



Picatinny School News

Child, Youth & School Services

Volume 2, Issue 2

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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!

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Communication Between Parents, Child, and Teacher

How To Communicate With Your Child

Maintaining good communication with your child gives you an opportunity to better understand his thoughts, fears, and expectations. Communication with young children is best achieved when you are attentive, interested, provide encouragement, listen patiently, and reflect his feelings.

- Let your child know that you care about how his feelings, by saying such things as, "It's okay to feel (sad, angry, scared, excited, etc.)"
- Share situations from your life with your child when you were experiencing the same feelings.
- Encourage your child to solve his problems. Assure him that you will be there to help is needed, but try to encourage independence. Let your face and your voice

show your interest.

Communicating With Your Child's Teacher

Sustaining strong communication between home and school is like providing a bridge that makes it easier for your child to go back and forth between the two settings. As your child observes ongoing communication between his home and school, he realizes that you think school is important.

How to communicate

To effectively communicate, you need to send messages, as well as to respond to, messages sent home.

- Read newsletters and notes sent home (or have someone read them to you).
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Telephone, write notes, or e-mail your child's teacher on a regular basis.
- Visit the school periodically. If possible, arrange to

occasionally eat lunch with your child.

Volunteer in the classroom or in the school, any help is welcome, even short-term.

What should you talk to the teacher about?

Find out what you can be working with your child at home on that will help your child's progress.

- Keep your child's teacher informed about what is going on in your child's life that can affect his behavior or learning. For example you have an illness in the family, you are going on a trip, etc.
- Ask questions about how your child is doing in school—both socially and academically. Ask questions such as: "Does he have good work habits?" "Is he too tired in the morning?" "How does he get along classmates?" If you have concerns about your child's adjustment, be sure to mention it to the teacher.

Non-Book Ways to Get Your Child Reading

1. Play board games. Scrabble or Boggle are specifically good for building vocabulary or spelling.

2. Collect trading cards. There are card series to appeal to most interests, from sports to space travel, Yu-Gi-Oh! to Beanie Babies or Webkinz.

3. Learn "how to." Is there something your child would

really like to do, such as perform magic tricks or add sequins to her jeans? Encourage her to find out how by reading about it.

4. Get cooking. Invite your child to help you bake a cake or make a special meal together. If necessary, simplify or rewrite a recipe's instructions so he can read it to you.

5. Make cards. Have your child make her own cards for holidays, birthdays, party invitations, and thank-yous. Help her write a personal message to each recipient.

6. Create signs and labels. Help your child build his vocabulary by creating signs for his room that identify objects: "bike", "desk", etc.

Online Parent Resources for Children Struggling with Math

It can be frustrating for parents when their child struggles with math. Math is not taught the same way as when they were in school, and some parents deal with their own math anxiety. Asking the child's teacher for help is one solution, but not always the easiest or most convenient.

Since technology is becoming a significant source for information, parents can turn to the World Wide Web to find math help. Online tools are available to help parents understand not only how math is now taught but also what to do to help their child improve poor math skills and gain confidence with problem solving.

Online Parent Math Resources

Math resources for parents are abundant, but a few provide valuable assistance for more than how to teach children math skills. These sites highlight the different stages of learning, strategies for overcoming anxieties, and simple ways to teach math based on everyday activities. For example, All Kinds of Minds provides educator and parent resources based on current educational research

and practices. Their Parent Toolkit explains how math works, why it might be difficult, and step-by-step examples so parents can experience different types of problems before trying to help with homework.

Another online resource, provided by the U.S. Department of Education, takes a different approach. It is based on a 1999 document about math activities that provides a glimpse into math classrooms and many hands-on math games that can be played at home.

Online Math Skills Practice

Besides learning how to help and encourage math games at home, parents can send their child to an online math practice site. Many of these sites provide math practice games and challenges in a fun and engaging way.

Though some online sites charge a small access fee, others provide free games



based on the math skill or grade level in an age appropriate way. One site, IKnowThat.com, provides accounts for free, though for a small fee the ads can be removed, and the math activities include games, interactive examples, speed based skill practice, and

problem solving to unlock parts of videos.

Other sites are completely free. Another site, Fun Brain, is about improving math skills through arcade-style video games; whereas Math.com is more traditional in its approach and offers tutorials, examples, and practice problems along with games.

The web is a rich source of information when parents need information about how to help their child with math. Not only can parents improve their understanding of math skills and how math is taught in schools, but they can also find engaging online and hands-on activities to help their child succeed in math.

Tools and Tips for Disorganized Boys

Boys are falling behind. Only two-thirds of boys in the U.S. earn a high school diploma – a 7 percent lower graduation rate than girls, according to a June 2010 *Education Week* report. "We've found that boys are struggling, not only academically, but also in their self-esteem," said Ana Homayoun, author of *That Crumpled Paper Was Due Last Week: Helping Disorganized and Distracted Boys Succeed in School and Life*. "They're two to three years behind girls in terms of puberty and that really affects their performance in school."

Many parents can relate to the helpless feeling of realizing their child has, once again, forgotten to do a homework assignment. By learning the basics of being organized, managing their time, and focusing on appealing and attainable goals, boys can get back on the path to completing



high school and going on to college or other endeavors.

5 Tools for Getting Boys Organized

Getting organized can seem like a daunting task, but she says it really comes down to one simple tool: a binder. "Having a binder for every subject and keeping things in one place really reduces the anxiety of not knowing where something is." She recommends these simple supplies:

- **A binder for every subject.** "In their mind and physically, they can separate out what they're working on. It saves time."
- **Five tab dividers for every subject.** "Use them to separate notes, homework, handouts, tests/quizzes, and paper. It helps you avoid that overstuffed front pocket of a binder."
- **A standard hole punch.** "Have a big one at home and a smaller one for your

child's backpack so they can punch holes and put things in their binder."

- **A written planner.** "I work with teens, especially preteens, on using a written planner for their assignments. A lot of times, kids will forget about things if they use an online or handheld planner."

- **A kitchen timer.** "This is for kids to time themselves, working for 20 to 40 minutes, taking a break, then coming back to it."

By using this binder system, she said, if a student needs to go to the library to work on a project, they only need to grab two things: their textbook and binder for that subject.

A large table or desk with room to spread out books and papers is the ideal spot for doing homework, while the bedroom—especially on the bed or facing it—is the least ideal location.

What's Going on in the Schools

Dennis B. O'Brien Elementary

October 1-31– Busy Bee Calendar Raffle
 October 3-17– Cookie Dough Sale
 October 10– Columbus Day (School Closed)
 October 13- PTA Meeting 7pm
 October 13– Favorite Hat Day
 October 25 - Staff Development (Early Dismissal at 12:48pm)
 October 28- Halloween Bash



Copeland Middle School

October 3- PTA Meeting 7pm
 October 10 – Columbus Day (School Closed)
 October 14– 6th Grade Friday Activity Night
 October 18- 8th Grade Walk A Thon
 October 20- 7th Grade Walk A Thon
 October 21- 6th Walk A Thon and 7th Grade Friday Activity Night
 October 25- Staff Development (Early Dismissal at 12:20pm)

Morris Knolls High School

October 4-6– HSPA Retakes & First Time 12th Graders
 October 7– Mid-Quarter Marking Period
 October 11-13– Make-Up HSPA
 October 12– PSAT– Delayed Opening for those not taking the exam
 October 14– Homecoming Game vs. Parsippany Hills 7pm
 October 15– Homecoming Dance 7pm
 October 19– Magnet-IB Information Night 6:30pm
 October 25– Staff Development (Early Dismissal 12:16pm)

Questions to Help Your Child Think Mathematically

Children who succeed at math don't just memorize math facts like one plus one equals two. They learn to think mathematically.

You can help your child do this by asking the following questions anytime the opportunity presents itself:

How many are there?

Have your child count ob-

jects such as toys, carrots, or shoes as she points to them.

How many of each kind?

Encourage your child to sort and count objects by color, shape, size, or feel. This teaches classification skills which will also be helpful in science as well as math.

How are they the same or different?

This requires your child to observe, com-

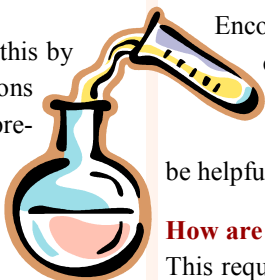
pare, analyze, and conclude– all higher level thinking skills.

Which has more or less?

This develops thinking for subtraction. Ask this as you pour juice into glasses or sort piles of laundry.

Which is shorter, taller, or longer?

Let your child compare lengths by matching up objects. This can be done with toys or everyday objects.



This Month's Parent Learning Opportunities

On Thursday, October 13 a Lunch and Learn Workshop will be presented by our Military and Family Life Consultant will discuss "Conflict Resolution with Children ages 4-16." Parents will have the opportunity to explore conflict and ways to resolve conflict by examining problem solving techniques. Guidelines for communication and skills that can help pre-

vent conflict will be explored. The workshop will take place in Building 3228 (Teen Center) from noon to 1pm.

A Parent Education Class will take place October 27 from 5pm to 6pm. This month's topic "Overcoming Test Anxiety" will empower parents with the ability to assist their chil-

dren in overcoming the fear of test taking. Children are welcome to attend with their parents. The workshop will take place in Building 3228 (Teen Center).

For more information on either workshop, contact Kristy Milner at (973) 724-7892 or kristen.milner@us.army.mil.





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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Shopping for Colleges Online

Bless the internet for taking the pain out of college-shopping. You'll be pleasantly surprised to know that practically every college and university in the U.S. maintains a Web site.

A college's home page can be likened to a magazine's table of contents. All the information needed to decide on a school is organized under headings, such as admissions, financial aid, student activities, special programs, social events, faculty, staff, and so on. A school's major departments usually have their own contents page.

As expected, many of the large public universities have sprawling Web sites.



UCLA,
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250 home pages and 50,000 contents pages.

While it's fun exploring college home pages -- some feature creative graphics, animation, even virtual tours of the campus and surrounding neighborhoods complete with sound -- their key advantage is providing fast answers to questions. A Hartford, Connecticut, high school senior considering Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for example, was concerned about the configuration of computer labs and the credentials of the faculty. In a few hours he had answers and his fears were allayed.

The comprehensive and timely information on a home page gives it a distinct edge over printed college catalogs. Catalogs are updated every six to eight months, whereas home pages are updated either monthly, biweekly, or even weekly. Most college home pages also offer an email feature, allowing you to ask questions and get answers within hours.

The best part: You can get information 24 hours a day. Visiting a college's Web site can also save you the time and money you would spend physically traveling to campuses.

Although you probably won't make a decision based solely on information gleaned from the Internet, it can help you whittle down your list of choices. If it's a down-to-the-wire toss-up between two schools, you can always get tie-breaking information by revisiting each candidate on the Internet.

Besides offering effortless information, college administrators have also discovered home pages can accelerate the application process. Many schools allow students to download an application on-line and send it back. Bear in mind that college home pages vary in quality. Still, most are easy to navigate and feature fast easy links to the information you need.