

READING HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Have your child read aloud to you every night.
- Choose a quiet place, free from distractions, for your child to do his nightly reading assignments.
- As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as *cat*, *pat*, *hat*.
- When your child reads aloud to you and makes a mistake, point out the words she has missed and help her to read the word correctly.
- After your child has stopped to correct a word he has read, have him go back and reread the entire sentence from the beginning to make sure he understands what the sentence is saying.
- Ask your child to tell you in her own words what happened in a story.
- To check your child's understanding of what he is reading, occasionally pause and ask your child questions about the characters and events in the story.
- Ask your child why she thinks a character acted in a certain way and ask your child to support her answer with information from the story.
- Before getting to the end of a story, ask your child what he thinks will happen next and why.

MATH HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Encourage your child to use a daily math assignment book.
- Follow the progress your child is making in math. Check with your child daily about his homework.
- If you don't understand your child's math assignments, engage in frequent communication with his or her teacher.
- If your child is experiencing problems in math, contact the teacher to learn whether he or she is working at grade level and what can be done at home to help improve academic progress.
- Request that your child's teacher schedule after-school math tutoring sessions if your child really needs help.
- Advocate with the principal for the use of research-based peer tutoring programs for math. These tutoring programs have proven results, and students really enjoy them.
- Use household chores as opportunities for reinforcing math learning such as cooking and repair activities.
- Try to be aware of how your child is being taught math, and don't teach strategies and shortcuts that conflict with the approach the teacher is using. Check in with the teacher and ask what you can do to help. Ask the teacher about online resources that you can use with your child at home.

- At the beginning of the year, ask your child's teacher for a list of suggestions that will enable you to help your child with math homework.

(From the United States Department of Education)

Preparing Your Child For School

Helping Your Child Learn Science

Children ask their parents hundreds of questions such as "Why is the sky blue?" and "What makes sound possible?" Curiosity is natural for children, but they need help making sense of what they see and relating observations to their existing knowledge. Parents can help their children turn curiosity into an understanding of science by encouraging their children to ask questions, make predictions, and explore in a safe environment. This support helps children become successful students and scientific thinkers.

Today's children are growing up in an increasingly technological society that requires far more advanced instruction in science and technology than their parents received. The good news is that parents do not have to be scientists or have college degrees to help their children learn science. It is far more important for parents to nurture their children's natural curiosity and take time to observe and learn together.

All parents want their children to be successful. The No Child Left Behind Act, the national effort to improve education, recognizes that it is vital for children to master the core academic subjects like science if they are to perform to the highest standards of achievement. This brochure is based on the Helping Your Child series of publications for parents and families, which is designed to provide parents with the latest research and practical information to help them support their children and ensure their children's success in school and in life.

ACTIVITY

Children learn by doing. They try new ideas and challenge old ones. But learning does not just happen in school. You can help your child learn by providing him or her with safe, interesting learning experiences in a supportive atmosphere. Below is an example of such an activity.

Float or sink?

(kindergarten-first grade)

Learning to make and test predictions is a good first step toward formulating and testing hypotheses.

What you need:

- Block of solid wood,
- Plastic bottle cap,
- Two pieces of heavy-duty aluminum foil, and
- Sink filled with water.

What to do:

- Tell your child to hold the wooden block in one hand and the plastic cap in the other hand. Ask him or her to answer the following questions:
 - Which item feels heavier?
 - Do you think the wooden block will float or sink? How about the plastic cap?
- Have your child test his or her predictions by placing the wooden block and cap on the water. What happens? Next, have your child hold both items under water and gently release them. What happens now?
- Give your child a piece of aluminum foil. Tell your child to squeeze it into a ball and drop it in the water. Does it float or sink? Give your child another piece of foil. Help him or her shape it into a boat. Have your child carefully place it on top of the water. Does the foil float now?

The foil ball sinks because it is squeezed into a small shape and only a small amount of water is trying to hold up its weight. When the foil is spread out, it floats because the weight is supported by a lot more water.

(Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education)