



# SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

## School newsletter inserts for your consideration

### ELEMENTARY

#### ARTS EDUCATION: WHY IT MATTERS

The arts are an integral part of our children's lives. They provide important ways of making our lives meaningful. From an early age, children naturally immerse themselves in drama, dance, music, the visual arts, literary arts and media: to play, learn, communicate, celebrate and find out who they are. The arts both express and engage the human spirit in profound and powerful ways. They give our children and youth a sense of the world outside themselves, uniquely touching the timelessness of history and the limitlessness of the universe while helping them celebrate community. The arts are an integral part of Canadian society.

*National Symposium on Arts Education, 2004*

The Arts prepare children for the future, claims the internationally recognized educator, Sir Ken Robinson. Although we cannot know the future, its challenges will best be met by thinkers who are critical, creative and cooperative. The Arts provide one way of nurturing this in our children, for the Arts encourage independence and collaboration, and are unique in their power to communicate across barriers of language and culture.

We all benefit from the work artists do, whether we're at a movie, flipping through magazines at the dentist's office, shopping for stylish clothes, or browsing for a birthday card for a friend. The Arts build our world. They illuminate the world as it is and inspire us to imagine the world as it could be. Arts education helps children bring beauty to life.

#### Simple Steps: Ideas for Bringing the Arts Home

In addition to supporting a strong arts program in your child's school, you can help your child enjoy the arts outside of school by participating together at home, checking out resources online, or taking advantage of your community's cultural resources.

- Enjoy the arts together. Sing, play music, read a book, act out a story, dance, or draw with your child at home. Talk about the sounds, colours, lights, and movement you observe around you.
- Books! Help your child feel the rhythm in poems. "Read" the illustrations in picture books, as well as the text and ask questions that draw out ideas and opinions. Read books about the arts: knowing what others have done in an art form can be a source of inspiration. Also check out books that tell stories about specific visual artists, dancers, actors, and musicians. This will help them feel like they "know" various artists.
- Practice photography. Try taking pictures from different angles, different distances, and with the important objects somewhere other than in the centre. Work together on creating a family photo album, scrapbook, collage, or digital montage from pictures of family events, holidays or about a theme.
- Make videos together. Try organizing the shots ahead of time to tell a story as in filmmaking.

- Have an accessible collection of materials to encourage creativity in the arts: a variety of art tools and materials, old clothes for drama activities, found objects for rhythm and percussion. Art supplies make great gifts, too!
- Create a family art gallery or schedule an evening for family performances.
  - Visit web sites for simple activities to do at home with children of all ages and teens. Here are a few sites worth investigating:
  - [www.googleartproject.com](http://www.googleartproject.com) Explore museums from around the world, view hundreds of artworks at incredible zoom levels, and even create and share your own collection of masterpieces.
  - [www.incredibox.fr](http://www.incredibox.fr) Make your own beatbox band...Pump it up and chill!
  - <http://www.summeractivitiesforkids.co.uk/toddlers-creative-movement-home.html> Creative movement helps children learn about the space around them and encourages their innate creativity.
  - <http://www.artsconnected.org/toolkit/index.html> Explore the tools that artists use to build works of art.
- Attend local arts events like museum exhibits, plays, or outdoor concerts. Most communities have arts festivals, craft fairs, and seasonal celebrations that feature music and dancing.
- Attend presentations in the arts at your local schools, colleges, and universities, as well as those at professional venues to help your child experience excellence in the arts.
- Learn and sing through choirs, often found at no cost through local churches, houses of worship, and community groups. Visit community art galleries and museums to see many different types of art. Or simply browse through an art store just so your child can see a variety of artistic expression.

Some information obtained from: [www.ptotoday.com/sfn/arts.html](http://www.ptotoday.com/sfn/arts.html);  
[www.artsusa.org/public\\_awareness/get\\_involved/004.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/public_awareness/get_involved/004.asp)  
<http://www.americansforthearts.org>

## GOOD FIT BOOKS

Reading “Good Fit” books is absolutely imperative if students are to progress as readers.

Children must spend the majority of their independent reading time engaged in books which they can decode and comprehend at very high levels. In her book, *Reading Essentials*, Regie Routman states that reading books which are too difficult does not help children, but in fact has an adverse affect on their growth and development as readers (page 93).

There is a very simple way to help your child choose good fit books. It is called IPICK. IPICK is an acronym that stands for: I choose books to read, Purpose, Interest, Comprehend, and Know the words.

We always have a PURPOSE when we choose a book. Whether it's to learn about a certain topic, to continue with a beloved series, to try a new genre, to continue with works by a favorite author, or a variety of other reasons, the purpose is a key element in selecting a “good fit” book.

It is important that INTEREST not be overlooked when helping students learn to select books. Interest is crucial if we are going to get students to read the volume of material necessary to move them from survival readers to life-long readers who choose to read for information and pleasure. When we look at our own lives as readers, we realize that we seldom stick with books we are not interested in. Our motivation wanes, our minds wander, and we inevitably end up abandoning the text.

The last two things to consider when choosing a good fit book are: COMPREHEND what we are reading and KNOW most of the words. If I have a book that meets my purpose and interest, but I either can't read it or I can't understand the words...it isn't a “good fit” book for me.

**Here are some easy steps that you and your child can follow in order to choose “good fit” books:**

1. Have your child choose a book. This is the first I in IPICK which means “I choose books to read”.
2. Ask your child, “What is your purpose for choosing this book?” You may also want to ask, “Is it for fun or to learn something?” This is the P in IPICK which means purpose.
3. Ask your child, “Is this a book you are interested in?” This is the second I, which means interest.
4. Have your child read a page of the book. After your child reads the page, ask your child, “Who did you read about and what did they do?”. This is the C in IPICK which stands for Comprehend. If it is a good fit book your child should be able to answer your question.
5. Have your child read another page (or use the same page) and ask, “Did you know the words?” This is the K in IPICK which stands for know the words. Your child should know all or almost all of the words in order for it to be a “good fit” book.

This ongoing dialogue will help children understand that books have to fit in order for us to be successful and have fun while reading. This will lead to children who are able to select books with a purpose, which they are interested in, that they can read and understand. They will go from being “pretend” readers to readers who don't want to stop reading!

Adapted from Alicia Darby ©www.thedailycafe.com

## HOW PARENTS CAN ENCOURAGE TWEENS TO READ

**By: Reading Is Fundamental (2008)**

You know that reading is important and you want to make sure that your tween grows into adulthood with all the skills he or she needs to succeed. The following list offers suggestions for encouraging your tweens to read.

1. **Set an example.** Let your kids see you reading for pleasure.
2. **Furnish your home with a variety of reading materials.** Leave books, magazines, and newspapers around. Check to see what disappears for a clue to what interests your tween.
3. **Give tweens an opportunity to choose their own books.** When you and your tween are out together, browse in a bookstore or library. Go your separate ways and make your own selections. A bookstore gift certificate is a nice way of saying, "You choose".
4. **Build on your teen's interests.** Look for books and articles that feature their favorite sports teams, rock stars, hobbies, or TV shows. Give a gift subscription to a special interest magazine.
5. **View pleasure reading as a value in itself.** Almost anything your youngsters read — including the Sunday comics — helps build reading skills.
6. **Read some books written for tweens.** Young adult novels can give you valuable insights into the concerns and pressures felt by tweens. You may find that these books provide a neutral ground on which to talk about sensitive subjects.
7. **Make reading aloud a natural part of family life.** Share an article you clipped from the paper, a poem, a letter, or a random page from an encyclopedia — without turning it into a lesson.
8. **Acknowledge your tween's mature interests.** Look for ways to acknowledge the emerging adult in your tweens by suggesting some adult reading you think they can handle.
9. **Keep the big picture in mind.** For all sorts of reasons, some tweens go through periods without showing much interest in reading. Don't panic! Time, and these tips may help rekindle their interest.

Reading is Fundamental. *All About Adolescent Literacy*. 8 12 2011  
<<http://www.adlit.org/article/23399/>>.

## HOW TO READ YOUR CHILD'S REPORT CARD

As educators, we recognize the importance of your role, as parent/ guardian, as a partner in your child's education. Studies have found the greater the support that families provide for their children's learning and progress, the greater the likelihood that their children will succeed at school. With this in mind, teachers work diligently to provide report cards that will communicate clear, meaningful information about:

- what your child is learning,
- how well your child is learning
- what strengths your child is showing
- what next steps are needed for your child's continued success
- how you might help your child at home

The report card, sent home on February 9, is the first of two Report Cards on which teachers will provide feedback about the achievement of your child. The second will be sent at the end of June. As with the Progress Report sent home in the fall, your child's development of learning skills and work habits are emphasized on the first page. These skills are integral to the success of students throughout their school career and long after they leave our care. Teachers assign a letter symbol to indicate the current level of achievement in each of six categories. The comment box provides space for teachers to reflect on areas of strength and plans for next steps to ensure your child's continued success. Teachers may indicate ideas to support your child in developing these skills at home.

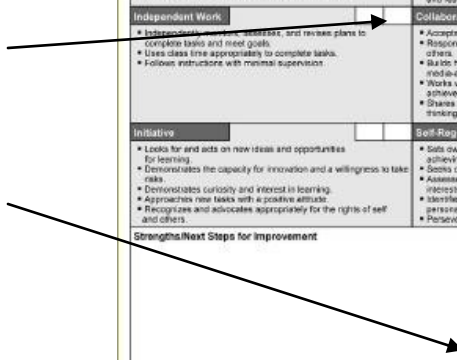
**Ontario Ministry of Education** **Elementary Provincial Report Card**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: _____		OEN: _____	Days Absent: _____	Total Days Absent: _____
Grade: _____	Teacher: _____	Times Late: _____		Total Times Late: _____
Board: _____		School: _____		
Address: _____		Address: _____		
		Principal: _____	Telephone: _____	

GRADE IN SEPTEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning Skills and Work Habits	E – Excellent	G – Good	S – Satisfactory	N – Needs Improvement
<b>Responsibility</b> • Fulfills responsibilities and commitments within the learning environment. • Completes and submits class work, homework, and assignments according to agreed-upon timelines. • Takes responsibility for and manages own behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b> • Develops and follows a plan and process for completing work and tasks. • Establishes priorities and manages time to complete tasks and achieve goals. • Identifies, gathers, evaluates, and uses information, technology, and resources to complete tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Independent Work</b> • Independently completes tasks, and revises plans to complete tasks and meet goals. • Uses class time appropriately to complete tasks. • Follows instructions with minimal supervision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Collaboration</b> • Accepts various roles and an equitable share of work in a group. • Responds positively to the ideas, opinions, values, and traditions of others. • Builds healthy peer-to-peer relationships through personal and media-assisted interactions. • Works with others to resolve conflicts and build consensus to achieve group goals. • Shares information, resources, and expertise, and promotes critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Initiative</b> • Looks for and acts on new ideas and opportunities for learning. • Demonstrates the capacity for innovation and a willingness to take risks. • Demonstrates curiosity and interest in learning. • Approaches new tasks with a positive attitude. • Recognizes and advocates appropriately for the rights of self and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Self-Regulation</b> • Sets own individual goals and monitors progress towards achieving them. • Seeks clarification or assistance when needed. • Assesses and reflects critically on own strengths, needs, and interests. • Identifies learning opportunities, choices, and strategies to meet personal needs and achieve goals. • Perseveres and makes an effort when responding to challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement</b> _____ _____ _____				



Subject	Report	Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement	
		1	2
<b>Language</b> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Writing <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Oral Communication <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Media Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>French</b> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Oral Communication <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Reading <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Writing <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Core <input type="checkbox"/> Core <input type="checkbox"/> Immersion <input type="checkbox"/> Combined	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Native Language</b> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Mathematics</b> <input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Number Sense and Numeration <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Measurement <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Geometry and Spatial Sense <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Patterning and Algebra <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Data Management and Probability <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Science and Technology</b> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/EFL <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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Pages two and three of the report card provide feedback about specific subjects. Letter grades are used for grades 1-6, and percentage marks in grades 7 and 8. The marks provided reflect the work your child has done since September, 2011. Teachers have used their professional judgement in selecting a variety of opportunities for their students to best demonstrate their achievement. In the comment boxes, teachers strive to write, in language that is clear, about what your child knows and can do. They use this space to communicate your child's strengths regarding the learning goals of the term, as well as to identify next steps that your child will be able to act on. Look for ideas for how you might support your child at home.

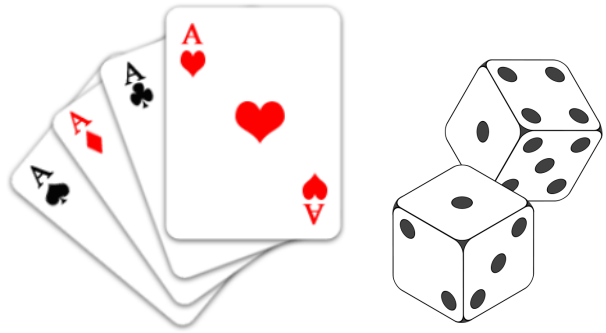
The bottom of pages three and four of the report card provide a detachable form on which you and your child can reflect on accomplishments and set some goals for the upcoming term. It is important to return this slip to your child's school. The thoughts you share can provide a starting point for discussions in a parent teacher conference. Remember, the purpose of all evaluation and reporting is to improve student learning. Your child's success, now and in the future is our main priority. We appreciate your continued partnership in this vital job!

## HAVING FUN WITH MATH DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

On those cold days when you're stuck in the house, take the time to play games with your child. Play board games, dice games, card games, dominoes, chess and backgammon. Solve puzzles together.

While playing ask questions:

- Who is winning? By how much?
- What number do you want to roll? Not want to roll?
- How many cards do you have left?
- Which card would be the most helpful? Least helpful?
- How many dots are there on this domino?
- Where could you move that piece?
- Which piece do you want to move next time?
- How did you know that puzzle piece went there?
- How did you add up those two dice? Cards?

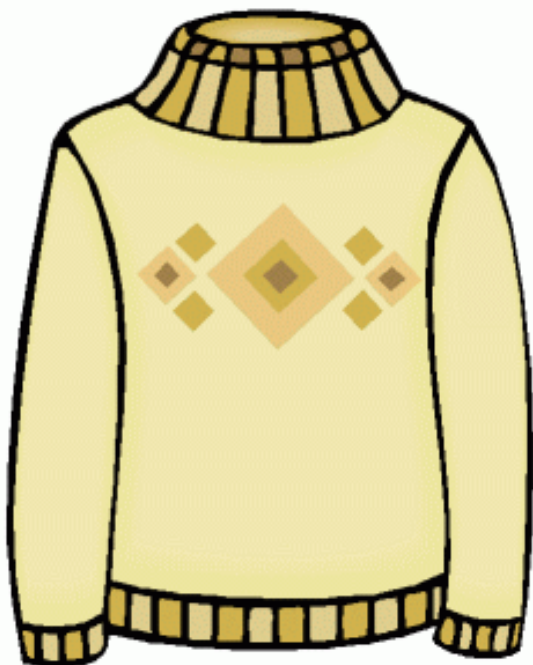


Ask questions about their thinking?

- Why did you move this piece instead of that piece?
- What did you do to try to win the game or solve the puzzle?
- Would you do the same thing next time? Why or why not?
- What could you do to make it easier to win this game?

Remember to keep it FUN!

## ECO-CORNER BROUGHT TO YOU BY: DSBN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE



### Sweater Day: February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012.....A fun way to promote Sustainable Living

Looking for a way to beat those cold Canadian winter-blues.....well cheer up with others who are participating in "Sweater Day". Sweater Day is a sponsored event by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Canada that was initiated last year...it challenges us to turn down the thermostat a couple of degrees and then invites everyone young and old alike to 'sport' a fun or favourite sweater to show their commitment to action on climate change.

Last year's event was a great success, seeing many DSBN schools filled with all sorts of 'favourite' sweaters on the day. Do you have a sweater that might be new, or from a decade past? Perhaps from a sports team? Or one that you have been saving for a special occasion?.....Then Sweater Day might be just right for you!

**How can you get involved?** Simply mark your calendars and on February 9<sup>th</sup>, turn down your thermostat by a couple of degrees and ask everyone to 'sport' their favourite sweater.....you might even find a creative way to celebrate the diversity of sweaters worn on this day.

For more info and ideas stay connected with WWF Sweater Day online @ [http://wwf.ca/takeaction/sweater\\_day/](http://wwf.ca/takeaction/sweater_day/)