

Parent Newsletter

For Title I Families

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Review the school year and make necessary adjustments

It's the beginning of a new calendar year—and nearly the halfway point in the school year. So it's a good time to take stock of your child's habits and make needed adjustments.

Talk with your child about how she thinks the school year is going. If the two of you had set learning goals at the start of the year, review those goals now. Is she making progress? How can she make the rest of the school year even better?

Then, help your child make some resolutions. Here are three to consider:

1. **Recommit to routines.** Has your child's bedtime begun to slip? Are mornings more rushed? Is her regular study time now not quite so regular? Sleep and study routines make life easier—and help kids do better in school.
2. **Spend more time reading.** There is no skill that will help your child more in school. And reading ability, like other skills, gets better with practice. Encourage your child to read every day. Let her read about anything, from sports to her favorite movie character.
3. **Spend less time on screen media.** Talk about the amount of time your child spends in front of screens. How much time does she spend watching shows and movies? Playing online games? Browsing the internet? Set and enforce limits.

Try positive discipline for positive results

The discipline strategies you use at home can increase your child's likelihood of succeeding in school. And experts agree that the best discipline methods are positive, not harsh. Studies have shown that physical punishments may actually increase children's risk for mental health problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents:

- **Develop loving, supportive relationships** with their kids. This gives children a strong foundation and motivates them to behave well. When kids feel loved and respected by their parents, they are more likely to cooperate at home and at school.
- **Focus on the positive.** Compliment what your child does right—and be specific. "You started your homework without my reminding you. Great job!"
- **Use time-outs and other non-physical consequences** when needed. A child who speaks disrespectfully may need some time alone in her room. A child who puts off homework may miss other fun activities.
- **Let natural consequences** do the work. If your child forgets to bring her homework to school again, don't bring it to school for her. Instead, allow her to get a zero. She will be more likely to remember her homework tomorrow!

Seven strategies can make your family read-aloud time a success

Some parents stop reading aloud as soon as their children learn to read. But reading aloud can continue to be fun, and it builds reading skills, too.

To make your read-aloud time successful:

1. **Do it every day.** When you read aloud daily, you demonstrate that reading time is much too important to miss.
2. **Pick a regular time.** When reading is already part of your daily routine, you won't have to think about trying to fit it into a hectic day. Choose a time when your child will be most receptive, such as after playing outside or before bed.
3. **Read the book first**—before you read it aloud. Reading aloud is performing. You'll do a better job if you're familiar with what you're going to read. Previewing a book may also keep you from getting bogged down in a book that neither you nor your child enjoys.
4. **Read books you like.** If you like a book, odds are your child will, too. Start by reading books you enjoyed as a child. Often, your enjoyment will be contagious!
5. **Accentuate the first line.** The first line of any good story will grab the reader's attention. Your reading should make your child want to sit up and listen.
6. **Use facial expressions.** Widen your eyes to show surprise. Squint a bit to show you're thinking.
7. **Leave your child wanting more.** Stop your day's reading at a point where you are both eager to hear what happens next.

Doing chores helps kids develop important values and skills

In the past, children had to do their chores. With everyone doing their part, the family was able to survive.

Today's kids don't always have family responsibilities. And that's too bad. There are significant benefits for children who do chores—and those benefits also carry over into school.



Chores help children:

- **Become “stakeholders.”** When your child does some of the tasks that keep the household running, he makes a real investment in your home. A child who swept out the front hall is less likely to walk through it in muddy soccer cleats.
- **Develop skills.** Each time you give your child a new chore, he learns how to do the job and also learns skills he'll use throughout his life.
- **Understand** that the world doesn't revolve around them. We all know people who expect others to clean up the messes they make. Your child won't grow up to become one of those people.
- **Learn to work well with others.** If you have more than one child, ask them to do a chore together. Or, encourage them to create a weekly chore chart and alternate responsibilities.
- **Develop self-discipline.** There will be lots of things throughout your child's life that he'll need to do, even though he won't want to.
- **Develop a sense of pride.** If your child is responsible for doing his laundry, having a stack of clean shirts is an accomplishment. He can take pride in what he has done.
- **See that they are an important part** of the family. Your child will know he is helping to keep your home running smoothly.