

Parents & School Together for Success



The Parent Information & Resource Center Newsletter for parents and families

Fall 2009

2nd Annual Conference for Parents –

Learning Starts at Home

SD Department of Education and SD Parent Information Resource Center are sponsors of the 2nd Annual Conference for Parents — Learning Starts at Home – Friday and Saturday September 25 and 26, 2009 at the Ramkota Inn in Rapid City and is FREE to registered participants.

Friday evening will offer focused information for parents of all ages. There will be 2 sessions Friday evening – so if you are the parent of a child in 4th grade and a child in 8th grade – you will be able to attend a session focused on each of their age/grade levels. Focused sessions include:

- Early Learning Guidelines and Early Literacy for parents of pre-school aged children
- Math and Science will be the focus for parents of children from 1st through 8th grade. (There will be individual sessions for parents of children K-3, 4-5, and 6-8.) Parents will hear about math and science in the classroom, but more importantly – what they can do to support math and science learning at home!
- Parents of young adults in high school will learn about potential careers in math/science fields and how they can best guide and support their children to successful post-secondary education and/or work.
- Parents of children with disabilities will hear about transition planning and social skills.

Saturday will begin with a breakfast and keynote address from Keith Moore, the former Director of Indian Education at the SD Dept. of Education. Parents will be able to attend breakout sessions on variety of topics. Session topics range from internet safety, test taking skills, the birth to 3 program, using games to reinforce learning, school report cards, building relationships with educators and LOTS more!

Learning Starts At Home conference addresses the positive impact parents can have on their children's growth and achievement. For more information contact Lori at 800-219-6247 or Dawn at 605-773-2535; to register log onto www.sdpirc.org or www.doe.sd.gov

Make this the “BEST SCHOOL YEAR EVER!”

With the start of a new school year, view this as an opportunity to make this be the best school year ever! Parent involvement makes a difference in a child's development, education, and success in life! We often think of parent involvement as how much time is spent at the school or on a homework assignment. However, parent involvement in a child's education does not refer only to how many times or hours a parent has been present at the school; involvement encompasses a wide-spectrum of parent/child interactions at home and away from school.

The significant ways in which parents can influence learning are through the values, attitudes, and materials found in the home environment. Three factors in which parents exercise authority – 1) how much reading material is available in the home; 2) how much time is spent watching television; and 3) regular attendance at school – were significant factors in states that were rated high for educational achievement. Parents are in an exclusive position to be aware of and in charge of these factors and to consequently provide a home supportive of learning. (Strong Families, Strong Schools – US Dept of Ed. 1994).

Families have an opportunity to create an atmosphere favorable to education and learning. Reading to and with your child on a daily basis is perhaps the most

(continued on page two)



BEST SCHOOL YEAR EVER! *(continued from page one)*

significant factor in putting your child on a successful path to learning. Families can also promote educational achievement and success by:

- Talking together! Have conversations about everyday events.
- Reading together! Encourage reading for fun. Let your child see YOU read for fun too.
- Working together! Identify some long and short term goals – help your child monitor progress and celebrate success towards identified goals.
- Learning together! Show an interest in your child’s academic and personal preferences. Discover new hobbies and nurture their interests in the world around you.
- Playing together! Have fun! Do things you enjoy and share them with your child. Spending time together is important!

Here are some suggestions to help you help your children make a smooth transition from summer to a successful school year.

- Adjust bedtime schedules that may have been flexible during the summer. One approach is to gradually move bedtimes back for two or three weeks before school starts. Another method is to wake the child earlier in the morning for three to four days until the child automatically goes to sleep earlier.
- Encourage the love of learning by telling children about inspirational teachers and interesting things they did in school.
- Treat school as a normal part of the family’s activities. Answer questions, discuss issues, but keep school preparation in perspective. Don’t force enthusiasm or unwanted conversation.
- Visit schools and bus stops with children. Walk to the school or drive the bus route to familiarize kids with pertinent landmarks. Visit the child’s classroom and meet school staff members.
- Provide children with alarm clocks and instructions on using them. Children should set them each night after choosing clothing for the next day.
- Shop for school supplies together. Make a list before going to avoid conflict during the outing. Allow the child to make as many choices as possible. Use the excursion as an opportunity to discuss academic goals and organizational needs. For children in kindergarten through second grade, anticipation and fun should be the focus.
- Hold a family meeting to discuss the schedule and new rules that are in effect during the school year. Talk about bedtimes, morning rituals, bus rules, homework times, play and television limits, and school lunches. Also, discuss clothing, supplies, and plans for involvement in school activities and fun events.
- Establish routines for bed and wake-up times, getting dressed, after school activities, meals and homework. Children thrive on routine if it leaves room for personal creativity and is not too rigid.
- Help children identify potential “helpers” at school, like the principal, nurse and counselor.
- Try to get involved the child’s school. Studies show that kids are more motivated to learn when they see their parents involved at school.
- Plan to be available to children, especially the first few weeks of school. Keep the early weeks as free from outside activities as possible, and pamper them a little with favorite foods or extra reading time with a parent.

Enjoy this very special time of year as a family! www.agnews.tamu.edu/stories

Free Tutoring Available!

Parents – did you know your child might be eligible to receive FREE tutoring this school year in reading and or math? Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are tutoring services that must be offered to eligible students who attend a Title I school that fails to make progress for three years. SES offer students extra help in academic subjects such as reading, language arts, and mathematics. Students who may be struggling in school get a chance to get the extra academic help and individual instruction they need. The extra help can improve your child’s confidence and self-esteem. Here are some facts for parents to know:

- **YOU** get to choose who will tutor your child from a list of “approved providers”. (A provider must complete an application and be approved by the SD Department of Education. The application shows they are capable of offering quality tutoring services in your district.)
- **YOU** will meet with the tutor you select and assist in developing a plan for these services along with your child’s teacher. You will receive progress reports on a regular basis (discuss this when you met to work out plan for services).
- **YOU** must act quickly! If you want your child to have the maximum benefit from tutoring - time is critical, you will want to sign up as soon as possible. The money to provide these services is limited – and law requires that if the amount of money is not enough to met requests that priority will be given to the lowest achieving students.

Math in Today's World

We are constantly being bombarded with information that must be understood, sorted, and organized in order to make decisions. Daily we are faced with making decisions that are based on having and understanding good information; from simple to complex purchases (best buy at the grocery store to buying your first house), to selecting an insurance plan, planning for retirement or college for your child. All of these decisions require mathematical competence.

Recent data from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics reveal that more students must pursue mathematical and technical occupations. Employment projections to 2010 expect these occupations to add the most jobs and grow the fastest among the eight professional and related occupational subgroups.

Will enough qualified workers be available to fill the projected 2 million positions? *60% of all new jobs in the early twenty-first century will require skills that are possessed by only 20% of the current workforce.* (National Commission on Mathematics and Science for the Twenty-first Century 2000). Whatever your child chooses to do in life, you can be certain that having a strong understanding of mathematics will open doors to a productive future.



Mastering challenging mathematics is not just a classroom skill – it's a life skill!

Today's students must master advanced skills in order to stay on track for college and for promising careers. Mathematics teaches ways of thinking that are essential to work and civic life.

- Students who take algebra and geometry go on to college at much higher rates than those who do not (83% vs. 36%).
- Most four-year colleges require three to four years each of high school math and science for admission.
- Almost 90% of all new jobs require math skills beyond the high school level.
- Strong math skills are needed for understanding graphs, charts, and opinion polls in a newspaper, for calculating house and car payments, choosing a cell provider.

(From A Family's Guide: Fostering Your Child's Success in School Mathematics)

The Early Years



Children are born set to grow, develop and learn. From birth through five years old, children make dramatic growth. Any parent will easily confirm how much growth occurs in those few short years. Early stimulation develops brain functions which in turn promote growth and learning. While children can and do learn at all times and in all places, home and families provide the most important and strongest influence on learning.

Early years really do matter. Motor coordination, language proficiency and the capacity for social/emotional development are learned during the first five years of life. Readiness for mathematics and logic appears to be between 0 and four years old. A child's interest in music can be best cultivated when he reaches 3 years until 10 years. These windows of opportunity, when well utilized by parents will lead to healthy growth and development.

The best time to introduce science is when children are curious about the world around them. Rich sensory experiences (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling) can help children become more observant and curious.

Explore the characteristics of objects and living things and help children learn how to group items based on those characteristics - an important tool for sorting tasks later on in school, i.e., "find the animals that fly" or "find the things we ride in".

Science comes to life when children discover they can learn about the world through their own action such as blowing bubbles or adding a block to a tall tower that causes it to collapse. Hands-on science experiences, together with conversations about what is occurring, are the best method for developing children's science process skills.

(Source: ericdigests.org/1995-1science.htm)

Parents are clearly a child's first and most influential teachers. A secure and loving home has a powerful and enduring impact on a child's development and behavior. Thirty years of early child research tells us that what takes place in a child's early years will have a profound influence on future relationships, the ability to adapt, learn and achieve. It is families, who make things happen; families, who love, care for and teach - long before a child enters school. **Source: Health Today.net**

REGISTER TODAY!
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Registration available online at:

www.sdpirc.org

or call **800-219-6247**

and ask for Lori or Janice for more information

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We would like to hear from you!

We would like your feedback and suggestions. Please call the 800-219-6247 or send a message by logging onto SDPIRC website for additional information, if you have a suggestion or request for future newsletter articles, or if you would like to update or remove your mailing address.

www.sdpirc.org