



Parent Newsletter

For Title I Families

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Boost reading comprehension and writing skills with summaries

Homework in elementary school often involves reading something—a chapter in a textbook or a few pages in a library book. One way to make sure your child understands what she has read is to have her write a summary.

One night, after your child has finished her homework, tell her you'd like to find out what she's learned and what she's read about. Ask her to write down the most important points in her own words.

Your child may need to go back and read the material again. When she knows she has to write about it, she'll read more carefully. She'll think more as she reads.

After your child writes her summary, give her this set of questions to help her write more complete summaries in the future:

- **Who** are the characters or people involved? Suggest that she write about each person and what's important about each one.
- **What** did the characters do? Your child should write down the plot in her own words.
- **Where** did the story take place? Have your child describe the setting in some detail.
- **When** did the events take place? Your child should give the time span of the action.
- **Why** did things occur as they did? Have her explain why the characters behaved the way they did.

Once your child gets the hang of writing summaries after she reads school material, she will soon reap the benefits. Not only will she have a much better understanding of what she reads, she will improve her writing skills as well!

Show your child how to give meaningful gifts this season

Many people exchange gifts over the holiday season. While children love receiving gifts, they also enjoy being able to give them.

Does your child know that the most meaningful gifts don't have to cost money? They simply take time and come straight from the heart.

Share these thoughtful gift ideas with your child. She could:

- **Offer to do chores** for an elderly neighbor.
- **Record herself** reading a book for a younger sibling to listen to while reading.
- **Make a list**, such as "My 10 Best Memories With Grandpa."
- **Play a favorite game** with a family member or a neighbor who is homebound.
- **Record an audio** or video message for a loved one who lives far away.
- **Create a playlist** with a bunch of her favorite songs to share.
- **Bake cookies** and deliver them to someone who may not receive many homemade gifts.
- **Create a calendar** for 2019 and decorate it with personalized artwork, one drawing for each month.
- **Make a gift certificate** good for two hours of help around the house.
- **Create a beautiful picture** or poem about a special person.

Persistence is key to success in school and in life

It's wonderful for students to be talented and smart, but educators know it's just as important for them to be persistent. At one time or another everyone faces a challenging task or a heartbreaking setback. The key is to remind children to keep trying until they are successful. Pushing forward—even when it's tough—is a key to success in school and in life.

To promote persistence in your child:

- **Talk about it.** How has persistence already helped your child? Maybe he learned to ride a bike or play an instrument. What new challenge can he tackle now?
- **Break big goals into small parts.** If your child is determined to raise his grade in English, support him by discussing steps and helping him develop a reasonable plan.
- **Offer encouragement.** When your child is working on something challenging, say things like:
 - *I know you can do this.*
 - *I bet you'll figure it out.*
 - *You're making great progress. Keep at it. You'll get it.*
 - *It will get better. You'll get the hang of it.*
 - *If it doesn't work that way, try another way.*
- **Focus on the process.** Sure, it feels great to see an A on a report card, but it also feels great to do well on a test after studying hard. Even better, it feels great to learn! Talk with your child about his accomplishments and what makes each of them worthwhile.

Promote kindness and teach your child to take action

Children aren't always kind to one another. They pick on other kids. They say mean things behind people's backs.

But your child doesn't have to accept that unkindness as the norm. Instead, you can teach your child a simple rule: Do something about it. If your child witnesses a classmate being treated unkindly or left out, help her think through actions she could take. She could:



- **Start a conversation** with the classmate about a book she has read or a school assignment.
- **Ask the classmate** to sit with her at lunch.
- **Compliment the classmate** on something. "Your handwriting is neat," or "I like that shirt."
- **Smile at the classmate.** Sometimes all it takes is a simple smile to make someone's day. Challenge your child to do at least one kind thing for a classmate each week and ask her to report on what she did—and how it made her feel. As your child takes these actions, she will learn many lessons. She will learn how good it feels to do something positive to help another person. Even more importantly, she will learn that when she sees something wrong, she doesn't have to accept it. Instead, she has the power to make a difference.