

Picatinny School News

Child, Youth & School Services

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Inside this issue:

Find Winter Gear Fast	2
Handwriting Help	2
Test Taking Preparation	2
School Calendars	3
Helping Teens Make Goof Choices	3
Parent Learning Opportunities	3
Bullying and Your Child	4

Don't Forget!

Check out www.tutor.com/military for homework help! At Tutor.com, you get a professional online tutor whenever you need help. You work one-to-one with your tutor in our online classroom on your specific homework problem until it's done. This is a FREE service to military family members!

The Parent-Teacher Conference: Five Must-Ask Questions

In order to help your child have a successful school year, you need to know what is expected of her, academically, from now until June. You can find out by asking some questions. Take this list with you to the parent-teacher conferences which are being held this month in the elementary and middle schools. And don't forget to take notes!

1. What skills and knowledge will my child be expected to master this year?

- What will my child learn this year in key subjects like math, science, history, and English?
- Are there challenging academic standards in place at this school, and how do they compare with those at other school districts? May I see

them?

How do you inform students about the academic standards they're expected to meet?

- What kind of projects and assignments have you planned that will help my child meet higher academic standards?

2. How will my child be evaluated?

- What kind of information do you use to evaluate students?

- How do you know if they're academically ready to move on to the next grade?

- How are grades determined in your classroom?

3. What can I do to stay more involved in my child's academic progress?

- What can I do at home to complement what is happening in the classroom?

- How can I know on a daily

basis what homework has been assigned?

How can I support teachers' efforts in implementing higher academic standards?

4. How do you accommodate differences in learning?

- What if my child is a slow learner and falls behind, or is a fast learner and is bored?

- Are summer school, tutoring, or other programs available for students who need more help?

5. How are older students prepared for further learning after high school?

- Are children encouraged to think about a wide variety of career interests?

- Are all students encouraged to take algebra by the end of eighth grade?

Ten Tips for a Successful Parent-Teacher Conference

Parent-teacher conferences present an excellent opportunity to find out how your child is adjusting to the new school year and to get to know her teachers.

Here are some general hints on how to have a successful conference:

1. Ask your child if there is anything that he would like you to discuss with the

teacher.

2. Jot down everything that you want to talk about at the conference.

3. Arrive promptly or a few minutes early.

4. Begin with positive comments about the teacher or classroom.

5. Avoid lengthy discussions of topics that are not related to the purpose of the conference.

6. Be open-minded to suggestions from the teacher.

7. Keep your emotions under control.

8. Take notes about what has been discussed to share with your child.

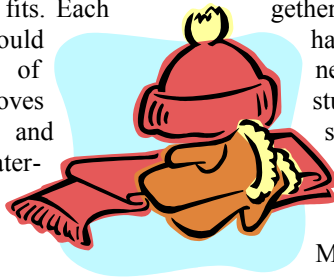
9. Express appreciation for the conference and the feedback given by .

10. Do not stay beyond your allotted time.

Find Winter Gear Faster

Staying warm inside when it's cold outside can be a challenge, especially when gear must travel back and forth to school several times each week. Keeping track of your winter wear doesn't have to wear you out. Here are some tips for storing and tracking it all so when that first snowstorm hits, your kids will be ready (and stay ready right through until spring).

The Right Stuff for the Fluff
Before the first snowflake falls, take inventory of what still fits. Each family member should have a coat, a pair of boots, mittens or gloves (one pair for warmth and another made from water-repellent material), a hat, a scarf, and a pair of snow pants.



Keep In the Hall Closet
Big, bulky winter coats can be closet hogs. If you're short on space, install hooks for off-season coats on the back of the closet door to give you more room on the rod for the heavy-duty outerwear.

Small-Item Storage Solutions

Hang a plastic shoe bag on the back of a closet door to keep mittens and hats neat and organized.

Pair scarves with coats and hang together. Scarves can either hang on the hanger underneath the coat or be stuffed into the coat's sleeve.

Color-coded stacking bins (blue for Billy, green for Grace, red for Mom, etc.) inside the coat

closet make it easy for kids to put away their own mittens and hats.

To keep gear from going missing at school, train kids to zip mittens into pockets or backpacks as soon as they come inside. Or show them how to stash a pair of mittens inside their boots. A hat can be folded to fit inside a coat sleeve; a scarf put in the other.

Some Seasonal Suggestions

If closet space is at a premium, don't store winter coats in the attic (heat can damage them). Instead, assemble a spare closet for the basement, garage, or spare room. A free-standing wardrobe will keep clothes dust-free. Or install a rod and hang coats in a garment bag with a clear plastic window so you can see what's inside.

Seven Ways to Help with Handwriting

Kids aren't able to write well until they have developed good fine-motor skills. Fortunately, these skills improve easily with lots of practice. Use the following activities to help your young child develop the precision, balance, and hand-eye coordination that are needed to perform the fine-motor skills used in handwriting:

1. Give your child clay or play-dough to play with to strengthen the major muscles used in handwriting.
2. Encourage her to play with Legos,

miniature cars, small blocks, action figures, and other small toys.

3. Do puzzles with your child.
4. Provide creative art projects that involve using crayons, marking pens, scissors, and finger paints, as well as tearing paper.
5. Play games with your child that involve the handling of cards and small game pieces.
6. Ask your child to sort collections loose coins into stacks of pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

7. Help your child learn to manage such everyday skills as tying and lacing his shoes and buttoning his clothes.

Remember, every child has a different timetable in acquiring the fine-motor skills needed for handwriting. The more your child uses her fingers in activities, the sooner she will acquire these skills.



Test Taking Preparation

Help your child with test taking preparation using the following process:

Help your child map out a test-taking study schedule so you can best manage her time.

Determine what kinds of questions will be on the test: short-answer, multiple-choice, essay, or a combination of the three.

Ask your child what she thinks is going to be on the test. Then look at

her class notes and the parts of the textbook that deal with those topics. If the teacher provided study questions, go over them carefully.

Remember test taking basics. One tip for helping a child organize and remember information is to follow the five W's: who, what, when, where, and why.

Teach test taking skills: how to read the test all the way through, answer the questions she knows well first, and

return to the questions she's unsure of later. The goal is to reinforce knowledge and understanding, build your child's confidence and help lay the groundwork for a lifetime of good study skills.

Follow up. Compliment your child for working with you and putting in the time. If the results are not what you and your child hoped for, talk to the teacher to find out what was missing in your child's preparation.

What's Happening in the Schools this Month

<u>Dennis B. O'Brien Elementary</u>	<u>Copeland Middle School</u>	<u>Morris Knolls High School</u>
11/5– Scrapbooking Marathon	11/1-11/3– Book Fair	11/8– End of Marking Period #1
11/9– Wacky Hair Day	11/7– PTA Meeting 7pm	11/10-11– NJEA Convention– (No School)
11/10-11– NJEA Convention– (No School)	11/10-11– NJEA Convention– (No School)	11/12– Fall Play Dress Rehearsal
11/14-11/16– Parent Conferences	11/14-11/17– Parent Conferences (Early Dismissal)	11/15– Jell-O Wrestling
11/14-18– Book Fair	11/23– 1/2 Day of School (School Dismisses at 12:20pm)	11/17-19– Fall Play: Auditorium 7pm
11/17– PTA Meeting 7pm	11/24-25– Thanksgiving Holidays– (No School)	11/23– 1/2 Day of School (School Dismisses at 12:16pm)
11/23– 1/2 Day of School (School Dismisses at 12:48pm)		11/23- Powder Puff Game
11/24-25–Thanksgiving Holidays– (No School)		11/24-25– Thanksgiving Holidays– (No School)



Helping Your Teen Make Good Choices at School

Even with the best upbringing teens don't always make the best choices. Shoot, adults don't always make the best choices. So what can parents do to tip the scales in the teen's favor?

1. Talk Talk Talk. Even if your teen goes into silent mode, keep talking with your child.
2. Lead by example. You can't expect your teen to behave in a manner contrary to your own.
3. Depending on the situation, you may want to share some of your own examples of what happened when you didn't make good choices.
4. If your teen mentions that so and

so made a poor choice, do not immediately condemn the person. Use their poor choices as a springboard for open dialog.

5. Make it easy for your teen to be honest with you. Reinforce that no matter what, you still love her.
6. Remind him that you'll be more disappointed if he lies to you, rather than by some behavior he chose to participate in.
7. Accept that your teen may make some poor choices. Let that experience be a lessons learned for both of you.
8. If you have blinders on, it's time to take them off. No teen is per-

fect. Look for warning signs.

9. Don't give your teen too many liberties. Respecting ones privacy is one thing, but you still need to be the parent.
10. Give your teen unconditional love.

When storms come, don't waste oxygen with should haves and could haves. There's no point in playing the "it's all my fault" card. All you can do is your very best.

You need to be able to look yourself in the mirror and know that you've provided your child with all the tools she needs to be a happy, well balanced teenager.

Parent Learning Opportunities in November

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? This month there will be opportunities for parents to learn ways to manage holiday stress and learn how to cope with the winter blues.

A Lunch and Learn presentation on Thursday, November 10 will address holiday stressors found at this time of

year, and offer effective coping mechanisms to decrease stress so you may enjoy the holidays. The discussion will be held in Building 3228 (Teen Center) from noon until 1pm.

Feel free to bring your lunch!

A Parent Workshop



on November 17 will focus on the characteristics common with the winter blues and offer suggestions for counteracting them. The workshop will take place in Building 3228 (Teen Center) at 5:15pm.

Contact Kristy Milner at (973) 724-7892 or kristen.milner@us.army.mil for more information on either class.



U.S. Army Child, Youth
& School Services



The School Liaison Officer works in conjunction with the Child and Youth Services Division and the local school community to address educational issues involving military children. Through partnering with the local and military community, the School Liaison Officer acts as a communication link between the installation and the surrounding school districts.

For more information, contact your School Liaison Officer.

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Bullying and Teasing: No Laughing Matter

Unfortunately, teasing is often part of growing up — almost every child experiences it. But it isn't always as innocuous as it seems. Teasing becomes bullying when it is repetitive or when there is a conscious intent to hurt another child. It can be verbal bullying (making threats, name-calling), psychological bullying (excluding children, spreading rumors), or physical bullying (hitting, pushing, taking a child's possessions).

How Bullying Starts-Bullying behavior is prevalent throughout the world and it cuts across socio-economic, racial/ethnic, and cultural lines. Bullying can begin as early as preschool and intensify during transitional stages, such as starting school in first grade or going into middle school.

Warning Signs- If you're concerned that your child is a victim, look for these signs of stress:

- Increased passivity or withdrawal
- Frequent crying
- Recurrent complaints of physical

symptoms such as stomach-aches or headaches with no apparent cause

- Unexplained bruises
- Sudden drop in grades
- Not wanting to go to school
- Significant changes in social life
- Sudden change in the way your child talks — calling herself a loser, or a former friend a jerk

How to Help

First, give your child space to talk. If she recounts incidences of teasing or bullying, be empathetic. If your child has trouble verbalizing her feelings, read a story about children being teased or bullied. You can also use puppets, dolls, or stuffed animals to encourage a young child to act out problems.

Once you've opened the door, help your child begin to problem-solve. Role-play situations and teach your child ways to respond. You might also need to help your child find a way to move on by en-

couraging her to reach out and make new friends. She might join teams and school clubs to widen her circle.

Schools and parents can work effectively behind the scenes to help a child meet and make new friends via study groups or science-lab partnerships. If you are concerned about your child:

- Share with the teacher what your child has told you; describe any teasing or bullying you may have witnessed.
- Ask the teacher if she sees similar behavior at school, and enlist her help in finding ways to solve the problem.
- If she hasn't seen any instances of teasing, ask that she keep an eye out for the behavior you described.
- If the teacher says your child is being teased, find out whether there are any things he may be doing in class to attract teasing. Ask how he responds to the teasing, and discuss helping him develop a more effective response.
- After the initial conversation, be sure to make a follow-up appointment to discuss how things are going.