

Helping Boys & Girls Learn

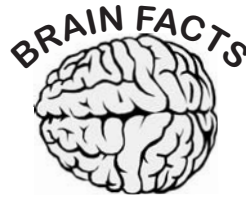
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Parenting for Success in Elementary School

Back To School Tips

Set back the clock. Usually summer schedules are more relaxed than school schedules. Maybe you permit your child to stay up later and sleep later during the summer. If so, adjust their schedule back to school times at the beginning of school. Bedtime can be set a half an hour earlier every couple of days until the schedule is back to school bedtimes. Wake-up time can also be adjusted. Sleep is very important to growing children. Most growth happens during sleep. If your child is having trouble adjusting to the sleep schedule, make sure there is a bedtime routine to follow (bathe, brush teeth, use the restroom, change to pajamas, bedtime story, lights out). A small glass of warm milk is often just the thing for helping a child drift off to sleep.

Homework already! Boys' grades throughout school tend to be lower than girls' and one reason is that girls turn in their homework more regularly than boys! Find ways to help your son get into a positive homework routine. Don't require him to sit down immediately when he gets home from school and do homework. His brain has been bombarded with information all day long and needs some down time to process that information before "working" more. Some active play, a healthy snack and some stress-free conversation can help get him in the mind set to do homework--and let him choose where to do the homework. If he wants to lay on the floor or stand at the kitchen counter so be it--where it gets done isn't nearly as important as the fact that it GETS DONE! Developing a positive routine for getting homework completed will help your boys (and girls) all the way through school.



Research has shown that:

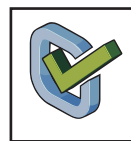
Children who skip breakfast are less able to distinguish among similar images, show increased errors, and have slower memory recall.

When children are hungry they have lower math scores and are more likely to have to repeat a grade.

Behavioral, emotional and academic problems are more prevalent among children who are nutritionally deficient.

Want both your boys and girls to be better prepared to learn at school? Make sure they eat a healthy, protein-rich breakfast each morning!

Food Research & Action Center, Washington D.C.



Check This Out

Resources for Parents

Website for parents:

<http://www.outdoor-nature-child.com>

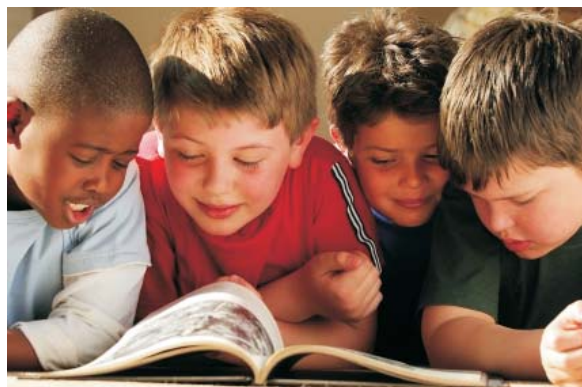
A free site that includes nature activities for children as a gateway for children to enter the natural world. Here you will find games, activities, stories, nature books, wilderness skills and much more.

Helping Boys Become Readers

What can parents and teachers do to help adolescent boys become stronger readers?

While there is no “silver bullet” that will help all boys become stronger readers, research suggests there are several strategies adults can employ to facilitate their reading development.

Use texts boys like to read. While boys generally perform lower than girls on reading assessments, there is one area in which they actually “outscore” the girls. Boys’ scores on sections of tests featuring informational texts are often higher than those of girls. This seems to indicate that informational texts are of more interest to boys. Teachers and parents should provide boys with informational texts to read and learn from, including magazine and newspaper articles, non-fiction books about topics boys are interested in (like hobbies or sports) and instructional manuals. Boys also like graphic novels and comic books, stories featuring male protagonists, humorous stories and works that allow them to escape (such as science-fiction and fantasy). Offering these texts to boys as instructional tools or for pleasure reading will increase their interest in reading.



How much television is OK?

Having a TV in the bedroom has been linked to lower scores on standardized math, language, and reading tests in the third grade.

Children who watch the most TV between the ages of 5 and 11 are less likely to graduate from college.

Excessive television viewing among children has been linked to a greater risk of obesity and violent behavior. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*

Know your boys and appeal to their individual interests and preferences.

Boys are more likely to become engaged in their learning when they feel like it has some application to their lives. When adults take the time to get to know what makes a child “tick” and then tailors their reading experiences to fit the child, he will embrace the activity. This is not only true for boys. Any child, male or female, wants to see value in what they are doing. Take time to discover what your children are interested in and offer them texts that speak to their interests and preferences.



Provide opportunities to immediately apply what they have read.

Boys generally do not like to focus on learning information that they might use later. Saying “you’ll need to know this in a few years” or “this will help you later in life” causes many male students to tune an adult out. Instead, allow boys to immediately apply what they learn through reading so that they develop the understanding that reading has real life value. For example, if your class is reading an informational article about the effects of global warming ask students (boys and girls alike) to write a letter to their congressperson(s) or an environmental group stating their views on the topic and offering solutions to the issue. For your more visual spatial learners, often boys and some girls, let them make posters to hang up in school and around the community educating people about what they have learned about global warming.



A-B-Cs

Boys generally develop language skills later than girls, so help your boy by including lots of words in his world. Talk to him, read to him, listen to him, play word games--and by all means possible make words fun!

How to Encourage Your Son To Read:

Let your son see you reading--books, newspapers, or magazines. Make reading part of your household. Read aloud to him and encourage him to read to you.

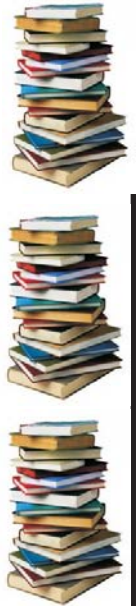
Leave books lying around the house. Buy some books that are likely to appeal to your son, or get a stack for free at your public library.

For those boys who fear being teased, reading may be essentially private. Respect that he may not want to talk about everything he reads or be praised for reading (depending, of course, on the child).

Subscribe to a magazine that might interest him.

Encourage relatives and family friends whom your son loves and admires to give books as presents. When giving him presents you might combine a book with another interest, such as a soccer ball and a soccer book.

Let your child make choices at the library or bookstore, and don't criticize his interests. Let him pick books that are too easy but may be comforting, or books that are too hard but have interesting pictures or photographs. It's also important to let him explore various topics, even if they don't fit stereotypical male interests, without being teased.



While girls tend to develop advanced language skills early, their spatial skills may be on a slower track. Including lots of spatial play in their play activities like those listed will be fun and promote early learning of math concepts and skills needed in kindergarten and elementary school.

1-2-3s

The Girl Scouts of America offers a downloadable 14 page booklet entitled *It's Her Future: Encourage a Girl in Math, Science, and Technology*. Send the link to parents, mentors, or anyone you know that works with girls. The book provides down-to-earth tips for encouraging girls to excel in math and science as well as exciting experiments for girls to conduct. Young women will have a blast as they construct a Jell-O mountain, build their own rocket ship, and put together a moving paper snake.

To download this booklet, go to:

http://www.girlsgotech.org/girlsgotech_booklet.pdf

