

# Parenting Hints and Tips to Help Your Child Learn and Grow

*Source: Child Welfare League of America*

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## **Rainy Day and School Vacation Activities That Can Help Your Child Learn**

### **✓ Car Games**

- Pick any subject (examples: animals, states, colors, etc.) The person who starts names one item, the second person adds something to the list along with what the first person said and so on. This is a memory game and continues until someone mixes up the order or forgets one.
- Start a story. Someone starts telling a story and when he/she gets to an exciting part, it's the next person's turn. See what kind of funny story all of you can end up with.
- Pick a subject and use the alphabet. Each person has to name something in the subject in alphabetical order.

### **✓ Visit Places in Your Own Town**

Have your children go to a library or call your local Chamber of Commerce to do some research on interesting places right in your own town. Either find a good map or have them make one to highlight the places you'll visit. Have them list the things you'll do at these places and if possible have them get a postcard from each place.

### **✓ How About an I'm Bored Jar**

Find an old jar or can and keep slips of paper and a marker or pen near it. Tell your children to pick an activity they would enjoy doing, write it down on the slip of paper. Tell them that this jar or can will be used on those "I'm bored days." Some examples

are: do a puzzle, write a letter, play a card game, draw and paint a picture, plan for a trip, clean out a closet, etc. Yes those chores that you've been meaning to do can be included!

### ● **Some School and Homework Ideas**

Every child learns in a different way. Some children are visual learners, and some children are auditory learners. Here are some hints for both ways:

#### ✓ **Visual Learner**

- Visual learners of course learn best when they can **see** what they are learning.
- Help your child write out and post important words and ideas.
- If your child is working on a certain city or state, find a map that is detailed or you can copy a map from a book and draw certain details on the map yourself.
- Time lines of important dates are helpful.
- Make flash cards to study spelling words or a foreign language.
- Help your child draw a picture or diagram of what they are attempting to learn.

#### ✓ **Auditory Learners**

- Auditory learners learn mainly through their ears. They could most likely say an answer, but might find it difficult to write it down.
- Make up poems or rhymes. Many times the first letter of each word in a certain topic can be used to make a funny saying. For example, "My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas." The first letter of each word represents the order of the planets in the solar system starting from the sun. (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto).
- Say important dates out loud many times.
- Suggest the use of a tape recorder to take notes while studying. Your child can play the tape back for review.

Another fun way to help a child study is by role playing. Have your child be the teacher and you be the student. Your child can teach you the lesson and he/she will be learning it as well.

### ● **Homework Time**

- Set a solid time for homework. Some children need to let off steam after being in school all day, so after dinner may be the time to start homework. Some children get tired early, so homework may need to begin shortly after school. Work it out with your child on what time is best and come to an agreement on the time and make a routine out of it.

- Adopt a "There's No Such Thing As 'No Homework'" attitude Monday through Thursday. Once your child is in middle school it is likely that there will be homework nightly. Many children will come home and tell you they don't have any homework when there really was some. It could of been a test they really need to study for and they're waiting until the last minute to do so. You can make up their homework. Make up some math facts you know they are having problems with, have them write out their spelling words and put them in a sentence, or have them do some reading. You'll be surprised how this will in turn make them decide bringing home that work is much better!
- Have your child find the best place to do homework and make that the Homework place. It becomes a routine for them and it helps them concentrate on the fact it's homework time.
- Make sure there are supplies (pens, pencil, paper, etc.) at your child's study place. This helps them get settled down quicker when everything is right there.
- Some children need complete quiet and some children may need soft music playing in the background. Low music is fine, but the television should be off during homework time.
- Work on your own projects near your child. You can do your bills, write letters or even read a book. This can send a message to your child that you think homework time is important.
- Try to remember to ask your child at least once a month if there are any big projects going on in school. Ask them to bring home an outline of the project and post it where it's visible. Have your child help you gather the materials needed for the project and have it handy to remind your child he or she needs to start working on the project. Put a calendar in your child's room and have your child mark the day he or she will start working on the project.
- As much as possible allow your child to have some control over homework time. Let him/her pick the place, come to an agreement on the time, etc. Set rules and be handy if your child needs help. Offer suggestions, but let your child make the decision on how he or she will do their work.
- Allow small breaks for large projects or large amounts of studying.

### ● **Helping Your Child Do Better On Tests**

As we are aware, tests are part of school life. Some children are at ease with studying for tests and some feel very pressured and studying can become a chore for them. This could cause your child to do poorly on a test when he or she really knew the answers.

### ✓ **How to Help Your Child Feel Less Pressured**

- Explain to your child that everyone handles studying differently. Everyone has their strong points and their weak points. Talk to them about how they can

- deal with the parts they have the most trouble with. Help them come up with ideas on how they believe they can retain what they are studying.
- Encourage them to skip the trouble spots on a test and go on to the next question. They will find that they really do know the answers to many of the questions and they can go back to the trouble spots. Many times when a child stays on the tough spot, he or she will find that the time is up and rush to answer the remaining questions, therefore answering the question wrong when they could of answered them right. Tell them you would much rather see quality than quantity.
  - Remind your child to listen and follow the directions. The teacher usually offers a lot of information before a test which could help your child through the trouble spots.
  - If there is time before a test, tell your child to look over his or her notes before taking a test.
  - Teach your child to remember the clue words about a subject. Many times a child will read through a chapter and become overwhelmed thinking they need to remember every word. For example when it comes to a vocabulary test they will be given a paper that has the words in one column and very short definitions in the other. Those short definitions are usually the clue words defining the vocabulary word.
  - It's important that your child try to get to bed early the night before a test.
  - Make a point to stress to your child that cramming doesn't work. A little bit of studying each night can go a longer way than cramming a whole chapter into one night.

## ● **Some Ideas To Help Your Child Learn From Mistakes**

### ✔ **Turning Defeats Into Victories**

- Praise. Remind your child that he/she tried their best and that you're very proud of their efforts.
- Help your child find something he/she can learn. You can do this by having your child write a list of the things he/she already learned or can learn from a certain experience. From there you can talk about what new skills he/she learned and what things she/he may want to different the next time.
- Have your child point out all the good things that happened.
- Most of all remind your child that you love her/him for who they are, not for what they did.

### ✔ **Are You Putting Too Much Pressure On Your Child?**

As we all know, we want our children to achieve their very best, but sometimes we may not realize that we may be causing our child to feel more pressured than they

need to be. Just as we try to teach our children to try to do things differently, here are some questions we can ask ourselves in order for us to possibly do things differently:

- When you watch your child play a sport what do you do? Do you point out what they may have done wrong or do you focus on the fun of participating?
- When your child brings home a test, do you first ask about the questions answered wrong or do you look for what he/she got right?
- When your child does a household chore, do you tell your child he/she didn't do it right or do you thank your child for helping?
- When you talk to your child, so you mentioned what he/she hasn't done (example: clean room, do dishes) or do you try to say something positive about the things they do?

Of course, there's nothing wrong with being critical about some things, but you may want to stop and ask yourself if there is a balance.

A good quote to keep in mind regarding this is: "*If I Had To Live My Life Over Again, I'd Dare To Make More Mistakes Next Time.*" -- Nadine Stair. After all, part of learning is learning from one's mistakes!