

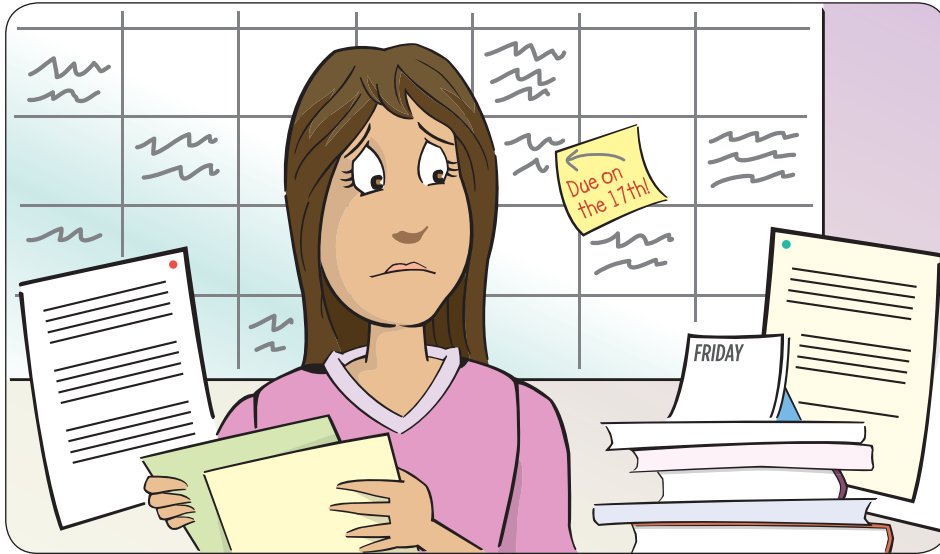
Elementary School

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Parents®

Shelton Youth Service Bureau

make the difference!



Support your child as the end of the school year approaches

By May, some kids act like summer vacation has already started. They “forget” their homework. They stop giving their best effort and start avoiding anything that seems difficult or challenging.

But the school year isn’t over yet. Kids need to stay focused on learning until the last day of school. Here’s how to help your child:

- **Review old homework papers,** quizzes and tests. Use them to talk with your child about how much she has learned this year. Having these papers close at hand will also be useful as she studies for end-of-year tests!
- **Shape year-end learning** around your child’s interests. If she has one more book report due,

suggest she choose a book on a topic she loves. If she has a social studies project, she should focus on something she is interested in learning about.

- **Help your child manage** her end-of-year projects. Long-range assignments can be overwhelming. So, in addition to helping your child break a big project down into smaller steps, encourage her to apply this rule of thumb: Move the deadline for finishing any big project earlier by two days. If a report is due on Wednesday, your child should plan to get it finished by Monday. That way, she’ll have a cushion if (OK, *when*) something comes up!

Source: D. Goldberg, *The Organized Student*, Fireside Books.

Fun learning ideas for the month of May



There’s more to May than Mother’s Day, Memorial Day and Victoria Day.

Here are some other holidays that offer fun learning opportunities for you and your child:

- **May 1**—Mother Goose Day. Read favorite Mother Goose rhymes with your child.
- **May 4**—National Weather Observers Day. Go outside and observe the clouds with your child. Or make a collage of weather-related pictures cut from magazines.
- **May 18**—International Museum Day. Talk with your child about the importance of museums. Make plans to visit one online or in person.
- **May 20**—Armed Forces Day. Have your child write a letter or draw a picture to thank someone for their military service.
- **May 21**—On this day in 1881, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross. Head to the library or the internet to learn more about this compassionate leader of charitable causes.

Help your child maintain a love of learning all summer long



Even if your child complains about school, chances are he likes learning. Here are some ways to maintain

your child's interest in learning all summer long:

- **Make time to talk.** Studies have shown that kids whose families have frequent discussions about many subjects tend to have higher IQs.
- **Build on your child's interests.** For example, if your child loves playing the guitar, read books about the instrument, go to a free concert, or encourage him to write to a famous guitarist.
- **Try a new activity** you can do with your child, such as a sport. Choose something he's excited about.

Show how interested you are in learning and improving—and that you never give up.

- **Become tourists** in your own town. Try to see your town through fresh eyes. Check out an exhibit at a local museum or library. Explore a different trail at a local park.
- **Set an example** by learning more about the things you love. If you enjoy cooking, take a cooking class, check out a cookbook at the library or try a new recipe. Invite your child to help.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

Teach your dawdling child to be more responsible with time



It's a busy morning. You need to leave the house on time but your child seems to be set on super-slow-motion.

Adults live in a time-oriented world. You check the time on your watch. You glance at the clock on your phone to be sure you're at work on time. But kids? Their views of time seem to be a lot more flexible.

To help your child become more responsible with time:

- **Be a good role model.** When you're in a mad dash to get out the door, you're not showing your child the importance of getting ready early.
- **Build in routines that help.** Take five minutes in the evening to prepare for the next day. Create a “launch pad” by your door where your child can put all those things (backpack, gym shoes, permission slips) that she will need.
- **Don't nag.** You'll make your child anxious—but you probably won't make her hurry up. Instead, look for concrete actions that will actually make a difference. Help her put on her coat. Pick up her backpack and hand it to her.
- **Make it a game.** Most kids love competition. So challenge your child to put on her shoes before you finish counting to 20.
- **Follow a predictable schedule** as much as possible. It's the best way to help your child develop a sense of time. Say, “In five minutes, it will be time for breakfast.” Or, “After dinner, we'll read a story.”

Are you helping your child prepare for year-end tests?



The end of the year often means lots of tests for students. Are you preparing your child to do her best on them?

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

___ 1. **Do you write down test dates** on your family calendar and avoid planning big activities on the day before a test?

___ 2. **Do you encourage** your child to study a little each day instead of cramming the night before a test? Research shows this is the best way to learn and remember facts.

___ 3. **Do you make sure** your child gets a good night's sleep and eats a healthy breakfast before a big test?

___ 4. **Do you encourage** your child to wear comfortable clothing and dress in layers on test days?

___ 5. **Do you tell your child** that you have confidence in her and know she will give her best effort?

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you're giving your child the support she needs to do her best on tests. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

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Everyday tasks can help your child strengthen math skills



Most people read every day. They probably do math, too, although they may not realize it. Math is a natural part of life, and it's important to include your child in daily math activities.

With your child, you can:

- **Take a trip.** Before leaving, measure the air pressure in your car or bike tires. Also calculate how many miles you'll go. If you are driving, how much gas will you use? As you travel, say a number between 1 and 10. Who can find a license plate with numbers that add up to the number you called out?
- **Follow recipes.** When preparing meals, let your child help with weighing and measuring. Discuss sizes, shapes and fractions. Find answers to questions such as, "How could we double this recipe?" and "When we add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, what do we get?"
- **Go shopping.** Use a calculator to keep a running tally of purchases. Use coupons to inspire math problems. "If we use this coupon, will the item cost less than other brands?" "Which of these items is really the best deal per pound?"
- **Save money.** Help your child choose a goal, such as saving for a book. Make a chart to help. How much does she need to save each week? How long will it take her to reach the total? Keep track of how well she is doing. Then have fun shopping together!
- **Play games.** There are lots of fun math games you can play together. Try dominoes, Uno and Connect 4.

How to handle situations that often result in school absences



Your child woke up late and can't get going. He has a big test today and forgot to study for it last night.

Things like this happen all the time. And parents sometimes wonder if missing a day of school here and there is really a big deal.

The answer is *yes*. Attending school regularly is important—right up to the very last day.

Here are a few of the top reasons kids miss school and some ways to prevent those absences:

1. **Your child feels sick.** If he doesn't have a fever and isn't showing signs of illness (vomiting, coughing, diarrhea), he can probably go to school. If you do keep him home, don't make it a vacation. A child who is too sick to go to school is too sick to watch TV, text friends or play on the computer.
2. **Your child won't get up.** Make his bedtime earlier. Help him get ready for school the night before.
3. **He isn't prepared.** Forgetting to study for a test and running out of time to complete a project are not valid excuses for missing school. Expect your child to plan ahead and let him face the consequences when he doesn't.
4. **Your child is worried.** Talk with him. Is he struggling in a class? Is a classmate bothering him at school? Talk with the teacher.

Q: My son is starting middle school next year. He won't be attending the same school as most of his friends. He's very anxious about this move. What can I do over the summer to help him make the adjustment?

Questions & Answers

A: Middle school is a really big adjustment for any child. Instead of having one teacher, your son will have several. Instead of staying in one classroom, he will have to move from room to room. Instead of being in the highest grade level in the school, he will now be in the lowest.

It is completely normal for your son to feel anxious about this transition. To help him feel a little more confident:

- **Sign up for a tour.** See if he can take a tour while classes are in session. Just walking around the building and seeing students will give your child a better idea of what to expect (and even what to wear) on his first day.
- **Buy a combination lock** and have him practice opening it. Lockers are a big source of anxiety for many kids. Even if your child has to learn a new combination when school starts, he'll feel confident that he can open and close his locker.
- **Remind him** that he won't be the only new kid in his school. Everyone will be starting fresh. Assure him that he'll still have opportunities to see his old friends, even if they're at a different school.
- **Check out school activities.** If your son can get started on a team or in the band over the summer, he'll make some new friends and start school knowing some kids.

It Matters: Summer Learning

Treat reading as an enjoyable summer activity!



To keep your child reading over the summer, treat it like any other summer activity.

Let it be something he can do whenever he feels like it. Show him that reading can be fun. And never make summer reading feel like homework.

If you help your child make the connection between books and the simpler pleasures of childhood, his desire to read may last a lifetime.

To take a summer approach to reading:

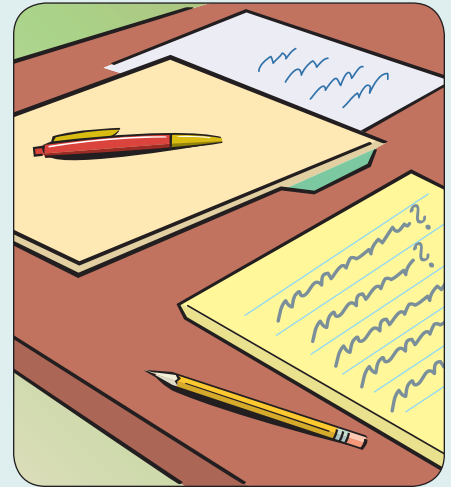
- **Suggest that your child** reread a favorite book. Then find another book by the same author. Or find one on the same topic.
- **Connect books** with summer activities—sports books for a summer league player, for instance, or camping books for a camper.
- **Let your child** stay up past bedtime when a book is just too good to put down.
- **Start your child** on a series of fiction or thriller books. These page-turners hook kids into a reading habit.
- **Encourage a change** of venue. Read books at the beach or pool, in a tent or at the park.
- **Watch movies**, videos and plays based on children's books. Then read the book together and compare it with what you saw.
- **Share your favorite books** and magazines with your child.
- **Encourage your child** to retell stories or parts of stories from the books he reads.

Inspire journal writing this summer with creative ideas

The summer is a great time for your child to begin writing in a journal. All he needs is an empty notebook and a few ideas to get started.

Suggest that he keep:

- **A research log.** Have your child pick a subject he loves, such as skateboarding. Over the summer, he can research and write about it. What are some cool skateboard tricks? How long are skateboards? Who holds records for skateboarding?
- **A travel log.** Each time he goes somewhere special—whether it's far away or close to home—he can keep a record by taking pictures, drawing or writing notes. What did he see? Who did he meet? What did he think about what he saw?
- **An observation log.** Suggest that your child observe something over a period of time, such as a summer vegetable as it grows. Or he can pick something to describe in great detail, such as a bug or an animal.



Don't let your child waste the summer in front of a screen



The lazy days of summer can lead to lazy hours in front of the TV, computer or game system. But experts say it's important to limit recreational screen time.

Encourage your child to:

- **Be the entertainment.** Instead of watching a show, your child can create one! Have her choose an exciting story line and act it out with friends or stuffed animals.
- **Play classic games.** Fill a bucket with traditional summer toys, including sidewalk chalk, balls, bubble stuff and water sprayers. When the weather is right, have your child take it outside for hours of fun.
- **Plan a treasure hunt.** Hide lots of clues, with each one leading to the next. This can be done outside or inside. The last clue should lead to a treasure, such as a yummy snack or a fun activity.
- **Get some exercise.** Go for a walk or ride bikes together. Toss or kick a ball around. Play a game of hopscotch on the sidewalk.