

# Parent Newsletter

For Title I Families

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## Review the school year with your child and set new goals

It's nearing the end of a busy school year. Your child has read new books and he's mastered new skills. Now is the perfect time to talk about everything he's learned.

Make time to have a chat about school. You could even plan something special, such as going out for a treat or making a favorite meal together. During your talk:

- **Take a look back.** What was your child's favorite school project this year? In what subject did he improve the most? Which book that the class read was his favorite? What goals did he accomplish?  
Help your child see the ways he has grown. "You worked hard to master division this year. You can do challenging things when you put your mind to it!"
- **Take a look forward.** What is your child looking forward to this summer? What is he excited about for next year? Is there a subject or an area he'd like to improve in next year? Are there books he would like to read? Encourage him to make a list of everything he hopes to accomplish in the months to come.
- **Discuss how learning** doesn't stop at the end of the school year. One of the great things about the summer is that it offers the opportunity to learn new things. Help your child think about something he'd like to learn. Would he like to learn a new sport? Would he like to teach himself how to paint? Would he like to learn a new language? Together, make a plan to help him achieve his learning goal.

## Encourage responsibility by helping your child enjoy chores

How do you get your child to do chores willingly? Most elementary-age children love to make a plan and then carry it out. So first, involve your child in brainstorming what needs to be done and when.

Then:

- **Give your child a choice.** Together, make a list of age-appropriate chores, such as taking out the trash, sweeping, folding laundry, feeding a pet and helping with yard work. Let your child choose which ones he'd like to do.
- **Schedule a family work time** when everyone has a chore to do.
- **Be a good model.** Dive into chores yourself. Avoid complaining. Instead, talk about how good it feels when you finish a chore.
- **Be encouraging.** Say, "Here's the broom so you can help! Let's do this together."
- **Make a game of it.** Set a timer and see if your child can beat the clock. Turn on some music and work to the rhythm of the beat.
- **Rotate chores** each week, so no one feels stuck doing a chore he doesn't like. Put chores on slips of paper and let family members draw from a bowl.
- **Use a chore chart.** Let your child place a star next to chores when he completes them.
- **Curb criticism.** Don't immediately say what your child did wrong. Gently show him what he could do to improve, but don't redo his work.
- **Follow chores with fun.** Have a basket of index cards listing fun stuff to do after finishing chores.

## Experiment with science this summer!

Keep your budding scientist experimenting with these clever activities. They're kid-friendly, safe, affordable and really, really cool!

Together, try these experiments:

- **Vinegar volcano.** Grab a cup or bowl, a box of baking soda, and some plain vinegar. (Conduct this experiment outside or in the kitchen sink.) Add a little bit of the baking soda to the cup, pour in some vinegar, and voilà! Chemistry in action! The fizzy rush happens because the baking soda—a base—reacts with the vinegar—an acid.
- **Raw or cooked?** Take two eggs—one raw and the other hardboiled—and try to figure out which is which. (Nope, you can't crack them.) How to do it? Put each egg on its side on a flat surface, and then spin it. The raw egg will wobble, while the hardboiled egg will spin smoothly. Why? The yolk and white in the raw egg are liquid, so they shift when moved. This affects the egg's center of gravity and makes it wobbly.
- **The sinking/floating orange.** Fill a sink with water and drop in a whole orange. It floats, doesn't it? Now peel the orange and drop it in again. It sinks, right? That's because the peel is full of tiny air pockets that make the fruit less dense (and able to float). Strip away those air pockets, and suddenly the orange is much denser. Hence, its trip to the bottom of the sink!

## Three activities will keep your child learning all summer long



Your child is as ripe for learning during the summer as she is throughout the rest of the year. So don't miss out on chances to boost her smarts during the warmer months. If you make them fun, she'll never

suspect she's learning!

Here are three brain-building activities to enjoy this summer:

1. **Plant a garden.** Involve your child in the entire process. She'll have a real-world chance to use her reasoning and math skills. "We have a 10-foot by 4-foot plot in the yard. If tomatoes need to be planted at least two feet apart, how many should we buy? What else should we plant?"
2. **Host a family game night.** Set aside one evening each week to play board games together. Classics like Scrabble and Boggle are good for keeping language skills sharp. And more complex games like Monopoly and chess require your child to use reason and think critically.
3. **Participate in a library program.** Summer reading programs are terrific, but don't stop there. Many libraries offer science and math activities, too. Not only are they great for learning, they'll also help your child meet like-minded new friends.