Dear Parents,

Books were big in my home this holiday season. I am always amazed how important and caring the gift of a personally selected book from a special person can be. I think of a book as a “gift that keeps on giving.”

Book ownership characterizes successful readers. Researchers have documented that in families with children who have been successful in learning to read and who enjoy reading, each child owns some books and has a place to keep them. The books don’t have to be fancy or new, and the place to keep them could be a cardboard box. Easy access to other “tools” of literacy, including magazines, paper, markers, tape, blank sheets of paper stapled together, and magic slates, encourage young authors. Reading and writing are closely connected skills. When one is strong, it helps the other.

As you read to your child, remember to take time to explore the pictures. When readers connect pictures with what they’re reading, it helps them understand. Ask your child questions such as:

- What is the picture showing?
- What does the picture have to do with what you’re reading?
- Why has the author included the picture?
- What does the picture tell that the words don’t?

Encourage children to use the clues from the pictures to make a guess when they are having trouble with a word. Struggling too much can take the fun out of reading. I urge you to give help when words don’t come easily. You can tell your child to skip over the word or ask him what word would make sense in its place. Don’t hesitate to supply the word and keep reading to keep up the momentum. Some children are naturally good phonetic readers; they have the greatest success when asked to “sound out” the word. Most importantly ask your child what good readers do when they come to a word they don’t know; they should be able to tell you.

Parents can nurture their child’s reading and writing growth by following the same path that led your child to be successful with learning to talk…take the time, appreciate your child’s efforts and trust your instincts.

Thanks for being our partner in learning,

Susan Z. Owner
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<td>Club/Group and Candid Photos</td>
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<td>BART Testing (gr. 3-6)</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>3-4 Drama (B)</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>REACH WEEK BEGINS</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>3-4 Drama (B)</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>3-4 Drama (B)</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>STUDENT HOLIDAY - NO SCHOOL</td>
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<td>3-4 Drama (B)</td>
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<td>3-4 Chess Group</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>3-4 Drama (B)</td>
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<td>3-4 Chess Group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

REACH WEEK - JANUARY 27th through FEBRUARY 2nd
Thank you to all of our families who were so giving and kind to us over the holidays. The generosity of our school community is amazing. We are so fortunate to enjoy the kindness of the Island Creek School Community.

Level IV GT Center Screening Referral
Deadline Is Approaching!

The countywide central selection committee reviews candidates for GT center placement and makes eligibility decisions for Level IV services. Parents and guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the GT center screening process by completing and submitting a Gifted and Talented GT Center Referral form to the local school by February 1, 2006. Forms are available on the GT website and in the Parent Information Packet available in the Island Creek ES office or from Cindy Roberts, GT Specialist at Island Creek ES. (Students in the second grade pool are automatically screened for GT center placement. Letters are mailed to second grade parents if their child is in the pool in January. Second graders not in the pool and all third through seventh graders are screened only by referral.)

For additional information contact:
Cindy Roberts – GTS at Island Creek, cindy.roberts@fcps.edu
The GT Programs Office at Lacey Center
703-846-8670

The GT web site: http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt

Frequently Asked Questions http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt/faqs.htm

Referral Forms at http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt/forms.htm

Workshops - Adults
- Anger Management
- Bullying
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Use
- Depression & Suicide
- Single Parenting
- How to Talk to Your Kids
- About Sex, Dating & Divorce
- Raising Responsible Children
- Internet Safety
- Gangs
- Self-Defense (for Females Only)

Workshops - Youth
For youth 12-18 Years of Age
(Some facilitated by youth leaders)
- Teen Maze (The game of Life)
- Living With Single Parents
- Relationships (Separated by Miles & Females)
- Depression/Suicide
- Eating Disorders
- Reality of Using Drugs
- Unsafe and Drunk Driving
- Gangs
- Self-Defense (for Females Only)
- Race Relations and Religion
- Conflict Management & Role Play
- And Lots More

Riding the Wave 2
A Prevention Conference
Tools for Safely Surfing the Elementary Through High School Years
for Parents and Youth

8:00 AM Registration FREE
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM Workshops
Door Prizes for Youth
Exhibitors With Giveaways and Resource Information
Continental Breakfast
Concessions
Translation Services Available

Saturday March 3rd 2007
South County Secondary School
The West Springfield and Robinson Community Coalitions are partnering with us this year.
Online Databases

Courtesy of FCPS, the following databases are available for home use:

User name: fairfax
Password: 22003

**GROLIER:** Collection of online encyclopedias, including New Book of Knowledge, Encyclopedia Americana, Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, etc. Access at [http://go.grolier.com](http://go.grolier.com)
User name: fairfax
Password: Fairfax

**EBSCO PUBLISHING:** Databases of a wide variety of magazines. PDF format is available for some articles. Access at [http://search.ebscohost.com](http://search.ebscohost.com)
User name: fairfax
Password: fairfax

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**6th Grade Book Club**

Join us on January 18th at 7:30am for the 6th Grade Book Club. We are reading “Peter and the Starcatchers” by Dave Barry. All sixth grade students are welcome. New members are encouraged to attend!

You can access the library catalog from home: [http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhthin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/57/49?user_id=429WEB](http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhthin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/57/49?user_id=429WEB)
Register For Keep in Touch

Register now for Keep in Touch, a service that allows employees, parents and others interested in emergency messages and other information about the school system to receive updates via e-mail. Participants set up individualized profiles and receive the most up-to-date information as soon as it is available. To sign up, visit the FCPS web site at www.fcps.edu and choose ‘Keep in Touch’ on the left hand side.

Or, visit direct: http://fcps.medianext.com/fcps/signup.html

Text Message Option Added to Keep in Touch

Employees, parents and others interested in emergency messages from the school system can now receive those messages to cell phones and other text message devices. Register for this service at the FCPS home page, www.fcps.edu; choose ‘Keep in Touch’ on the left hand side.

New subscribers should start by entering an e-mail address. Current subscribers should select the “update my profile” link. To receive emergency messages to a cell phone, simply enter the cell phone number in the fields provided. Questions can be directed to Rose Kaspersen in the Office of Community Relations by e-mailing her at Rose.Kaspersen@fcps.edu.

Three Ways to Purchase School Meals: Online Payment, Check, or Cash

Fairfax County Public Schools is pleased to announce that it now offers three ways to pay for school meals:

- **Online**—Using www.myLunchMoney.com—The service is easy to use, convenient, private, and secure. There is a convenience fee of $1.95 per transaction. Once the account is open, parents may check the fund account at any time from computer or phone.

- **Check**—Write a check—made out to (School Name) Food and Nutrition Services—and bring the check to the food service manager’s office. A parent who wants his or her check payments to be for meals only (no a la carte items) should write it on the check or tell the manager.

- **Cash**—Cash may be brought to the food service manager’s office for deposit in student accounts, or students may pay cash for breakfast and lunch on a daily basis.

### 2006-07 School Meal Prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced-Price Meals</td>
<td>$.30</td>
<td>$.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Snack - Milk</td>
<td>$.50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk or Juice plus Snack</td>
<td>$.75</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

School lunch menus, updated monthly, are available at http://www.fcps.edu/parents/schlunch.htm.
Two-Hour Late Opening on Monday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 1-6</th>
<th>Grades 1-6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Monday Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:20-12:10</td>
<td>10:20-3:00</td>
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<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Monday Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a.m. 8:20-10:15</td>
<td>a.m. 10:20-12:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>p.m. 10:15-12:10</td>
<td>p.m. 12:40-3:00</td>
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<th>Preschool</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Monday Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a.m. 9:15-11:15</td>
<td>a.m. Classes Canceled</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.m. 11:15-1:15</td>
<td>p.m. 12:20-3:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Day 9:15-1:15</td>
<td>Full Day 11:15-3:45</td>
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Two-Hour Late Opening on Tuesday Through Friday

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<tr>
<th>Grades 1-6</th>
<th>Grades 1-6</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Tues-Fri Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Tues-Fri</strong></td>
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<td>8:20-3:00</td>
<td>10:20-3:00</td>
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<th>Kindergarten</th>
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<td><strong>Regular Tues-Fri Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Tues-Fri</strong></td>
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<td>p.m. 11:40-3:00</td>
<td>p.m. 12:40-3:00</td>
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<th>Preschool</th>
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<td><strong>Regular Tues-Fri Schedule</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two-Hour Late Opening on Tues-Fri</strong></td>
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<td>a.m. 9:15-12:30</td>
<td>a.m. Classes Canceled</td>
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<tr>
<td>p.m. 12:20-3:45</td>
<td>p.m. 12:20-3:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Day 9:15-3:45</td>
<td>Full Day 11:15-3:45</td>
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ANNOUNCEMENTS TO PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND EMPLOYEES

A. Web Site
All emergency closings and delayed openings shall be listed on the Fairfax County Public Schools web site: www.fcps.edu.

B. Electronic Mail
All emergency closings and delayed openings shall be sent by electronic mail (email) to all employees and to the community through the division’s e-mail notification system.

C. Hot Line
All messages shall be recorded and carried on the division’s emergency hot line, 800-839-FCPS (3277).

D. Cable Channel 21
All messages shall be carried on the division’s public access channel, Cox Cable Channel 21.

E. Radio and Television
1. All-day closings and delayed openings are provided to local radio and television stations no later than 5:30 a.m.
2. Early closings are provided to local stations no later than 10:30 a.m.

F. Keep In Touch
1. All FCPS schools are able to send messages with Keep in Touch. If you subscribe you will have the option of receiving various information including emergency closures and delayed openings. To subscribe go to: www.fcps.edu and click on “Keep in Touch”.
Helping Children Learn
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Island Creek Elementary School
January 2007

BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS

Children need stress relief, too
Children who have too much stress often exhibit difficult behavior. They may become shy, anxious, or withdrawn. They might resort to uncontrollable crying or angry outbursts. Some preschoolers regress to an earlier stage of development, such as by thumb sucking. To minimize your child’s stress and help her cope:

- **Let your child go at her own pace** when playing and learning.
- **Plan activities that emphasize cooperation,** not competition.
- **Boost your child’s self-esteem.** Help her feel proud—not ashamed—of herself.
- **Have reasonable, clear expectations** of your child.
- **Be patient and encouraging** in good times and bad.
- **Make time to listen** to your child’s concerns every day.
- **Talk about feelings.** Say that it’s okay to feel angry, sad or scared. Use art, puppetry and play to express emotions.
- **Find ways to eliminate** sources of stress.
- **Teach relaxation techniques,** such as taking deep breaths.
- **Encourage your child to run,** jump, climb, etc., to relieve tension.

If your child’s signs of stress persist, don’t hesitate to get help from teachers and other professionals.


EXPANDING YOUR CHILD’S WORLD

Let your child learn from plants
Gardening is a fun way to introduce kids to the world of science. It also promotes patience and responsibility. Start with an easy-care, child-safe houseplant. Teach your child:

- **Where to put the plant.** Talk about its need for sun, but avoid too much direct light.
- **How to water the plant.** Show your child how to check the dirt to see if it’s dry.

- **How to dust plant leaves.** Dust blocks sunlight and prevents photosynthesis.
- **How to mist the plant.** Give your child a sprayer filled with lukewarm water. Try to save seeds from citrus fruits. Help your child plant them in a six-inch pot. When a seedling sprouts at least four leaves, transfer it to its own pot.


DISCIPLINE

Stay calm during tantrums
Preschoolers, especially before they turn five, put their own wants and needs first. This helps to explain stubborn behavior. Remember to:

- **Let your child choose between two options** whenever possible.
- **Enforce** a few simple rules instead of overwhelming your child with limits.
- **Give** your child little responsibilities that she can handle successfully.


READING READINESS

Applaud reading attempts
Predictable books repeat words or actions, helping kids get comfortable with stories. When you read these books often, your child will learn words and phrases. This builds vocabulary and confidence. Soon he’ll be “reading” with you.


BUILDING MOTOR SKILLS

Motor skills help your child with basic school activities
Children need strong motor skills in kindergarten. For example, they should be able to:

- **Skip** (step-hop, step-hop).
- **Put** large beads on a string.
- **Draw** a person with several body parts.
- **Cut** with safety scissors.
- **Hop** a few times in a row.
- **Stand** on one foot for five seconds.


Are preschoolers responsible for lying?

Q: It makes me angry when my child lies. But I don’t think he’s doing it on purpose. Does this make sense?
A: Yes, because preschoolers often have trouble telling the difference between reality and make-believe. Your anger may confuse and frighten your son. Remember that preschoolers:

- **Have active imaginations.** They are in the “age of fantasy.” Your child may simply describe what he wishes were true. That means he’s pretending, not lying.
- **Think they are telling parents the “right thing.”** Your child may think you’d rather hear, “I didn’t paint on the wall” than the facts.
- **Need excellent role models.** Be honest with your child and others. If your child hears you fibbing, he’ll assume he should do the same.
- **Want parents’ help.** If you know your child has lied, be matter-of-fact. “That’s not what happened. You made a mistake and told me something that’s not true. Please tell me the real story.”
- **Succeed with loving support.** Treat your child with calm understanding. You want to send him the message that he can always come to you with the truth.


**PARENT QUIZ**

Are you teaching how to tell time?

Most preschoolers can’t tell time. But there are activities that prepare them to learn this skill. To see if you’re helping, answer the following questions yes or no.

1. **Do you describe** the time of day? (“It’s nighttime. It’s dark outside.”)
2. **Do you connect** numbers to routines? (“It’s one o’clock. Time for your nap.”)
3. **Do you explain** the clock? (“This is the second hand.”)
4. **Do you time** activities? (“Let’s see how many spaces the minute hand moves while you eat.”)
5. **Do you refer** to clock numbers? (“We’ll leave when the little hand is on the two.”)

How did you do? Each yes answer shows that you’re teaching about time. For each no answer, try to change your answer to yes.

---

**Developing Concepts**

Teach chronological order

Understanding the order of events—a-called sequencing—is necessary in math and reading. Begin with the basic concepts of “before” and “after.” Give your child examples. “After breakfast, we’ll read a story.” “Brush your teeth before bed.” It’s helpful to connect new concepts to familiar routines.


**Building Language Skills**

Try to expand conversations

Having many back-and-forth verbal exchanges is important for speech development. It’s especially helpful for kids with speech delays. Try asking your child how, why and what questions. Also:

- **Give your child chances to talk** with other kids. Encourage him to listen and respond.
- **Make silly sounds.** Roar. Moo. Turn this into a “Simon Says” game.
- **Read books that encourage talking,** such as Wilt Berry’s *Let’s Talk About.* Ask a librarian for ideas.


**Building Math Skills**

Make patterns with music

Math is based on patterns. To teach about patterns through music:

- **Sing songs that repeat** phrases, such as “B-I-N-G-O.”
- **Make patterns.** Clap twice. Stomp your feet. Repeat.


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Editor: Jennifer McCovern.
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Illustrations: Maher & Mignella, Cherry Hill, NJ.
La vida es estresante para los niños también

Los niños de enseñanza primaria pueden parecer maduros. Pero algunas veces empiezan a tener arreglos que se convierten en el estilo de los niños. Es por eso que exactamente como los adultos, tienen estrés en sus vidas, pero carecen de las habilidades emocionales para sobrellevarlo. Para minimizar los arrebatos de su niño, trate de entender qué es lo que lo conduce a ellos. Para ayudarlo a reconocer y lidiar con las señales de estrés, sugiérele que:

- **Se vuelva conciente de las señales que está “perdiendo los estribos”**, como punos apretados, respiración rápida, lágrimas, un dolor de estómago o un dolor de cabeza.
- **Se aparte de la situación** durante un descanso de cinco minutos. Puede regresar cuando se sienta lo suficiente compuesto.
- **Trape de relajarse**, respirando profundamente, regateando un pelota. Que cuente hasta diez lentamente. O que piense, “Puedo superar esto.”
- **Se imagine ser un personaje de caricatura** echando vapor de los ojos. Que cuente en voz alta hasta que vea que desaparezce el vapor.
- **Escriba o dibuje sus sentimientos**. Que enrolle el papel y lo tire.
- **Hable de cualquier cosa**. Cuando su niño esté pasando apuros, aléntelo a identificar sus sentimientos.
- **Haga memoria de su recuerdo familiar más chistoso**. Que lo imagine varias veces al día hasta que pueda “encenderlo en su mente” cuando esté enojado.


El aprendizaje

Los juegos ayudan a hacer la historia

Memorizar un montón de nombres, fechas y lugares puede resultar aburrido. Para hacer la historia más significativa y divertida, juegue juegos como:

- **Recordar a personas**. Prepare tarjetas que describan figuras históricas. Céntrese en cada una tenga una pareja igual. Luego juegue al “reciendo” tradicional.
- **Lotería de historia**. Haga tarjetas de lotería con fechas o eventos importantes en ellas. Cuando estén jugando, pronuncien el nombre de la persona que coincida.
- **Adivinanzas de personajes**. Un jugador finge ser alguien de la historia sin hablar o decir el nombre; los otros adivinan de quién se trata.
- **Adivinanzas**. Hable de las razones de los momentos que se ven en la historia. ¿Por qué pienso su niño que esto pasó? ¿Qué podría haber pensado la gente de ese tiempo?


¿Cuánta tarea es demasiada?

P: Mi niño de quinto grado tiene mucha tarea. Estudia cuando menos tres horas cada día—algunas veces más. Se le hace difícil hacer cualquier otra cosa.

¿Cuánta tarea es demasiada?

R: La tarea ayuda a los alumnos a salir mejor en la escuela. Pero de tres a cuatro horas al día es excesivo. La mayoría de los expertos dicen que en los grados K-2, los niños deben hacer alrededor de 10 a 20 minutos de tarea diariamente. En los grados 3-6, la mayoría puede manejar de 30 minutos a una hora cada día.

Empiece identificando la causa del problema. ¿Elige un tiempo prudente? ¿Se pone a trabajar inmediatamente o se entretiene? ¿Trabaja sin parar (durante menos de 15 minutos a la vez), o tiene descansos constantes?

Si el manejo del tiempo es el problema, haga de la tarea un juego. Eche a andar un cronómetro y establezca un objetivo—como diez problemas de matemáticas. Si puede “ganarle al reloj,” déle un premio o un descanso breve.

Pero sí está estudiando mucho y constantemente, hable con el maestro. Puede tratarse de un problema a nivel de la clase. Si no, consiga ayuda adicional. Trabajando con el maestro, usted puede mantener el equilibrio entre la tarea y otras materias importantes de emplear el tiempo.

Ayude a los niños tímidos a participar en clase

Si su niño es tímido y titubea para hablar en clase, ayúdelo a hacerlo en casa. Por ejemplo, pídale su opinión con frecuencia. ¿Cuál programa de televisión es mejor? ¿Quién va a ganar el Superfútbol? Esto lo ayudará a practicar cómo expresar sus pensamientos en palabras.


Hable con su estudiante respecto a hacer trampas

Algunas veces los niños alentan a sus compañeros a hacer trampas. Si los padres no han adoptado una postura firme contraria a hacer trampas, puede ser aún más tentador clase que por vencido. Digale a su niño que hacer trampas está mal. Explíquele por qué. Si su niño confiesa que ha hecho trampas, reaccione con tranquilidad. Elogie su honestidad y ayúdelo a aprender del error.

Ayude a los demás, ayúde a todos

Los buenos ciudadanos piensan en las necesidades de otras personas no sólo en las suyas. Se sienten responsables de hacer del mundo un lugar mejor. Los niños que tienen tales cualidades también las pasan mejor en la escuela. Ayude a su niño a:

- **Conocer a modelos de buena conducta.** Ustedes podrían hablar con un agente de policía o con una enfermera. Pregúntele qué hacen y cómo se sienten al respecto.
- **Darles las gracias a las personas de la comunidad que ayudan.** Llamele algo especial (una tarjeta de agradecimiento hecha en casa, por ejemplo), a alguien que le merezca, como una persona que sirve como voluntaria en la escuela.


Ayudando a los niños a Aprender


Los niños necesitan modelos en lugar de críticos. —Joseph Joubert

[Notas: Esta página contiene información educativa sobre cómo ayudar a los niños a enfrentar problemas académicos y sociales. También ofrece consejos para ayudar a los niños a desarrollar destrezas en las relaciones y a funcionar mejor en la escuela.]