



Santa Ana Unified School District

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Helping Your Children Achieve

Suggestions for Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians play a very important part in their children's education. Encouraging children to do their best in school and to complete school assignments well and on time can have a positive impact on learning. Research about how children learn shows that a great deal can be done at home to increase their academic performance.

One question you may have about the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is, "How can I help children do better on the tests?" The question really is, "How can I help children do well in school?" What you do at home can make a very big difference in how well children achieve in school.

Most Important of All

Let your children know how important their work at school is and how interested you are in what they are doing. Talk with them every day about:

What they did at school

What homework must be finished for the next day

What needs to be done on a future project

Here are some suggestions for helping children in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas.

In Reading and Writing

Listen to your children read. Read stories aloud to and with them.

Talk about what you and your children are reading. Ask questions and discuss words that are new or difficult.

Spend time together, as a family, reading newspapers, magazines, and books.

Encourage your children to write lists, notes, thank-you notes, requests, journals, recipes, short stories, and other types of writing used in everyday life.

For writing assignments, talk with your children about what the assignment requires; help them list the points to cover. Take your children to the library or help them use the Internet if more information is needed.

Set a limit on the amount of time your children watch television or use the computer. Watch and discuss television programs with them whenever possible.

In Mathematics

Review homework every day with your children to make sure assignments are completed. Ask your children to explain some of their math problems and how they solved them.

Attend parent/guardian classes about mathematics to prepare for questions that your children might ask at home.

Have your children help solve "real" mathematical problems as you play games, cook a meal, or prepare to do a home project.

Show your children how mathematics is used in everyday life, including cooking, shopping, making crafts, sewing, or doing home repairs.

Help your children read charts or graphs in newspapers and magazines. Read maps when going on a family trip. It is important to help your children apply what they are learning.

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In Other Academic Areas

Other academic areas, such as science and history-social science, challenge children to use reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with their knowledge about the subject. As your children read about a subject, ask them to tell you about it. This reinforces what they have learned and promotes the use of their new vocabulary.

Share your interest in any academic area because children become interested in what is discussed at home. Family trips to museums, special television programs, news about a recent scientific discovery, or important world and local events should be shared and discussed. At times, let your children take the lead in talking about topics of interest to them.

You Can Help Your Children Do Better on State Tests

Visit the school to find out how your children's classroom instruction addresses California content standards.

Attend parent/guardian-teacher conferences to find out how well your children are achieving and what they need to do to improve.

Discuss with your children the importance of going to school every day and doing their best on assignments and tests.

Make sure your children have a quiet place to study and that they complete all homework assignments.

Attend parent/guardian information meetings. Ask about the major tests given to children and other ways academic achievement is measured.

Know when the major tests, such as tests in the STAR Program, are given and find out what you can do to help make sure your children are prepared.

Discuss upcoming tests with your children and try to reduce their anxieties about test taking. Reassure children that the test results will provide useful information about what they know and what they still need to learn.

Make sure your children attend school on testing days, get a good night's rest, and have breakfast before a big test.

Get Involved

Children do better in school when parents and guardians get involved. In addition to the suggestions already described in this brochure, you can become involved by attending school events, joining parent/guardian groups, and visiting your school's Web page.

You also are encouraged to contact the school for additional information about your children's academic progress and the tests they are taking at school.

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