

Parents & School Together for Success



The Parent Information & Resource Center Newsletter for parents and families

Winter 2009

Second Annual Conference for Parents

Learning Starts at Home was held in Rapid City, SD on September 25 and 26, 2009. This year's featured keynote speaker was Dr. Julie Mathiesen, director of TIE, (Technology and Innovation in Education). Dr. Mathiesen spoke of the crucial need for 21st century technology in education today. Successful businesses and organizations embrace the use of technology and education must do the same by incorporating 21st century technology into teaching and learning.

Students are among the most enthusiastic and competent technology users. A 21st century classroom can produce students with strong core subject (language arts, math, science, economics, geography, history, government and civics) knowledge as well as students with 21st century skills, able to communicate, collaborate, analyze, and solve problems. Postsecondary institutions and workplaces increasingly value learners with these skills. Students need 21st century knowledge and skills to thrive as effective citizens, workers and leaders in the 21st century.

Assisted by up to date technology, educators make a rich and relevant experience for today's students. Interactive networks allow classrooms to communicate with authors, experts and other classrooms. Students connect to others to sharpen critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative skills. Teachers can direct learning and learners with 21st century tools toward 21st century skills and knowledge.

Technology allows teachers to use resources such as Google Earth where students can tour museums and labs; view architecture around the world, interactively study geography, language, cultures – the list is endless. Students are able to build an understanding of core subjects through inquiry and investigation.

Technology engages learners in diverse ways. It is suitable to a wide range of interests, abilities and learning styles. Technology offers the educational community methods and resources engaging to 21st century students. It can be a compelling hook that engages and motivates students to succeed.

Source: Dr. Julie Mathiesen; Maximizing the Impact - The pivotal role of technology in a 21st century education system. www.setda.org

2004 Partnership for 21st Century Skills. www.21stcenturyskills.org



Teaching Financial Literacy

Money makes the world go round, but do young people graduate from high school knowing how to manage their money? When the economy stumbles – and pocket money can vanish with a few clicks of a mouse or a gas pump – it becomes increasingly important to teach young people the basic survival skills of personal finance. Their journey through postsecondary education, career and family will be enhanced by learning to spend wisely, maintain good credit, and borrow money safely.

Being financially literate or informed suggests a consumer has the ability to make wise financial choices, discuss money and financial issues with fundamental understanding, plan for the future, and respond competently to events that affect financial decisions.

Adolescents face financial choices well beyond what their parents or grandparents dealt with. An estimated 80 % of students work during high school; nearly one-third have personal checking accounts and credit cards in their own names. Families who share information about money, planning and management, as well as teaching and demonstrating wise spending and savings choices help children increase their understanding of personal finances. With college savings plans, investment funds, retirement accounts, and the wide range of borrowing options available, adolescents must learn to make wise financial decisions to avoid excessive debt and plan for the future.

When children take part in family and personal financial management and have opportunities to make choices with expenses and investments it will increase their understanding of personal finances management and savings. Facts and practice help prepare children for future financial decisions whether it is purchasing a tank of gas or their first home.

AT HOME –

- Share the family budget or finance plan; develop a plan for each child using money from gifts, allowances, jobs etc. Even young children can learn to balance money coming in with money to be spent and saved.
- Discuss how paychecks, allowance money and gift money will be used. Build in a simple system of accountability so children can view their spending and savings habits. A balance sheet on the computer may entice them.
- Practice math skills with money. Add and subtract incoming and outgoing money, figure interest rates and investigate how savings grow with compound interest.
- Young children need opportunities to identify coins and bills, count money and change, and ‘save-up’ for a special occasion.
- Discover the stock market with your teenager. Invest real or fantasy funds and to watch.
- Discuss credit cards – late-payment fees, finance charges, interest rates, credit limits, and what happens when only the minimum balance is paid.



AT SCHOOL –

Encourage your adolescent to take part in financial literacy classes if offered at their school. Students learn to manage personal finances and make sound financial decisions. Graduates with an understanding of economics as well as their personal financial responsibility are better prepared for education, career and family - if they choose to have a family.

Teens may have an impractical view of financing their postsecondary education and what income they may expect after graduation. In preparation of post secondary education, outline the realistic cost of tuition, books, room and board with a student. Enlist resources on-line, at the high school and the intended higher ed institution. Talk to counselors about scholarships, grants and reasonable loans. Counselors can provide insight into a credible economic and career match with a student’s budget and interests. The South Dakota Board of Regents web site lists SD’s postsecondary schools and links to a helpful timetable for high school and middle school students.

Go to: <http://www.sdbor.edu/sdcollegeprep/resources/> .

On-line resources:

Simple Steps to Raising a Money-Smart Child (Toddlers to Teens) by the National Endowment for Financial Education – <http://www.vermontreasurer.gov/documents/literacy/MoneySmartChild.pdf>

Parent tips for helping teens with financial information.

<http://www.health.ri.gov/family/ofyss/teens/tips/Tip38.php>

Supporting Your Child in the Middle School Years

Middle school students experience a remarkable amount of growth and change in a very short time. These physical, intellectual and emotional changes of adolescence are opportunities to grow, develop skills for higher education, and become responsible, caring adults.

During middle school, educational expectations increase; students are challenged in the direction of independent thinking and decision making. The middle school is designed to support students through the many changes they experience, while families provide valuable support at home during the challenges of middle school.

The middle school building itself is packed with changes – more space and students, more teachers and homework along with traveling to a different classrooms a number of times each day. Academic challenges significantly increase in middle school. These changes can add up to disorganization at a critical time of development in education. Thus, being organized is a large step toward success.

Support your middle school student by discussing organizational skills and having supplies available to aid organization with school work and homework. This is not a job only for the start of each school year; check periodically for quality organization and have an in-depth check at the beginning of each year and semester. Determine a balance between support and independence that suits your child as he moves and develops throughout middle school.

- Develop a system to keep track of papers. Any uncomplicated and organized folder-system will work as long as it is used everyday. Try a folder for homework to be done, one for homework ready to be turned in and another for papers returned by the teacher. Save them for studying.
- Use a daily planner on a daily basis. Clearly write down assignments and due dates; check off work that is completed and turned in. Demonstrate to a young student how to divide a large project into manageable chunks; clearly mark the completion date for each ‘chunk’ on a full-size calendar with space for reminders and notes.’
- Organize school work the night before. Monitor completion of homework, encourage them to pack it up and be ready to avoid the morning rush.
- Be prepared. When books, homework and supplies are organized, students don’t waste class time to search for or borrow supplies. Being prepared will strengthen a child’s self-image as an organized, effective and efficient student.
- Maintain an organized locker. A well-ordered backpack and locker can set the tone for a well-organized student.
- Communicate with teachers. If your child is struggling with organization, not understanding homework or isn’t taking useful notes, encourage them to ask for help from their classroom teachers.

In due course, students learn to set their own goals, organize a study schedule, and complete their work. Families and teachers provide students with support, trust, and congratulations for their work. Source: greatschools.net



SCIENCE AND MATH COUNT

Parents have an influence on their children’s attitude about learning and this contributes to how well their children learn and understand all subjects, in particular math and science. Here are some suggestions on how support your child’s learning in these areas.

- Demonstrate that hard work and effort pay off in math. Everyone is able to do math – not just a favored few.
- Show how math is used every day in lots of ways such as at home while measuring, weighing, building, cooking, and paying bills, changing TV channels or playing games or at the store when checking prices, sizes, best values, paying, counting cash or swiping the card.
- Make math and science fun together! Estimate or guess — jelly beans in a jar, dad’s giant shoes, which is the heaviest or lightest potato, the outside /inside temperature and so on. Figure out the answer together and post the winner on the fridge.
- Nurture your child’s natural curiosity by observing and learning together. Discover dirt, plants, rocks, the sky, animals, insects and their habits. The backyard nature is full of opportunities to talk about science, observe information, and research and learn together.
- Investigate and experiment with real objects around the house? Hands-on-science encourages children to think, question and search for answers.

The US department of Education has a series of booklets entitled “Helping Your Child Learn”. They cover a variety of school related issues including math and science. To view these books go to www.ed.gov Click on *parents* at the top, then *Helping Your Child* – the series is listed and can be read online.



BE THE POWER IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION!

Check out the Parent Information and Resource Center's new online site. Family involvement in education information for parents and teachers; early childhood information including programs available in SD and a link to monitor a young child's development are available on site.

Infants through adolescents do benefit from parent involvement, find something for any age child at www.sdpirc.org

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**South Dakota Parent
Information & Resource Center**
PO Box 218
Sturgis, South Dakota 57785-0218
Phone: 605-347-6260 or 800-219-6247
Website: www.sdpirc.org

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U.S. Postage
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