



The Link

Connecting Parents and their School Community



Learning Starts Early and Starts at Home

Most parents believe they should focus on their child's academic and social development when their child begins preschool or kindergarten. However, research states that the brain begins to develop even *before* birth and the greatest growth spurt of the brain is from birth to about 10 years of age. This means that half of the most crucial period of brain development in a child occurs before they even begin school! This also means academic excellence and the preparation for a successful life for your child unquestionably begins in the home!

There are many simple, yet effective, practices and activities to help your child learn and prepare for his/her educational experience. Children learn by using their five major senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. In order to promote mental growth and the development of these senses, they must be stimulated as frequently as possible. The spinning colorful objects that hang from a crib can be used to stimulate and develop visual skills. Playing with blocks and puzzles develops motor and reasoning capabilities. Reading and singing to a child develops his/her listening and speaking skills. Most activities you can do at home will benefit children of

all ages. Try to incorporate simple things such as:

- Read every day out loud. Street signs while driving, instructions/recipes while cooking, read the newspaper together.
- Talk as often as you can with your child. Talk about school, activities, important events, things that you see while driving in the car. The more your child talks and participates in conversations the more he/she will add to and strengthen his/her vocabulary.
- Sing songs together. Singing is a great way to remember and learn. It is also a great way to introduce language and words that may not be used every day.

You can find many more ideas on supporting learning at home through websites such as www.NJPIRC.org, in parenting books, or in magazines.

These are just a few simple and fun ways to effectively prepare your child for learning and positive self-expression. Remember that you are your child's primary teacher so it is very important that you stay informed and involved in your child's education from birth until and throughout adulthood! If you choose to give a little time and effort towards your child's development, the rewards will be tremendous for you and your child's future!

The New Jersey State Parent Information & Resource Center

NJPIRC

another program of



Prevent Child Abuse
New Jersey

*Building a parent,
school, and
community network
that supports
student success*



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Your Parent-Teacher Conference

Questions to consider:



Terms Every Parent Needs to Know NJ STATE ASSESSMENTS

Core Curriculum Content Standards

Standards were created to improve student achievement by clearly defining what all students should know and be able to do at the end of thirteen years of public education. The NJ Department of Education ensures that teachers provide instruction according to the standards; ensures student performance is assessed in each content area; and, teachers are provided with opportunities for professional development that focuses on the standards.

View the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards by grade and subject at:

<http://www.njpirc.org/child.shtml>

NJ ASK (3rd – 8th Grades)

NJ ASK stands for the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. The state currently administers tests at grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and eleven. The scores on the state tests are used to determine whether or not a school has made adequate yearly progress under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Each school is required to meet a minimum proficiency level to avoid being classified as a school “in need of improvement.”

HSPA (11th Grade)

State law requires all students who graduate from a public high school in New Jersey to demonstrate mastery of skills needed to function politically, economically, and socially in a democratic society. The High School Proficiency Assessment is used to determine student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics as specified in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. The assessment is given in 11th grade. First-time eleventh grade students who fail the HSPA in their junior year will have an opportunity to retest twice in their senior year.

Find practice tests, test accommodations, and information for parents for the NJ ASK, and HSPA at

<http://www.njpirc.org/child.shtml>

1. How is my child doing in class?
2. Is my child having any problems? What are they? How can I help at home? Is tutoring available?
3. What is your homework policy? What happens if my child does not hand it in?
4. How much time should be spent on homework? How often do you assign homework?
5. How often do you give tests? How is my son or daughter doing on the tests so far?
6. How can I get in touch with you or make an appointment to meet with you again?
7. How well does my child seem to feel about school and about his or her own abilities? What can we do to make sure these feelings are positive?
8. Is my child in special groups for reading or math? Who are the teachers?

Share with Teachers:

- Special interests/skills
- Study habits
- Medical problems
- Recent family experiences (death, sibling birth, divorce) that may affect school behavior

Find More Tips for Parents at
www.NJPIRC.org

Cool School Facts

71 percent of New Jersey schools met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards mandated under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2008.

The number of schools on the Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI) list - schools that have missed AYP for two or more years in a row - dropped from 505 in 2007-08 to 442 this year, a decline of more than 12 percent.

Websites We Love:

www.math-drills.com
www.dadz.com
www.parentsjournal.com
www.brainconnection.com
www.njpta.org
www.encarta.com



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