The Central Valley Chronicle

October 2025

Cougar Connection ~ Ms. Kimbrie Vlach, High School Principal

August flew by, and September is already nearly behind us. As the year continues to move quickly, I want to pause and acknowledge some of the great things happening here at Central Valley. Our students have been active in so many ways—athletically, academically, and socially—as we've gotten the year underway.

Homecoming 2025 was a wonderful success! The week was filled with both tradition and new activities, thanks to the creativity of our Student Council and sponsor, Mr. Scott Wood. From class games and poster competitions to the always-popular dress-up days, our students and staff brought amazing energy and school spirit. For the first time in ten years, we faced a rainy day for the parade, but in true Cougar fashion, the event went on and was as memorable as ever. I'd like to give a special thank you to Shelly Houtby for coordinating so many of the details and working with both school and community groups to make it all possible. The student- and staff-created floats were incredible, and it was great to see everyone enjoying the day and making memories together.





Parent-Teacher Conferences were also well attended. These meetings provided our faculty and staff with the opportunity to share students' strengths, discuss areas for growth, and collaborate with families in supporting our learners. Many classes even had students complete self-reflections, encouraging them to pause and think about their own progress, challenges, and goals for the year ahead.

Multicultural Performance: We also had the privilege of hosting **Enda Reilly**, thanks to the Irish Festival Committee. His performance gave our students a taste of Irish culture through music and storytelling. Students clapped, sang along, and learned about the rich history of Gaelic songs. It was a truly engaging and unique experience.

Thank you for the continued support that allows our students to learn, grow, and build lasting connections within our communities.

Instilling Pride, Inspiring Others


WE HIT HARD
COUGARS
TRACK
FIELD


KINGWOOD
C.E. THOMPSON
CAMPFIRE
OF
2029
VICTORY
TOAST THE COYOTES
WE WANT S'MORE!


POST 226

Central Valley Enrollment Summary as of 9/30/2025

Grade Level	Total in Grade	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific: Islander	Black (Not Hispanic:)	Hispanic:	White (Not Hispanic:)	Unclassified
PK3	19	0	0	0	0	10	0
PK4	16	0	0	0	0	16	0
0	16	0	0	0	0	16	0
1	27	0	0	0	2	25	0
2	22	0	0	1	1	20	0
3	21	0	0	0	1	20	0
4	24	0	0	0	1	23	0
5	17	0	0	0	0	17	0
6	33	0	0	0	1	32	0
7	20	0	0	0	0	20	0
8	21	0	0	1	1	19	0
9	20	0	0	0	1	19	0
10	32	1	0	0	0	31	0
11	19	0	0	0	0	19	0
12	18	0	1	0	0	17	0
Total	**325**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**8**	**313**	0

*Preschool is half-day. 3-year olds attend in the morning and 4-year olds attend in the afternoon.

**Kindergarten is all day every day

Central Valley Elementary

October Newsletter

From the Principal's Desk: Mr. Nick Carlson



Conservation Celebration -4th Grade-



Auble's Pond - Ord



FALL Into Learning

As the leaves begin to change and the cool autumn air sets in, we are excited to share some of the wonderful learning opportunities happening in our classrooms this fall. The start of the school year has been full of energy, and now that students have settled into routines, we are eager to see them "fall" into learning in new and exciting ways.

Reading: Students are diving deeper into reading strategies, expanding vocabulary, and building a love of stories. Teachers are also beginning to implement more small-group reading instruction, allowing them to target skills and provide individualized support.

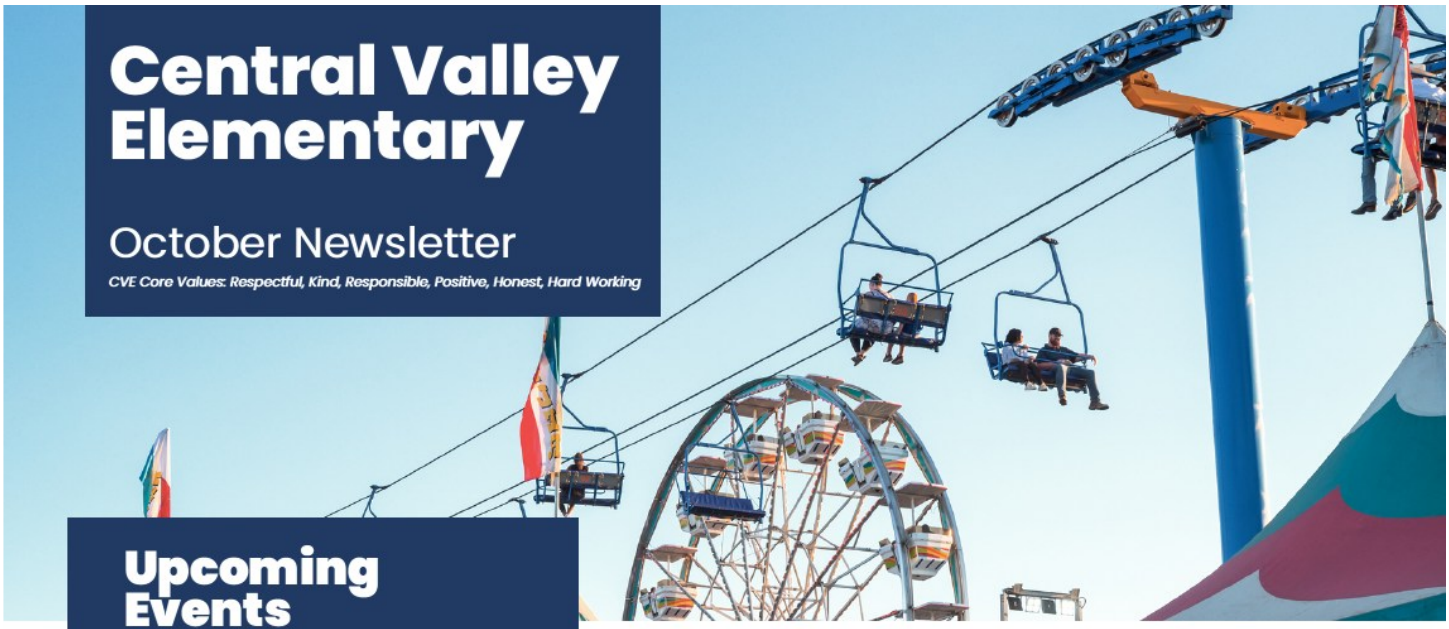
Math: Teachers are helping students strengthen number sense, explore patterns, and apply problem-solving skills in real-world ways. Just like in reading, teachers are incorporating more small-group math instruction, ensuring every student receives the right level of challenge and support.

Fall also brings special events and celebrations at CVE. Be on the lookout for details about our upcoming assemblies, family events, and holiday activities. We are so grateful for your continued support and partnership in making this a wonderful season of growth and learning for all students.

Central Valley Elementary

October Newsletter

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



Upcoming Events

October 1st
1:30 Dismissal

October 9th
Guest Author Speaker

October 13th
Grandparents' Day – 8:00-10:00

October 13th - 17th
Book Fair Week

October 15th (End of Q1)
NO School - P/T Conferences

October 23rd
Flu Shots:
Wolbach – 8:30-9:00
Scotia – 10:00-12:00.
Greeley – 1:00-3:00
Cougar Community Recognition

October 24th
NO School - Fall Break

October 31st
Classroom Halloween Parties - 2:00







The Nebraska State Fair













Central Valley Elementary

October Newsletter

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





1st Semester Cougar Point Goal:

100,000 Points

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be Responsible

1st Semester Cougar Point Total - 26,500

HOMECOMING WEEK













LEARNING TO DO
DOING TO LEARN
EARNING TO LIVE
LIVING TO SERVE

On Tuesday, September 16th, five officers from the Central Valley FFA chapter attended Connecting Chapters in St. Edward. Connecting Chapters is an ag literacy training event sponsored by the Nebraska Farm Bureau.

While they were there, they participated in several activities that they will be able to use in the classroom to teach ag literacy to elementary students. Through this training, Central Valley FFA members and agriculture students will read to elementary classes, do an activity to teach younger kids about agriculture, donate agriculture books to the elementary library, and involve the community. Once all of the activities are complete, Central Valley will be recognized at State FFA in late March. This will give Central Valley FFA and ag education the opportunity to involve the youth and teach them more about agriculture and FFA.



L-r: Addison Ryan, Payton Kniss, Zoey Jensen, Aubrey Winter, Trasa Klein



L-r: Lexi Gonzalez, Laretta Davis, Tesla Landers, Ethan Lobner, Nevaeh Vanosdall, Kerry Luscomb

Family, Career and Community
FCCLA
Leaders of America
The Ultimate Leadership Experience

FCCLA Attends Fall Leadership Conference

This past week, our FCCLA chapter had the exciting opportunity to attend the Fall Leadership Conference. Members connected with other chapters from across the state, participated in interactive workshops, and learned valuable skills in leadership, teamwork, and communication.

The conference gave our members the chance to grow as leaders, explore new opportunities within FCCLA, and bring back fresh ideas to strengthen our chapter. We are excited to put these new skills into action as we continue building toward a successful year!



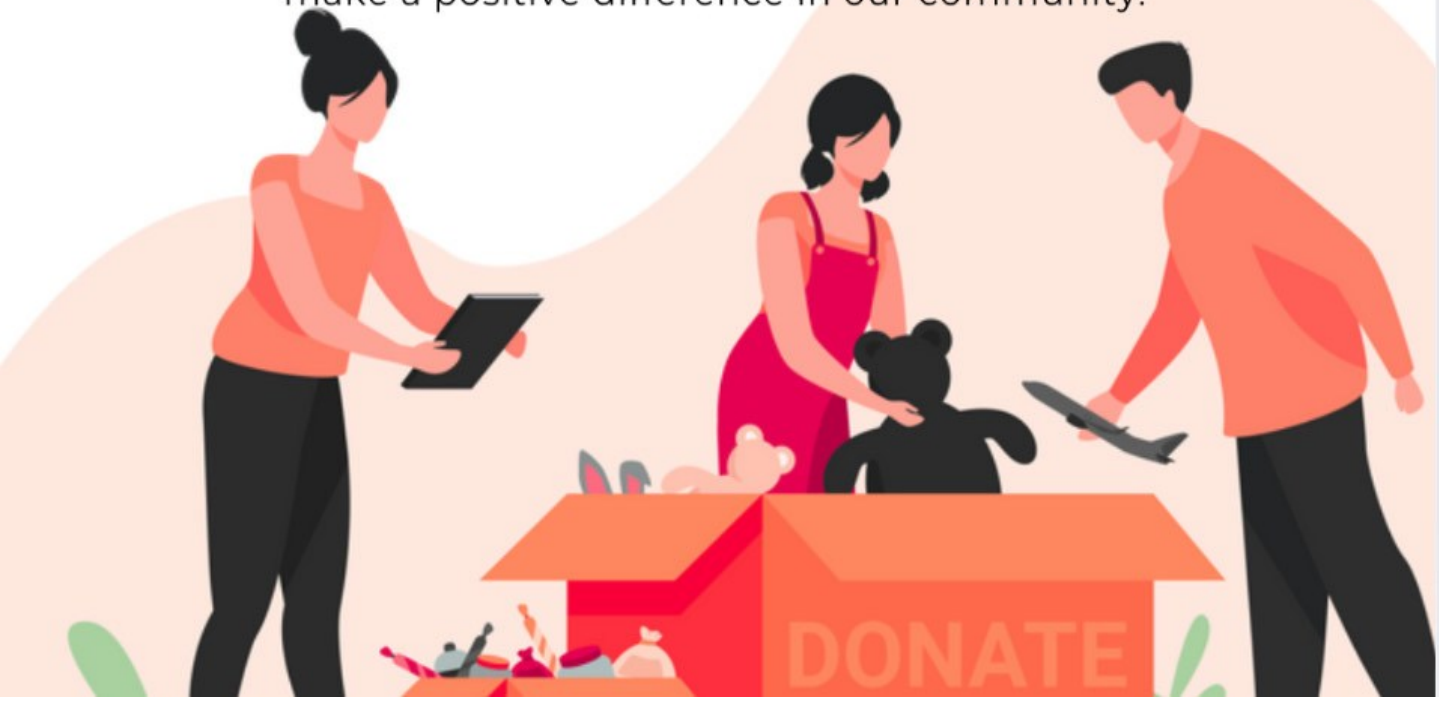
District 9 Service Project

FCCLA

Hair Wash Drive

October 1st - 15th | Donations can be brought to Mrs. Kennedy's room.

On October 15th, the Central Valley FCCLA Chapter will be attending the District Leadership Conference in O'Neill. This year, District 9 FCCLA is hosting a Hygiene Product Drive to support those in need. During the conference, members will assemble hygiene packages, which each chapter will then bring back to donate within their own communities. The Central Valley FCCLA Chapter has volunteered to provide shampoo and conditioner (travel size recommended, full size works) for these care packages. We would be so grateful for your support! Together, we can make a positive difference in our community.



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.

Central Valley Speech and One-Act coaches attended the Nebraska Speech Communication & Theatre Association Convention in Kearney Sept 18th-20th!

Katie Davis, Head Speech and Assistant One-Act Coach, serves as the District 4 Representative for NSCTA and leads the scholarship raffle that supports the Mel Shoemaker Scholarship.

Rachel Fox, Head One-Act and Assistant Speech Coach, serves as the Convention and State Play Production & Speech Contest Liaison for NSCTA, helping plan and support both the annual convention and state contests.

We're proud to see Central Valley Fine Arts represented at Convention each year and working hard to make opportunities possible for students and educators across Nebraska!



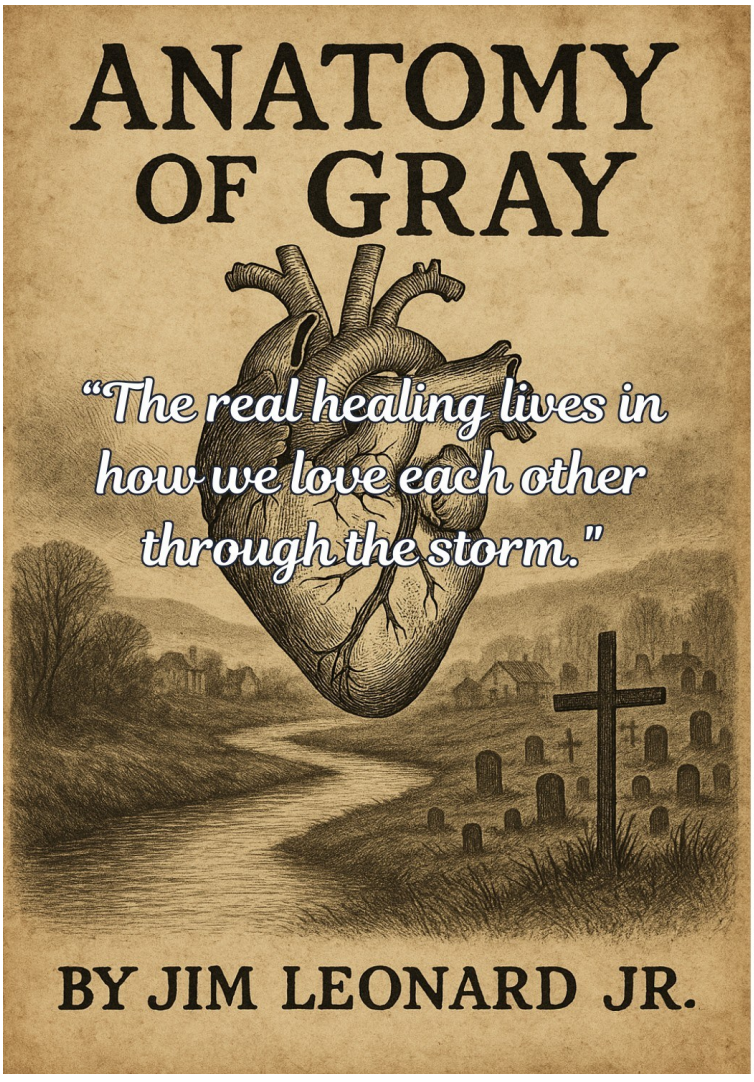
Central Valley One-Act Team Prepares for Competition Season

The Central Valley One-Act team has been putting in hours of dedication this fall, working hard to get fully memorized and comfortable with the set. Rehearsals have focused on mastering lines and building strong character connections, but October brings an exciting new stage of preparation—introducing props, movement, and music into practices to bring the story fully to life. The cast and main crew have done a great job in owning their role and we look forward to keeping that momentum going.

This year's production, Anatomy of Gray by Jim Leonard Jr., tells the story of a small Indiana town in the late 1800s that faces change, loss, and healing when a mysterious doctor arrives. It is both heartfelt and humorous, weaving together themes of love, community, and resilience in the face of hardship. Audiences will find themselves laughing one moment and moved the next, as the characters' journeys reflect universal struggles and hopes.

The team is eager to share their work with the community and hopes for strong support at competitions. Every performance is a chance to showcase not only their talent but also the spirit of Central Valley.

We invite everyone to follow along with our journey and, most importantly, come cheer us on at our upcoming contests in November. Your encouragement makes all the difference as we take the stage and bring this story to life!



One-Act Cast

Anatomy of Gray

June – Laretta Davis
Rebecca – Emalee Leth
Tiny – Aubrey Winter
Maggie – Tesla Landers
Homer/Hazel – Trasa Klein
Belva – Bentleigh Dugan
Phineas – Ethan Lobner
Crutch – Thayer Davis
Galen P Gray – William Pokorny
Townspeople: (more to be added)
Prudence Belleweather – Paige Berst
Trudy Pickett – Tenley Perrott
Rufus Prindle – Raynea Pokorny
Lorelai Gibbons - Lexi Gonzalez

Questions?
call or text: Rachel Fox 308-219-0320

2025 ONE-ACT PERFORMANCE & COMPETITION DATES/TIMES

Mon, Nov 3rd - Ord Festival: perform 11:15am

Mon, Nov 10th - CCCV Fest at Central City HS: perform 2 pm

Wed, Nov 12th - Central Valley One-Act Festival: perform 8am @ Scotia

Mon, Nov 17th - Elm Creek Festival: perform 12:45pm

Tues, Nov 18th - Public Performance 7:30pm @ CV Aud

Wed, Nov 19th - Cougar One-Act Workshop: perform 8am @ CV Aud

Tues, Nov 25th - Conference at Central City: perform 3pm

Wed, Nov 26th - HS Performance at 1pm @ CV Auditorium

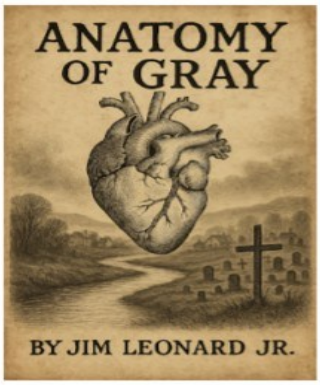
Wed , Dec 3rd - Districts at Leigh perform 11:15am

Wed , Dec 10th - State One-Act in Norfolk

2025 OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Reh 6:30pm	1 Reh 7am Off Script Reh 4:30pm	2 Reh 6:30pm	3	4 Reh 9am Costumes
5	6 Concession Wolbach	7	8 Reh 7am	9 Reh 6pm *June, Grey and Rebecca	10	11 Trailer of Terror North Loup 5-12am
12	13 Reh 6:30pm Costumes	14	15 Reh 7am	16	17	18
19	20 Reh 6:30pm Costumes	21	22 Reh 7am	23 Reh 6:30pm *ALL TECH	24 Reh 10 am *ALL TECH	25 Reh 8:00am *ALL TECH
26	27	28	29 Reh 7am	30	31	

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Rehearsals at the CV Aud unless noted

***make sure we are doing great things in the classroom too!**

Good Luck in all your things, Cougars!


CENTRAL VALLEY DRAMA
FUNDRAISER
TRAILER OF
TERROR
OCTOBER 11, 2025
NORTH LOUP COMMUNITY BUILDING
"CHILDREN'S HOUR"
5PM-6PM
6PM - MIDNIGHT
*THIS DISCOUNTED HOUR IS RESERVED/RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 12 AND UNDER. ACCOMPANYING ADULTS MUST PURCHASE TICKET.
TICKETS @ TRAILEROFTERROR.COM
NORTH LOUP RECREATION COMMITTEE
1ST ANNUAL BBQ COOK-OFF FROM 4-?
BBQ, MUSIC, DRINKS AND FAMILY FUN



FCCLA Scholarship Blood Drive

The FCCLA held its second scholarship drive on September 24, 2025. The Red Cross collected seven Power Red units and 31 whole blood units.

We are currently seven short of reaching 101 units for the $1500 scholarship, and 58 units for the $2500 scholarship monies. Please mark your calendars for February 24, 2026, our final drive this school term. Not only will you be saving 3 lives with your donation, you will also be contributing to scholarships for Central Valley students.

Thank you to all our donors, we cannot be successful unless we have you!

Milestone donors were:

- First Time Donors ~ Laretta Davis and Emmalee Leth
- 1 gallon ~ Jordan Beck
- 2 gallon ~ Pat Harvey
- 4 gallon ~ Patricia Kasper
- 5 gallon ~ Susan Graff
- 7 gallon ~ Brian Glenn



16th Annual Girls' Night Out

Girls' Night Out 2025 will be held in the CV Elementary Gym in Scotia from 6:00 - 8:30 pm on Saturday, November 15.

Tickets may be purchased from a CV 10th grader. Please contact Mrs. Alexander at the high school with questions.

It's a great way to get a head start on your Christmas shopping, buy locally, and support the Central Valley 10th grade class as they fundraise for their trip to Washington D.C.

Tickets includes one drink, dessert buffet, appetizers, your chance to win and have a fun evening with friends!!

See you there!



MUM SALE!

The FFA Mum Sale was a great success. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support!



"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

~ Bryant H. McGill

LIBRARY NEWS

Mrs. Angela Boyce
CV Media Specialist

Students at the elementary school have been reading to work toward their Accelerated Reading goal. Students in preschool through sixth grade visit the library every week. These students have practiced good book care, listened to stories, and checked out several books.

Peg Sundberg will be at Central Valley Elementary School on October 9. She is an author who writes about animals. She has written several stories about horses and dogs. Many of her stories are based on real events or her pets and animals she has rescued.

The Book Fair is October 13-17. The Book Fair has been a successful event for our school. Our Grandparents' Day trip to the book fair is coming up on October 13. This special event is a wonderful way to spend time with family and spread the love of reading. Students will visit the book fair during library class the week of the fair.

Please help your child keep track of their library books. It is best to return your library book before checking out another one.



Try this homework strategy

Research shows that middle schoolers prefer to do assignments away from home, with their peers around. And they like parents to be less involved. To give preferences a chance.

- **Check on achievement**. If your child is doing well, consider allowing a choice of study locations, within reason.
- **Let our child try studying** with a buddy. Monitor the sessions.
- **Praise responsible learning**. "I see you working hard on your assignments. That's why you make progress!"

Give your teen's brain a workout

Thinking is essential for learning, and the more students do it, the better. In school, your teen is expected to analyze and evaluate material, make connections and support conclusions. At home, ask your teen to:

- **Examine all sides** of an issue. Encourage your teen to develop arguments defending opposing viewpoints with equal dedication.
- **Double-check information**. Instead of assuming something online is true, have your teen verify the facts with credible sources.
- **Explain situations**, examples and problems in detail. To do this well, your teen will need to develop a strong vocabulary and an ability to express ideas clearly.
- **Identify bias** and assumptions. Is that website or social media post promoting an agenda? Does it present complete information, or cherry-pick facts to make a point? Is a "fact" really an idea based on an assumption. Stereotypes, for example, are usually unfair and misleading.

Stay positive when talking to your child about grades

If your child's grades need improvement, a supportive-rather than upset-response from you can make a difference. To encourage your elementary schooler's best effort:

1. **Talk to your child**. Ask questions like: What do you think is going on? Do you understand the lessons? Do you complete your work in class? What could you do differently?
2. **Talk to the teacher**. Is your child having any issues at school? What resources are available to help?
3. **Show your child** how to find or figure out answers instead of just giving up.



AVOID THE FLU



GET YOUR FLU SHOT AT:

CENTRAL VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

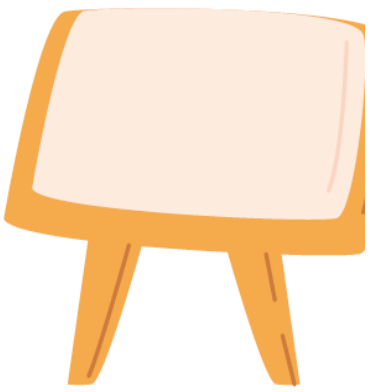
OCTOBER 23RD
WOLBACH: 8:30 - 9 A.M.
SCOTIA: 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.
GREELEY: 1-3 P.M.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US :

LOUP BASIN PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

CALL : 308-346-5795





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Helping Children Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School October 2025
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Learning from mistakes builds skills and self-confidence



Nobody's perfect, and like all kids, your child will sometimes make mistakes on tests or assignments. But that's no reason for either of you to get discouraged!

Research shows that when children are encouraged to learn from their errors, they do better in school. When they fix their mistakes, students learn that they can improve. And when they avoid repeating the errors, they learn they can get smarter—and that boosts their confidence about their ability to learn.

Begin any discussion about your child's schoolwork by pointing out what your elementary schooler did well. Then, to help your child concentrate on learning from mistakes:

- **Ask if your child understands** why an answer is wrong. If so, have your student correct it. If your child isn't sure, offer suggestions or encourage your child to ask the teacher for help.
- **Talk about ways** your child can avoid making that kind of mistake again—by reading carefully, slowing down, double-checking work, etc.
- **Celebrate progress.** Did your child make fewer mistakes on this test than the last one? Praise the improvement and talk about how learning from past mistakes likely made a difference.

Source: H.S. Schroder and others, "Neural evidence for enhanced attention to mistakes among school-aged children with a growth mindset," *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, Elsevier B.V.

Take your child on a virtual STEM trip

Digital media offers exciting ways to spark your child's interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. By taking virtual field trips online together, you can help your child experience:

- **Museum exhibits.** You and your child can take a self-guided tour of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (*www.naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour*). See 360-degree views of exhibits about dinosaurs, oceans, gems and minerals and more. Help your child read the exhibit text to learn more about the items on display.
- **National parks.** See the natural wonders of the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone without leaving home (*www.nps.gov/subjects/npscelebrates/find-your-virtual-park.htm*).
- **Mars.** Footage from NASA's Perseverance rover lets your elementary schooler explore the Jezero Crater on the red planet's surface (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOplTCgnJFQ*).

Give a responsibility lesson

Doing chores at home teaches children about responsibility—and that pays off in school. Chores can help your child:

- **Develop school skills,** such as following directions and timeliness.
- **Feel invested** in work and take pride in successful effort.
- **Learn basic life skills,** such as caring for clothes and keeping things clean.

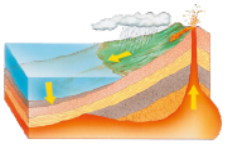
Ask your child to teach you



Having your child teach you can reinforce newly-learned information in your student's memory—and reveal gaps in comprehension. Try these strategies:

- **Ask your child** to explain an assignment, teach you a concept or read a passage from a school text aloud.
- **Let your child give you** a quiz about topics the class is studying. Ask questions, even if you understand everything.
- **Present a "problem"** you are having, and ask your child to help you solve it. What should you do first?

Graphics clarify meaning



Photos, maps, graphs and illustrations can give students a clearer understanding of a text's meaning. Encourage your child to study graphics before reading and ask:

- *What do the images show?*
- *What details are included?*
- *What might the material be about based on these graphics?*
- *Why might the author have included them?*

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
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Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School October 2025

Q&A How seriously should I take my child's negativity?

Q: My child keeps saying "I hate school." I'm not sure how to respond. I don't want to make a big thing out of a casual moan, but I don't want to ignore a real problem, either. What should I do?



A: You are right that not all children who say they hate school actually do. Sometimes, they are just looking for attention, or for a chance to delay doing schoolwork. However, since your child has said this more than once, something may be going on.

To figure out what it is:

- **Start a conversation.** At a time when you are both calm, say, "You've said you hate school a few times. What's making you feel this way?"
- **Ask follow-up questions** if your child can't identify the problem. Is your child struggling in a subject, or feeling lonely or overwhelmed?
- **Brainstorm together** about actions your child can take, such as increasing study time, joining a school activity or asking for help.
- **Point out that almost all** situations have pros as well as cons. Ask what your child likes about school.
- **Reach out to the teacher.** Explain how your child is feeling and ask for suggestions and support.

Parent Quiz Are you teaching decision-making?

Your child will make many decisions in school that can affect achievement: To tackle a challenge or give up, to give in to peer pressure or do what's right, etc. Are you teaching your child how to choose wisely? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

___**1. Do you tell** your child that all choices have consequences?

___**2. Do you include** your child in family decision-making discussions?

___**3. Do you set** an example by thinking through decisions aloud as you make them?

___**4. Do you encourage** your child to ask questions and gather relevant information before making a choice?

___**5. Do you offer** plenty of chances to make decisions and then expect your child to live with the outcomes?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are helping your child learn to think decisions through. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"You cannot make progress without making decisions."
—Jim Rohn

Optimize test outcomes

In addition to learning the subject matter before tests, your child will also benefit from learning effective test-taking strategies. Encourage your elementary schooler to:

- **Pay careful attention** to directions, and ask the teacher for clarification if they are confusing.
- **Answer all questions** and show all work. The teacher may award partial credit, and blank answers won't earn points.
- **Read all answer choices** on multiple choice questions and cross out those that can't be right before choosing an answer.
- **Use extra time to review** answers and check for careless mistakes.

Exercise is brain-building

Getting regular exercise is vital for your child's physical and mental health. And studies show it boosts children's alertness and memory, too. To add exercise to your child's life in fun ways:

- **Start family traditions** that include physical activity, such as taking a hike every weekend.
- **Perk up chores.** Play upbeat music or race to finish the job.
- **Include your child** in your own exercise activity, such as jogging or stretching.

Source: A. McPherson and others, "Physical activity, cognition and academic performance," *BMC Public Health.*

Help make schoolwork work

Schoolwork should be a priority for your child. If your student can't finish assignments because of other activities, adjust the schedule to allow your child enough time to focus on the schoolwork. Also remember that assignments are meant to help students practice skills. Your child's best effort, not perfect work, is the goal.



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MIDDLE SCHOOL
Helping Students Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School October 2025
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Spending time learning in nature supports success in school

When it comes to helping your middle schooler learn, the whole world is your classroom. And research shows that heading outdoors together for learning activities is an effective way to boost your child's motivation, school performance and general well-being.



Try these activities to help your child benefit from time in nature—and have fun at the same time:

- **Have a photo scavenger hunt.** Make a list of natural sights for your child to photograph, such as a cumulus cloud, a spider web, a reflection in water and a tree's shadow.
- **Make a map.** On a visit to a nature area, challenge your child to map it and include features like trails, streams, water crossings, fallen logs, etc.
- **Identify what you see.** Help your child use a field guide or an app like *Seek* to identify plants and animals. At night, identify planets, stars and constellations using a star chart or an app such as *Star Walk 2*.
- **Write poetry.** Have your child make a list of the sights, sounds and scents outdoors and use it to write a poem.
- **Put the sun to work.** Encourage your child to research how to make a sundial with sidewalk chalk. Or, look up how to turn a pizza box into a solar oven.

Source: J. Mann and others, "Getting Out of the Classroom and Into Nature: A Systematic Review of Nature-Specific Outdoor Learning on School Children's Learning and Development," *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Talk about student responsibilities

Not all middle schoolers know what being a responsible student looks like day to day. To help your child understand, discuss essential aspects of responsibility and suggest ways to put them into practice. Responsible students:

- **Fulfill duties.** They do what is necessary—even when they don't feel like it. For your child, that might mean getting ready for school on time, reading every day and turning in complete assignments when they are due.
- **Are self-reliant.** Most middle schoolers are too young to be totally self-reliant, but they can do many tasks for themselves. Your child could pack a lunch and keep track of gym shoes and other items needed for school.
- **Persist,** and stick to their goals. After a poor performance, your child can work on sharpening skills and try again.

Source: M.S. Josephson and others, *Parenting to Build Character in your Teen*, Boys Town Press.

Promote active thinking

Students get more out of schoolwork when they actively think about the material. Encourage your child to:



- **Think about** the differences between central ideas and details.
- **Consider six questions.** Figuring out *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* improves comprehension of many texts.
- **Summarize.** Putting material into their own words helps students remember it.

Encourage reading ahead

Arriving in classes on time is important for doing well, but your child should also arrive ready to learn. One way students can do this is by reading ahead. Skimming over the next day's lesson or chapter in advance will help your child be familiar with the topic. That can also help your student ask better questions and participate more in class.



Offer tips for clear writing

Your child may be more willing to accept suggestions for improving writing *before* starting work on a writing assignment than afterward. Encourage your child to focus on:

- **Staying on topic.** The fact that an idea is interesting doesn't make it relevant.
- **Organization.** Points should flow logically and be supported by details.
- **Word choice.** Words should add meaning, and not just take up space. Your child should also avoid repeating patterns of words from sentence to sentence.
- **Mechanics.** Remind your child to proofread work for correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL
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Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School October 2025

Q&A How do I help my child reject negative peer pressure?

Q: My child is has made friends with some classmates who think it's funny to be rude and make mean jokes about people. I'm afraid my child will feel pressure to behave this way, too. What should I do?



A: Start a conversation about friends with your child. Without mentioning any names, ask your child some general questions. For example, how does being with school friends make your child feel? What do they like to do? What values do they share? These friends may make your child feel funny and popular. Or, your child may be uncomfortable with their behavior, but not really know what to do about it.

To guide your middle schooler through this tricky area:

- **Steer clear of directly criticizing** your child's friends. It is likely to make your child feel the need to defend them.
- **Ask your child to consider behaviors.** "It sounds like Jamie's comment to the teacher was pretty rude. How did it make you feel?"
- **Discuss inappropriate humor.** Explain that no matter how many kids laugh, if a comment is rude or hurtful, it isn't funny—and it isn't OK.
- **Set boundaries.** If you have real misgivings about certain friends, supervise the time your child spends with them outside of school.

Parent Quiz Are you helping your child improve relationships with teachers?

Most students will encounter a tough teacher they don't like at one time or another in their school careers. Are you ready to help your child rise to this challenge? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

___**1. Will you tell** your child that learning to work with all kinds of people is necessary in life?

___**2. Will you review** your child's goals for the class together?

___**3. Will you help** your child brainstorm things to do to improve the situation, such as asking the teacher about strategies for learning the material?

___**4. Will you express** your confidence in your child's ability to work with the teacher and learn successfully?

___**5. Will you encourage** your child to talk with the counselor if problems persist?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you will help your child address issues constructively. For each* no, *try that idea.*

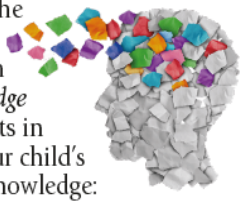
"What seem to us as bitter trials are often blessings in disguise."
—Oscar Wilde

Instill smart study habits

The way your child approaches schoolwork has a big impact on learning. To help your middle schooler develop effective habits:

- **Discuss project management.** Help your child think of all the steps involved in a project and schedule time to do each.
- **Sharpen awareness of time.** Have your child estimate how long an assignment will take, then use a timer to check.
- **Schedule a regular time** to do schoolwork when your child is most alert. Help your child develop a routine for beginning study time.
- **Show how to use a planner,** app or calendar to track assignments and test dates. Review it together once a week.

Build a base of knowledge



Students understand the meaning of what they read more easily when they have *prior knowledge* of the topic or concepts in the text. To add to your child's base of background knowledge:

- **Learn** about the world together. Visit historic sites, watch educational shows, etc.
- **Share** news articles with your middle schooler on a wide variety of topics.
- **Talk about things** you have done and seen in your own life.

Connect at a conference

Parent-teacher conferences can be helpful in middle school, and you can ask for one anytime. To make the most of these meetings:

- **Get your child's input** about concerns and questions before your conference.
- **Bring a written list** of topics you want to cover so you won't forget them.
- **Ask the teacher** for specific examples of issues and how to address them.

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HIGH SCHOOL
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Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School October 2025
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Help your teen establish habits for managing digital media use



With the digital world in their pockets, it is vital that teens develop healthy habits for managing their use of it. Too much recreational digital media use is linked to negative effects on well-being and academic achievement—and in a recent survey, nearly half of teens reported using their phones constantly.

Help your teen:

- **Understand that digital media** is designed to be hard to resist. A "like" on social media or reaching a new level in a game feels like a reward. Algorithms feed similar content to keep people passively scrolling. Fear of missing out plays a role, too—a lot can happen online in just minutes, spurring the desire to stay connected. Encourage your teen to resist this by turning off notifications and setting specific times to play games or check messages and posts.
- **Be purposeful about screen use.** Teens often reach for their phones because they feel bored, lonely or uncomfortable. Help your teen recognize these situations and choose healthier alternatives, like reading, talking to a friend or taking a walk. Teens also turn to digital media to procrastinate when it's time to do schoolwork, so have your teen set a timer when picking up a device. When it goes off, it's time to get to work.

Source: M. Faverio and O. Sidoti, "Teens, Social Media and Technology 2024," Pew Research Center; "Protecting Youth Mental Health," The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory.

Effort leads to success with math

Many students—and adults—are intimidated by math. But it is something all students can learn. The keys to success with math are effort and practice.

Encourage your teen to put these math strategies to work:

- **Attend every class.** Math learning builds on itself from day to day. Missing even one class can make it tough to keep up.
- **Ask questions right away** to clear up confusion. And chances are, if your teen is confused, others in the class are, too.
- **Take notes in class** and review them each evening. Then, your teen can write down questions that arise to ask in the next class.
- **Schedule enough time** to keep up with assignments and complete them by their due dates.
- **Practice solving problems** from prior assignments, quizzes and tests. This will keep the steps fresh in your teen's mind.
- **Form a study group.** What confuses your teen may be something a classmate can explain.

Make winding down easier

You've set a reasonable bedtime, but your teen says it's too early to be able to fall asleep. Encourage your teen to:



- **Relax before bed** with screen-free activities.
- **Avoid caffeine.**
- **Exercise daily—**but not right before bedtime.

Suggest thinking activities

School-based extracurricular activities offer fun ways for your teen to strengthen thinking skills and a connection to school. Suggest that your teen try:



- **Making music.** Student musicians think about order, rhythm and patterns.
- **Blogging** or podcasting for a school media outlet.
- **Debating.** Teens love to argue. In debate club, your teen can earn points doing it. No club? Perhaps your teen can start one.

The future is coming soon!

In every year of high school, there are things your student can do to prepare to graduate and move on to career training or college. Review this partial list together:

- **Ninth graders** can join school activities of interest and meet with a counselor to create a four-year plan of classes.
- **Tenth graders** can learn about careers of interest and the education required. They can take online tours of schools, and learn about sources of financial aid.
- **Eleventh graders** can check the requirements for admission to schools or programs of interest, and make sure that the classes they are taking meet them.
- **Twelfth graders** can chart application and financial aid deadlines, and make plans to meet them.

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HIGH SCHOOL
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Q&A How can I keep anxiety from getting in my teen's way?



Q: My teen feels a lot of anxiety about school. Worry about failing tests leads to late night cramming and then poor performance. Social anxiety is an issue, too. My teen has done other people's work on group projects—just to be liked. How can I help?

A: Anxiety is the most common mental health condition affecting teens today. And it is causing your student to make school life harder than it needs to be.

Talk to your teen about it. Say you are concerned and want to help. Then, to ease the stress that comes with anxiety:

- **Help your teen put things into perspective.** Not everything needs to be perfect. Discuss times when "good enough" really is just that.
- **Discuss study structure.** Encourage your teen to start studying for tests several days in advance and to take breaks after every hour of studying. Share that getting a good night's sleep helps consolidate information in students' minds, making it easier to recall information and do well.
- **Agree that your teen can use you as an excuse** for not taking on other people's responsibilities. "Sorry, I can't—my family needs my help this weekend."
- **Monitor your teen's behavior.** Anxious students sometimes self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. Seek professional help if needed.

Parent Quiz Are you helping your teen face challenges?

As the school year moves along, some students will run up against difficulty learning the material in one class—or several. Are you fostering your teen's ability to overcome obstacles? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

___**1. Do you discuss** how things are going at school regularly, and ask if your teen has any concerns about classes?

___**2. Do you tell** your teen to ask teachers as soon as possible about ways to get extra help?

___**3. Do you help** your teen establish positive study daily habits, such as sticking to a study time, setting priorities and reviewing notes?

___**4. Do you help** your teen find videos online that explain challenging concepts?

___**5. Do you consult** with your teen's teacher or counselor if the issues continue?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are making it easier for your teen to get back on track. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional."
—Roger Crawford

Teach behavior by example

To teach your teen to behave respectfully, demonstrate what respectful behavior looks like. In interactions with your teen:

- **Be fair.** Don't pass judgment or impose a consequence without learning all the facts. Listen carefully to your teen's side of the story.
- **Be constructive** when your teen makes a mistake. Talk about what to do instead.
- **Be reliable.** If you tell your teen you will do something, do it.
- **Be accountable.** Apologize for your errors, and explain what you will do to avoid them in the future.

Keep up the good work!



Anti-vaping efforts by schools and families have led to a recent decline in e-cigarette use by teens. But many high school students are still active users. Make sure your teen knows that:

- **Most vapes contain nicotine**—sometimes more than in cigarettes—which is addictive and especially harmful to teens' developing brains.
- **Vaping is against your rules.** Role-play ways to say *no*.

Source: A. Jamal and others, "Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students—National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2024," CDC.

Cheating is always wrong

Technology has made cheating easier, and many students don't view it as a serious offense—but it is. Explain to your teen that cheaters are stealing work and lying by saying it is their own (even if it was produced by artificial intelligence). They also cheat themselves of the knowledge they would gain by learning the material. Cheaters risk severe penalties—including failing the class.

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