **Prepare appropriately.** Your child can ask the teacher about practice tests and other ways to study.
- **Remember that one test** won't change your student's entire future.
- **Get plenty of sleep,** eat breakfast on test day and dress comfortably in layers.

Make a plan for discipline

One way to avoid arguments with your child over rules and discipline is to create a written plan. Together, identify your five most important rules and the consequences for breaking them. Allow your child to express opinions about them, but make final decisions yourself. Post the plan prominently.

Now, instead of being drawn into an argument, you can just point to the plan. Review and revise it as your child shows an ability to stay within boundaries.

Talk about a power shift

A negative attitude toward school often results from feeling helpless. For example, your child probably can't change which classes are required.

Focusing on having to take a disliked subject would leave any student feeling helpless and negative.



Shift the focus to things your child *does* have the power to change. If your child prepares and participates more, classes in the subject will likely become more interesting. A feeling of empowerment can improve attitude—and school success.

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

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Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

HIGH SCHOOL



April 2024

Have your teen try 'interleaving' when doing assignments

When it comes to doing homework, most high school students take it one subject at a time. But recent research shows that this is less effective for long-term learning than a technique called *interleaving*.

When interleaving, students mix several subjects up, doing a little of each before returning to the first. Instead of AAA-BBB-CCC, they might do ABC-ABC-ABC. To put interleaving to work, your teen could do the first seven or eight of 20 math problems, then move on to do some reading and some Spanish, and then go back to math.

After changing subjects, students have to work a little harder to remember what they know. (What is the Spanish word for *try again*?) That effort actually helps them recall the material in the long term.

It's important that students don't just use interleaving as an excuse to quit when something seems hard. Instead, they should keep returning to the subject until they feel a sense of accomplishment.

Remind your teen that even if this study technique seems to require more work, stronger recall power is worth it. As one teacher says, "It may feel worse now, but it will feel better when they take the test!"

Source: G.M. Donoghue and J.A.C. Hattie, "A Meta-Analysis of Ten Learning Techniques," *Frontiers in Education*, Frontiers Media S.A.



Absent students lose out

No matter the kind of absence—excused, unexcused, partial day, etc.—the result is the same: lost learning time. Being absent for as few as two days a month means a student will miss 10 percent of an average school year. And this kind of chronic absence sets a pattern that is hard to recover from. Don't let your teen miss out. Insist on attendance in every class, every day.

Encourage volunteering

Teens want to make the world a better place and believe they can do it. A volunteer job can help your teen put that belief into action. To boost the benefits to your teen:

- **Point out the links** between schoolwork and volunteer work—skills, concepts, etc.
- **Encourage your teen** to focus on activities in one area of strength and deepen experience in it. This will have more impact on a résumé later.



Nurture interest in learning

When teens are motivated by curiosity and an inner desire to learn, they are more likely to stick with tasks, keep learning and retain knowledge. To encourage this:



- **Offer opportunities** for your teen to display knowledge. Ask your teen to teach you skills learned in school.
- **Ask what your teen hopes** to learn from projects and assignments.
- **Help your teen recognize** how good it feels to accomplish something. "You've done a lot of research for that paper. You are becoming a real expert!"

Source: P.Y. Oudeyer and others, "Intrinsic Motivation, Curiosity, and Learning: Theory and Applications in Educational Technologies," *Progress in Brain Research*, Elsevier.



Foster reading comprehension skills

To really understand what they are reading, students must think about more than just the words on the page. They must also consider more abstract concepts. Encourage your high school student to spend time thinking about:

- **The author's purpose.** Why did the author write this? Was it to inform? To entertain? To influence thinking?
- **The sequence of events.** What happened first? What happened next? What was the result?
- **The main idea** and supporting details. What is the author's basic message? What elements does the author include in the writing that strengthen and support this message?
- **Figurative language.** "The ocean sang to me," doesn't mean the water had a voice. It means the author felt connected to it.
- **Relationships between** events or characters or plot points and how they affected the outcome.
- **The characters' feelings.** How did they affect their decisions?

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April 2024



How much sleep do teens really need to learn well?

Q: I can't get my 15-year-old to go to bed at night—or get out of it in the morning. This can't be good for learning in school. How can I help my teen get enough sleep?

A: Battles over sleep often escalate in adolescence. Teens stay up because they want to keep playing on their phones or watching shows, and they also must finish assignments. What's more, their internal clocks reset at this age. Teens don't tend to get sleepy for many hours after the sun has set.



But if they don't get at least eight or nine hours of sleep every 24 hours, high school students get irritable. They are groggy in class. They zone out on tests and they muddle through extracurricular activities.

Have a talk with your teen. Point out that tired kids perform far below their potential. Then, work out solutions together. For a start, you can:

- **Set a digital curfew.** Devices should be turned off at least an hour before bedtime, and charged outside your teen's room at night.
- **Promote exercise.** Getting plenty of physical exercise every day will also make it easier for your teen to sleep at night.
- **Strike a weekend compromise.** If your teen goes to bed at 10 p.m. on weeknights to be up by 6 a.m., allow staying up and sleeping in an hour or so later on the weekends.



Is your teen prepared to handle school and a part-time job?

Part-time jobs can help teens develop traits like responsibility that pay off in school. But they can also overwhelm students' ability to focus on schoolwork. Is your teen ready to balance school and a job? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Are you confident** that your teen can think ahead and manage time responsibly?
2. **Have you set** a limit on the hours your teen can work each week? Keep it under 15.
3. **Have you explained** that if grades suffer, your teen will have to quit the job?
4. **Have you discussed** your teen's plans for managing earnings?
5. **Have you agreed** on how your teen will get to and from

work without disrupting your family?

How ready is your teen?

More yes answers mean you are preparing your teen to handle a job as well as school. For each no, try that idea.

"Balance is not something you find. It's something you create."
—Jana Kingsford

Enrich your teen's solo time

Teens these days tend to turn automatically to screens for entertainment when they are alone. But that's not healthy. Encourage solo activities like these that will make your teen feel worthwhile and productive:

- **Reading.**
- **Creative pursuits**—music making, arts and crafts, writing.
- **Exercise.** Suggest that your teen listen to an audiobook during a walk or a workout.
- **Cooking.** This practical, creative activity lets your teen use all five senses—and eat the creations!



School counselors can help

Does your teen understand that it is a sign of strength to ask for help when it's needed? This is true for a lot more than schoolwork. School counselors are highly-trained professionals who can help your teen:

- **Identify** and work through academic, social and behavior issues.
- **Find** support and assistance in a crisis.
- **Plan** for a bright future.

Make family meals work

If you have a table, you have a great place to connect with your teen over a meal. To make the most of mealtime:

- **Try to eat as a family** as often as possible.
- **Be flexible.** If breakfast together works better than dinner, go for it.
- **Include your teen** in conversations. Bring up topics your teen can contribute to without feeling put on the spot.
- **Save criticism** of your teen's behavior for other times when you are alone.

Source: S.G. Wallace, "The Art and Science of Family Dinner," *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, LLC.

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