

# THE ROLE of PARENTS

TIPS AND TOOLS  
FOR PARENTS



1

Parents are the first and most powerful influence on their children's learning, development, health and well-being.

2

Parents are an integral part of the Kindergarten program, and are often present in the school and classroom. Knowing their child as well as they do, parents are able to provide educators with important information that allows the team to meet the child's individual learning needs.

3

Families bring with them rich knowledge and varied viewpoints about child-rearing practices, childhood, and development. When they are able to share that knowledge, as well as their understanding of their child, with educators, they will be more supportive of their child's learning. *(Pascal, Every Child, p. 5)*

4

Active family involvement can include volunteering in the classroom, organizing school events, helping children learn at home, participating with team members in decision making, and collaborating with the community.

# Kindergarten to Grade 3

## READING TIPS AND TOOLS FOR PARENTS

### 10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH READING

- 1 **Cuddle up and read.** Quiet times together are opportunities to bond...and read. The cuddling can be as important as the reading. Make it exciting: put some drama into your voice or let your child read every other page. As you go, explain any new words or ideas.
- 2 **Public libraries today are worlds to explore so try to go regularly.** Your library has great resources – books, computer games, DVDs, CDs, magazines, newspapers and Internet access. There are also terrific in-house programs such as reading circles for little ones and homework clubs for older children. If you have access to a public library, talk to the librarian about what is available.
- 3 **Make your kitchen part of your “reading zone”.** Have fridge magnets available so children can start making words and short sentences.
- 4 **Words are everywhere – take everyday opportunities to read with your child.** Your child’s world is filled with words – on cereal boxes, street signs, stores, posters, subway ads, etc. Wherever you go, you can always find new words and point them out.
- 5 **Games can be great learning tools.** Board games or card games such as word bingo or memory and rhyming cards can be a fun way to learn about words, letter sounds, and reading. They can help children realize how much fun learning can be. Check out your local school fair or second-hand stores for gently used games. You can even create your own by cutting out pictures, writing words on cards and getting your child to match them.
- 6 **Computers are reader friendly too!** Though many worry that kids may spend too much time on the computer, there are some great games that help kids learn to read and allow them to create their own stories. Look for “parent approved” on the packaging in stores and in the library. Find some kid-friendly websites, like TVOKids and Canadian Geoillustrated for Kids, that have games you can play along with your child.
- 7 **Books make great gifts.** Ask family and friends to give a book instead of a toy as a gift. Make sure to tell them about your child’s reading level and interests. To build up a home library find almost-new books at garage sales and school fairs.
- 8 **Subscribe to a magazine.** There’s no substitute for the excitement of receiving mail. Let your kids subscribe to their favourite age-appropriate magazine and watch their eyes light up with the arrival of each new issue. Great magazines for younger children include Chirp® and Chickadee®.
- 9 **Be a reading role model.** When your kids see you reading, they will want to imitate you. It won’t be long until they learn that reading is fun, interesting, and a “grown up” thing to do.
- 10 **Keep books, magazines and newspapers handy.** Keep a box in the kitchen or living room for easy access.



#### A SPECIAL NOTE:

*Educators agree that literacy skills develop and improve as a result of a wide range of activities. For example, a child's literacy skills are enhanced when parents who do not speak an official Canadian language read to their children in their native language. Children will benefit from this reading experience.*



# Kindergarten to Grade 3

## WRITING TIPS AND TOOLS FOR PARENTS



### 10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH WRITING

- 1 Read from a variety of sources.** Reading and writing are linked – success in one supports success in the other. Read stories, newspapers, advertisements, instructions, etc. to your child every day and then discuss what you have read.
- 2 Encourage your child to write.** Children love to make their own birthday cards, write thank you notes, make place cards for the table, or send an email to a friend. Save old cards from birthdays and holidays to recycle for homemade cards. Whenever possible, let your child see you writing – grocery lists, instructions on the family whiteboard, emails, etc. – and get them to help.
- 3 Writing can be done anywhere.** Have lots of magnetic letters or words on the fridge. Get a box of chalk and write your names on the driveway or sidewalk. Get a white board – it can be used again and again.
- 4 Play writing games.** Make a game of letter finding. Show them how to form a letter and then go letter hunting in your house or in a book – count the number of “Ds” on a page. Find a picture they like and have them write words or a sentence about it.
- 5 Help children build their vocabulary.** Try rhyming games starting with one word such as “mat”. Say and write down all the words that rhyme, like “cat”, “hat”, “fat” and “splat”. You’ll be surprised how fast their word list grows.
- 6 Explore the meaning of words.** Create a word book at home and have your child add words as they’re learned. Have them note the words they use the most and talk about why.
- 7 Write to each other.** Write notes to your child and leave them in interesting places, like the lunch box. Ask them to write a reply or come up with something new. If they have their own email, email each other. Have kids email jokes to family and friends.
- 8 Don’t limit what you write with or what you write on.** The sky’s the limit – pudding, sticks or fingers in mud, earth, snow and sand, sparklers, steamed up windows and mirrors, and bubble soap markers for some sudsy learning.
- 9 Writing comes in all shapes and sizes.** Point out different ways writing is used – letters, signs, advertisements, instructions – and explain why they are different. Also point out different ways letters are created – printed, cursive (written) and fancy variations. Let them be inspired to create their own letter art.
- 10 Start writing at an early age.** Children often learn to write before they can read. Encourage this by showing them how to print their name or the names of friends and other family members. Buy them notebooks with lines so they can learn to make their letters correctly or a practice book with letters they can trace.

# Kindergarten to Grade 3

## MATH TIPS AND TOOLS FOR PARENTS

### 10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH MATH

- 1 **Counting can be fun and entertaining.** Sing counting songs such as "One, Two Buckle My Shoe". Your local librarian can recommend fun counting books. Play Hopscotch – it's a counting game! There are lots of games where you count, such as Snakes and Ladders, Dominoes, Crazy Eights and Candyland®.
- 2 **Computers + math = fun.** There are great computer games available for math – ask your librarian or check out your local computer store. Make sure they are "parent approved". There are also super websites that have fun math games, such as TVOKids, or do an Internet search for other sites.
- 3 **Start Easy and Work Up!** Once they have got the hang of counting by 1s, introduce skip counting, such as counting by 2s and 5s.
- 4 **Use household items for counting practice.** Practise adding and subtracting with objects found around your house like spoons or pots and pans. When they've become good at these skills, move on to simple multiplication.
- 5 **Tap into your child's curiosity.** Go on a number hunt together and discover places where numbers are used such as a clock, TV, computer keyboard, calendar, telephones and licence plates.
- 6 **Use everyday activities.** Your child's world is filled with everyday math problems that can be solved. For example, "There are four people in our family and we each need a knife and a fork to eat dinner. How many knives and forks do we need to set the table?"
- 7 **Kitchens can be math zones.** Bake some muffins or cookies and ask your child to help you measure out the ingredients. It may be a bit messy but it's fun family time and there's nothing like a fresh cookie as a reward. Have math fridge magnets available so children can start making number patterns and doing simple math problems.
- 8 **Predict and compare.** Start to measure and estimate things like how far it is from the driveway to the house or how long a trip will take and then measure and compare the actual time it takes.
- 9 **Talk about time.** The concept of time can be hard to grasp. Talk to your kids about minutes and hours. Then get them to try counting days and weeks – for example how many "sleeps" until the weekend or a visit to a friend or relative.
- 10 **Identify geometric shapes and sizes.** Play "I Spy". Instead of looking for words beginning with a letter, look for different colours or shapes and count the number you find in the room.

