

PARENT BOOKLET



Learning Together

Newspaper Activities for
Children in the Primary Grades





To the Parent

Like many parents today, you may often wonder what you can do at home to reinforce what your child learns in school. Experts agree that children learn best when parents are interested and involved in their children's education. Many parents have found that reading and looking through the newspaper with their children makes learning at home both enjoyable and effective. In observing a parent read the newspaper everyday, a child will be motivated to want to do the same--read and learn.

The newspaper is both an inexpensive source of information for you and a rich resource for enjoyable learning activities with your child. The suggestions in this booklet show you how to use the newspaper to:

- ★ Build your child's love of reading
- ★ Reinforce what's taught in school
- ★ Enjoy a special time with your child
- ★ Learn more about your child's interests
- ★ Help your child advance according to state and national educational standards.



Helpful Hints

- ★ Newspapers are an excellent resource for kids of all ages. Even young children enjoy photographs and comics. Early readers can read the large print in headlines and ads. And what child doesn't enjoy just talking with a parent? Special time alone together will go a long way to promote positive attitudes toward learning.
- ★ This booklet includes activities that will help you read together, talk together and think together. Try some activities from each group. Some days your child may be more interested in reading, while other days a "talk together" activity may be more fun.
- ★ Your understanding of your child's interests will help you select activities that will be most appealing.
- ★ Newspapers can help build the habit of daily reading in your child. Try to read aloud to your child every day. Ask grandparents, neighbors, older siblings or childcare providers to help. For example, you may suggest a comic strip or a short article your child might enjoy. At times, you may ask your child to read something to you.
- ★ You may want to scale down the newspaper with young children by using only one section at a time.
- ★ Sometimes stapling newspaper pages together along the fold (so it opens like a large book) makes it easier for small children to handle.
- ★ Show off the results of your child's efforts—it's another way to reinforce your "work" together. Many families have a permanent "art gallery" on the refrigerator door, but you might also encourage your child to share projects with grandparents, friends and neighbors.
- ★ Establish a comfortable place for your newspaper activities. Make cleanup time a regular part of your newspaper routine.
- ★ Exploring a newspaper should be fun, not an at-home "assignment." If your child shows no interest today, try another day.



Read Together

1. Read the newspaper's weather forecast to your child. Look for pictures that illustrate different weather conditions. Ask your child to find pictures of clothing that can be worn in different kinds of weather. Look at the forecast for tomorrow and help your child select appropriate clothes to wear. Or use the weather map to learn more about weather in other places: for example, "What is the weather like where Grandpa lives?"
2. Use the newspaper to learn more about opposites: win/lose, right/left, night/day, happy/sad. Find as many opposites as you can, using both words and pictures. Choose a pair of opposites like "night and day" and find pictures of things that happen in the daytime or at night.
3. Read the TV listings together. Help your child choose a program for the whole family to watch. Ask, "Why did you choose this program? What show would you choose to watch by yourself?" Look for ads about upcoming programs. Ask, "What do you think that show will be about? Do you think it will be fun to watch?"
4. Read aloud a short article about an event or organization in your area. Have your child retell the story in his or her own words.
5. Turn to the sports page. Read an article about your child's favorite team or find an article about a team from a high school near your home.
6. Find an announcement in the newspaper about a free event in your community. Decide whether you and your child would like to attend. Go to the event and then talk about it afterwards. "Did you enjoy it? Do you think others your age should go to see such an event?"
7. Have your child cut out the "cents off" coupons from the newspaper. Ask, "Can you tell me what this item is used for?" Sort the coupons into categories such as cleaning products, snacks or breakfast cereals. Let the child create the categories. As you make out your shopping list, have your child select the coupons you will be able to use.
8. Using the newspaper's food section, choose a recipe with your child. Prepare it together, asking your child to help you read the directions. Then serve it to the family or friends.



Talk Together

1. Look through the newspaper with your child. Ask your child to find examples of—
 - “Foods I like”
 - “Clothes I like to wear”
 - “Toys I like to play with”
 - “Animals I like”Talk about each selection: “Why is a cat your favorite animal?” Tell your child about things you like and why.
2. Find a newspaper picture that interests both of you. Tell your child, in story form, about what happened in the picture. Stop occasionally to ask, “Then what do you think happened?” Ask your child to make up a different story. Or talk about what might have happened before or after the picture was taken.
3. Cut out some favorite comics. Cut the captions off and ask your child to tell you a story about the comic. Ask questions like, “Did something like that ever happen to you?” and “What do you think will happen next?” Or cut a comic strip into individual pieces and ask your child to put them in order, showing what happened first, second and third. (The result may not be the same order as the original comic strip.)
4. Help children learn more about work and the variety of jobs available by looking for pictures of people performing different jobs. Talk about what’s involved in each job. Point out that either men or women can do most jobs. Search for pictures of jobs that various members of the family have or would like to have. Ask, “What kind of work would you like to do when you are grown up? Why?”
5. Look for pictures that show people’s facial expressions and emotions. Ask your child how each person may feel. Then ask questions like, “What makes you happy? What makes you sad?” Look for pictures that make your child feel happy and sad. Ask, “Why does this picture make you feel that way?”
6. Have your child draw a picture of a room in your house. Find ads that show pictures of things that might go in that room. Ask, “Can you find a bed? Can you find a TV?”
7. Look for a picture of your child’s favorite sport or a favorite athlete. Talk together about sports you both enjoy.
8. Look for a picture of something your child might like to give as a gift. Ask questions like, “Do you think Grandma would like it?” Have your child write or dictate a letter to this person, describing the gift and why it was selected.
9. Let your child choose an object from the newspaper that is of interest. Ask the child to pretend to be that object and to tell you a story about what the object is thinking.



Think Together

1. Have your child choose a picture of an object in today's newspaper and describe it to you. See if you can correctly identify it based on the description. Switch roles and repeat.
2. Ask your child to pretend he or she has money to spend at the grocery store. Cut out prices for different foods: meats, vegetables and breads. Help your child find at least two items in each group that your family might enjoy. Together, total your "purchases." How much money did you "spend?"
3. Ask your child to cut out a picture of a famous athlete, movie star, politician or other person he or she would like to meet. Ask, "What would you say to this person? What do you think the person would say to you?"
4. Find a story or picture of a group of people who need help (for example, victims of a fire or flood, the homeless, people in the hospital). Talk about ways your family might help by spending time, sharing talents or even contributing money.
5. Read through the lost-and-found advertisements. Choose an interesting ad, asking your child to draw a picture of the item it describes. Or help your child think of a classified ad to put in the newspaper. "Do you have some old toys to sell? Is there a job you could offer to do for people like walking dogs or watering plants?" Write the ad together.
6. Find pictures of people of all ages. With your child, imagine what life was like for these people in the past. Imagine what their lives might be like in the future.
7. Talk with your child about families. Who is in your family? Do you have neighbors or friends that you think of as part of your extended family? How are other families you know similar to your family and how are they different? Find people pictured in the newspaper that could be cut out to make a representation of your family group.
8. Look through the comics and have your child choose a favorite character. Ask, "How are you like this character? How are you different?"



On Their Own

Here are some independent activities that children can try on their own.

1. Have your child cut out pictures of faces, clothing, hands and feet. Arrange them to create funny people.
2. Ask your child to find an article about an interesting place to visit in your community. Then talk about what you would need to bring if you visited, how you would dress and what you could do.
3. Have your child cut out letters from the newspaper to spell his or her name. Paste them on a sign or poster to display or to make a nameplate for the child's bedroom door. Your child might also try to spell the names of other family members. Paste them onto paper to make placemats for each family member.
4. Ask your child to pretend your family is moving. Find pictures of things you might include in your new house or apartment.
5. Challenge your child to look through the food ads to find products that could be combined into a new and unusual sandwich. (Or suggest coming up with a new horrible-tasting sandwich!)
6. Let your child create an alphabet poster by cutting a large letter "A" from the newspaper. Cover the page with items or words found in the newspaper that start with the letter A. Repeat this for the other letters of the alphabet.