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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

# SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

## *School newsletter inserts for your consideration*

### ELEMENTARY

### GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

The schools of the DSBN welcome parent involvement in their children's learning experiences. 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.

Parent involvement can take many forms:

- Reading newsletters to keep informed about school and classroom happenings that are part of your child's school experience
- Asking questions to better understand how your child is achieving and how you can support next steps
- Working with your child at home, supporting what is happening in the classroom
- Making sure there is a time and place set aside to do homework
- Participating in parent teacher conferences, sharing your insights that will provide a richer knowledge of your child
- Meeting with teachers and taking an interest in their programs
- Serving on school councils and Parent Involvement Committees
- Volunteering for field trips and school activities
- Seeking ways to volunteer from home to support classroom activities

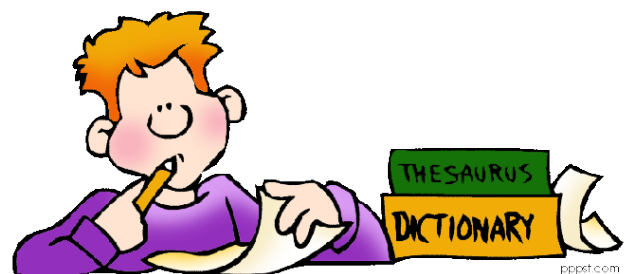
Your involvement will enrich your experience as a parent, and will also benefit your child. Students are more likely to be motivated, earn higher grades, and continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school.

### HOMWORK HELP



**Starting in fall 2011**, all 600,000 English-language math students in Grades 7 to 10 have access to live, interactive online math help through the expansion of a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Education. Homework Help is free, real-time math tutoring by certified Ontario teachers.

Students can log in from Sunday to Thursday, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST for 20 hours a week of individualized confidential math tutoring. There are discussion rooms for each grade where students can join in and see what questions other students are asking, watch the tutors draw on the whiteboard – and ask their own question for on-the-spot help.



pppft.com

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

### CRAWL THROUGH THE STORY

*Make it fun!*

#### **C – Come Read with Me!**

Let your child be the leader while reading a book. Let them look and talk about what they are interested in. It's OK to look at the same pages again and again! Repetition helps to build vocabulary and learn concepts.

#### **R – Remember and Recall**

For example, you can ask “What was your favourite part? Who were the characters? Do you remember when....?”

#### **A – Ask questions with the word “THINK”**

These questions help your child learn to predict and describe. For example, you can ask “What do you think might happen? Where do you think they might go? Why do you think they did that?”

#### **W – Where is the picture? Where are the words?**

Help your child understand that pictures and print are different – the words tell us about the story! Can your child point to the words? Can your child count the words?

#### **L – Link to real life**

Ask your child “Do you remember when we....” or “Have you ever.....” If you let the child link the story to their real life you can help them to relate new words and concepts to their everyday life.

How we read to children is as important as how often we read to them. Traditionally, when most adults share a book with a child they read and the child listens. Research tells us that children learn best from books when they are actively involved.

To get children involved we want to create a conversation while reading a book. We want both children and adults to move slowly through the story together to explore the book. The best way to help your child is to allow them to become the storyteller of the book. The adult becomes the listener, the questioner and the audience for the child.

To create a conversation about a book, we have created a book mark for you. These are strategies that you can use to help turn book reading into a fun conversation. These techniques encourage children to talk more and give descriptions about what they see.

Information provided by: Speech Services Niagara



## ECO-CORNER

### BROUGHT TO YOU BY: DSBN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

#### EYE ON WATER AT SCHOOLS...encouraging an environmentally friendly and healthy living initiative

Facts to consider when it comes to water and water bottle use:

- 60 Billion single use water bottles were purchased in North America in 2008.....less than 25% were recycled
- Plastic water bottles are typically the most prevalent source of pollution found on beaches and waterways (rivers, lakes, oceans)
- Plastic water bottles can take up to 1000 years to break down
- No guarantee that bottled water is 'healthier' or 'safer' than tap water
- Drinking water is a much healthier option for students compared to many other options marketed at them (no caffeine, no sugar, keeps them hydrated)
- \$\$\$: bottled water can cost more per litre than the gasoline used in your car

The DSBN Environmental Sustainability committee encourages all students, families and staff to continue to drink a healthy amount of water and consider the following environmentally responsible strategies:

1. Use....and re-use refillable water bottles (many plastic, stainless steel and aluminum options)
2. Provide convenient locations at schools to re-fill water bottles
3. Last year many DSBN schools installed "Elkay EZ-H2O" water bottle filling stations that dispense chilled and filtered water using a clean 'touch-less' system
4. Schools, Eco-teams, and parents can receive grants of \$1000 to start an eco-initiative (e.g. purchase of water bottles for school or purchase a bottle filling station) through the Metro Green Apple Grant Program sponsored by Metro Grocery.

<http://www.greenapplegrants.ca/home.en.html>

## ORAL LANGUAGE MATTERS

Children who have strong oral language skills often have strong reading and writing skills. The following is a list of specific strategies to help you promote your child's oral language and literacy skills!

**Let your child lead** the conversation. Children often love to talk about their friends, families, and favourite activities. If your child is less talkative, you may want to start a conversation by telling him/her something about your day that you think would be of interest. Your child may then respond with a comment about his/her day. If s/he does not respond, avoid asking lots of questions; rather, say, "Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_".

**Get close, listen and be animated** when speaking with your child. Your child should be able to see your lips and facial expressions, hear your voice clearly, and make eye contact with you. Making sure that you 'get close' helps ensure that your child keeps an interest in what you are saying.

**Keep the conversation going.** For example, if your child says, "Look at the truck", you might say, "It's a tow truck. I wonder where it is going."

**'Think' out loud** about what you are doing, using simple language. Activities such as making meals, watching TV, playing or walking outside provide many opportunities for oral language development. For example, when baking, you might say, "Next I'll stir the batter with the spoon. The batter is thick and hard to stir but the more I stir it, the easier it is. The batter is getting smoother and smoother." This type of talk helps children learn vocabulary and conversational skills, and develop sequencing skills. These are all needed at school.

**Provide 'toys' that promote oral language.** These may include microphones, old telephones, puppets, or even paper towel tubes. Dressing up and pretending to be someone else encourages children to copy the vocabulary, facial expressions, and body language that they see and hear from others.

*Remember: the way that you talk to your children influences their ability to talk, think and learn! The most effective way to improve child's language is to let your child lead and keep the conversation going.*

## SUPPORTING THE YOUNG MATHEMATICIAN AT HOME

*Success is in the journey, not the destination!*

**Young mathematicians should be provided with opportunities to explore mathematics throughout their day.** Share the times when you are using mathematics in your day so that they see and understand the importance of math in their world. Support them as they begin to grapple with mathematical ideas. Help them understand that success lies not in getting the right answer, but rather in the challenge of solving the problem. Also, let them know that you think math is important, exciting & even creative!

There are many times when mathematical thinking could be discovered while at home or out with the family. Here are a few examples. Be sure to keep it fun!

### At home:

- Daily chores: How long will it take us to clean the dishes? Let's time it and see if we were close.
- Cooking: Measure out the flour for this recipe. What if we double the recipe?
- Reading stories: How many elephants are there? How many feet would there be?
- Budgeting: How much will you need to save to be able to buy that bike you want to get?
- Puzzles: How did you know that piece didn't fit there?
- Card Games: What number is that? Is that number bigger than mine?
- Board Games: What roll do you want to get? What are the chances of that happening?
- Video Games: How much is your team winning by?
- I spy with my little eye, something that is smaller than a shoe box...

### Grocery store:

- Please pick out 5 apples for the family.
- I have \$20. Will that be enough to buy what we have in the shopping cart?
- That's a lot of pop cases. I wonder if there are more than 100 cases?
- Should we buy the smaller bag or the bigger bag? Which is the better deal?
- I spy with my little eye, something that is more expensive than a loaf of bread...

### Restaurant:

- About how much will this meal cost?
- About how much of a tip should we leave?
- I spy with my little eye, something that is a rectangle...



Help support your child as they encounter math in their daily lives. As well, it is very important that young mathematicians have many experiences around a mathematical concept (addition or multiplication) so that they can understand it in depth. While knowing math facts is important, it is more important that young mathematicians have opportunities to deepen their understanding, to reason mathematically, and to use mathematics to navigate their world. Making connections between school math and the math they encounter in the real world will support this learning.

***Remember to keep it fun!***

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE CONFERENCE 21st Century Learners: Where Parents Fit In

The DSBN Parent Involvement Committee invites you to join us for an evening of learning, sharing and networking with a focus on ideas to make your School Council bigger and better as you support student learning.

**All parents are invited to attend.**  
Wednesday, November 2, 2011  
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Eden High School  
535 Lake St., St. Catharines

Free registration includes a light supper and child care.

Register online at: [www.dsbns.org](http://www.dsbns.org) > parents > click on the Online Registration link.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

**Progress Reports** for students in Senior Kindergarten to Grade 8 will be sent home on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Please contact your child's teacher for an interview.

