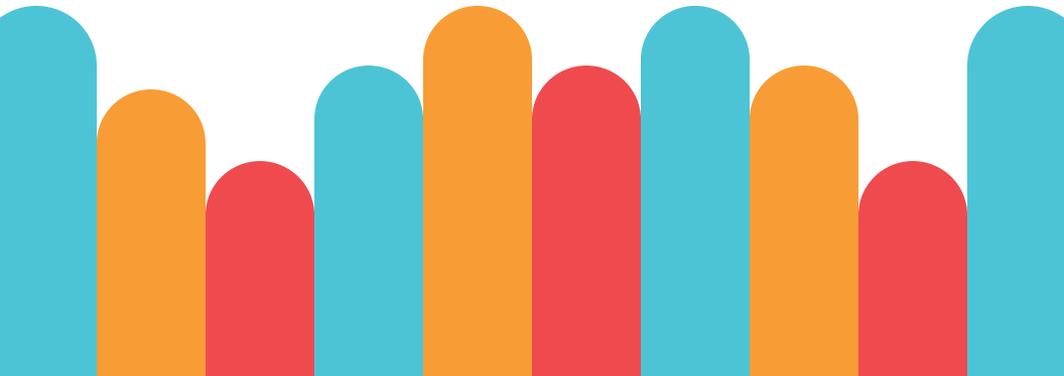


For the
Success
at
School



Saskatchewan Literacy Network



Introduction

This booklet is for everyone who looks after and works with children, preteens and teenagers. This includes parents, foster parents, grandparents and caregivers. It also includes youth workers, sports coaches and community workers.

Families are important. Learning begins in the family. Families have a powerful influence on children of all ages including teenagers.

No two families are alike. Families have different ways of doing things together, but all families are the same in one very important way. They want the best for their children – they want their children to be happy and to have a good life.

Success in school is part of a good life. Today you need at least Grade 12 for most jobs. Strong reading and math skills make everyday life go more smoothly.

This booklet gives some ideas for ways to help your child be successful in school, from preschool through high school, and beyond.

You Are Important

When children go to school they bring with them knowledge, skills and attitudes they have developed at home. When you value learning and encourage your children to learn at home and in the community, your children are more likely to have positive attitudes toward school and the skills they need for success in school.

Most families already show they value education and encourage their children's learning in school.

To help you think about some of the things you are already doing, this booklet includes boxes like the one below. In each box, there is space for you to write about ways you have helped your child.



Building on Success

I remember a time I told my child that education is important.

A Message from Your Child

I do my best work at school when:

- I go to bed early and get a good night's sleep
- I get up at the same time every day to catch the bus or get to school on time
- I eat breakfast every day
- I have a healthy lunch to eat every day
- I am healthy and ready to learn
- I have a quiet place at home to read and learn
- I get exercise every day
- I feel safe and secure in my home, school and community
- I go to school every day

A Foundation for Success

Families are important. What a family does to encourage school success matters more than how much money or education the parents have.

- Have high expectations for your child. When you expect him to do well at school, he probably will.
- Praise your child when he does something well at home or school. One success leads to another!
- Focus on your child's strengths. Every child has skills and strengths, but some children may need help to see their own abilities.
- Fill your home with lots to read. Advertising flyers, catalogues, menus and newsletters are free and fun to read. You can buy books and magazines at garage sales and stores.
- Join the public library. It's free and has books, DVDs and programs for all ages.

Building on Success

I remember a time I congratulated my child on a job well done.

- Let your children see you reading and writing. When they see you reading newspapers or websites, using recipes, or writing notes or e-mails, they will do the same.
- Eat meals together and talk together as you eat. Share events and tell family stories.
- Help your child use language to express feelings:
"I am angry because _____."
"I am happy because _____."
"I am proud because _____."
- Encourage your child to help around the house. Young children can put away their toys and set the table. Teenagers can clean house, cook and work in the yard.
- Take a course or go to a workshop. Your children will see that learning is important.

A Message from Your Child

I feel special when you stop what you are doing and give me your full attention when we are talking.

Students of All Ages

Children, preteens, teens and adults often enjoy these activities. Best of all, your kids are learning and having fun at the same time.

- Do jigsaw puzzles together. Talk about the shapes and colours of the pieces as you put the puzzle together.
- Sing together – there's a song every child will enjoy.

Building on Success
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I remember a time my child and I learned something new together.

- Play board or computer games together. Scrabble, Monopoly and Checkers are fun for older children and teens. Many young children like games where they match colours and shapes.
- Make “to do” lists with your child. Help older children or teens figure out how much time each task will take.
- Encourage your child to keep a scrapbook of pictures, newspaper clippings and photos that interest her, and write about them. If your child can't write yet, she can tell you what to write.
- Read and answer messages together. Talk about your answer before you send it.
- Talk about family plans with your child. Discuss what your family will be doing soon and in the future.

A Message from Your Child
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When you spend time with me, you are showing me that I matter to you, that I am important to you.

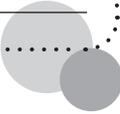
Preschool

We learn from our experiences. Young children who have lots of experiences with language are better prepared for school.

- Encourage your child to colour or draw. Praise his efforts.
- Show your child he is special. Put his art on the wall or the fridge for everyone to see.
- Talk, sing and read together every day.
- Go for a walk outside and talk about what you see.
- Encourage your child to say hello, goodbye, please and thank you politely.
- Show your child how to take turns when playing games or talking.
- Encourage your child to build things by providing blocks, small pieces of wood and sticks.
- Read books with your child about subjects which are interesting to him. Choose books with colourful pictures and short sentences or rhymes.

**Building on
Success**
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I remember a time I read a story over and over to my young child because he loved the repetition.



Grades 1 to 5

Children build new learning on top of what they already know, so the first few years of school are very important.

- Talk together about:
 - Your child's day at school
 - What you see out of the car window
 - A TV program your family watches
 - The weather each day.
- Cook together. Read recipes out loud and talk about measuring the ingredients.
- Keep a file of your child's school work. Look through it with pride and show it to family members.
- Encourage your child to write messages or greeting cards for friends and family.
- Look at websites with your child. Talk about what you see and read on each website.
- Read together. You can read one paragraph and your child can read the next, or ask your child to read to you.
- Create a homework routine, so that your child does homework at the same time and in the same spot every day.
- Help your child pack her school backpack before bedtime. Homework and school books go in the backpack. In the morning she can put her lunch in the backpack and she has everything she needs for school.

Grades 6 to 9

This is a time of great change. Your child's body is changing. Expectations at school are changing. Help your child adjust to these changes.

- Help your child make a daily schedule so there is time for family, friends, homework, quiet time and sleep.
- Grocery shop with your child. Give him a calculator and ask him to keep track of how much you are spending.
- Help your child plan a meal and make a list of the food needed.
- Listen to your child when he talks about his hopes and dreams.
- Take time to be with your child when he wants you to. Do things together that are important to him.
- Give your child some space, but encourage him to come to you with questions, ideas and problems.

Building on Success

I remember a time I was patient with my child when he made a mistake.

Grades 10 to 12

Help your child focus on both the present and the future – succeeding in school now and planning for life after high school.

- Before your teen starts high school, talk about her future plans. Then she will be able to pick the right high school courses.
- Encourage your teen to stay in school and finish Grade 12. High school graduation opens many doors.
- Talk with your teen about life after high school. Does she want to get a job? Does she plan more education? Where will she live?
- Go to career day at school with your teen or to a community job fair. Discuss different career choices.
- Remind your teen that school comes first. Sports and part-time jobs are less important than success in school.
- Help your teen make a budget and manage her money.

A Message from Your Child

Now that I am in high school, I am independent in many ways, but I still need your support and encouragement.

Families and Schools – Partners in Success

Parents and schools are a team. Both are important for school success.

- Be enthusiastic about learning. If you are positive about learning, your child will be too.
- Help your child break a big job down into several small tasks. Then, when he has a big assignment, he will be able to do it step-by-step.
- Encourage your child to stick with a job until it is done. Then he won't give up too soon on school work which is hard or less interesting.
- Help your child set goals and make plans to reach them.
- Visit your child's school regularly. Get to know the teachers.

Building on Success

I remember a time I told my child that success depends on hard work and sticking with a job, not just on being smart.

A Message from Your Child

Talk with me about school – about what's happening at school, what I am doing, and what I am learning. Listen and ask questions. Talking with me about school is one of the most powerful ways to encourage success.

- Go to parent-teacher conferences with your child. Ask questions. Talk about any concerns you have and about your hopes and dreams for your child.
- Read your child's report card and look at the teacher's comments. Discuss the report card with your child.
- Go to school events. Concerts, open houses and sports days are fun for both you and your child.
- Volunteer to help at school. Every parent has skills useful to the school.
- Attend School Community Council meetings.
- Find out about the services and programs the school provides. Some schools have lunch programs, parent programs and clothing banks.

Homework

Most students have homework. The amount depends on the student's age. Young children may have only a few minutes. High school students may have one or two hours each day.

- Encourage your child to develop good study habits.
- Encourage your child to talk with her teacher if she is having trouble with homework.
- Talk with your child about her homework.
What assignments does she have? When are they due?
What can you do to support or help?
- Make a schedule, so your child works on homework at the same time every day.
- Turn off the TV and radio, so your child can think and focus.
- Insist that your child do her own homework. Helping with homework doesn't mean doing it yourself.

A Message from Your Child

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When you believe in me, I believe in myself.

If Your Child Has Problems at School

Maybe your child is having problems at school or with his homework. Here are some steps to follow:

- Talk with your child first and listen to what he says. Get his views on the situation. Ask him what help he needs to solve the problem.
- Talk with the teacher. Take a cooperative approach. You and the teacher both want the best for your child.
- Go to the principal if the teacher can't help you.
- Encourage your child to work with a guidance counsellor or tutor, if this is what the teacher or principal suggests.
- Tell the teacher right away if your child is being bullied. Bullying must be stopped immediately.



Building on Success

I remember a time I talked with my child about a school problem.

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