

## The Parent-Teacher Partnership

### Reading and Math Practice at Home

Your child is in the last year of the primary grades, K through 3. Do all you can to make sure he or she has the reading and math background to move successfully into the elementary grades. Here is a very brief sketch of some skills your child needs, and of ways you can help develop them at home.

#### Reading skills:

- ♥ Recognize, say, and sight-read about 500 words.
- ♥ Blend letter sounds into words.
- ♥ Break words into syllables.
- ♥ Understand the meaning of sentences and paragraphs.
- ♥ Understand and follow simple written directions.

#### Ways to build reading skills at home:

- ♥ Continue to set limits on TV watching and video games. Research indicates that excessive TV watching (more than 10 hours a week) can interfere with reading development.
- ♥ Praise your child's efforts to read. Regularly ask to hear him or her read for a few minutes at a time when you're both relaxed. Don't make it "a test."

Make it fun.

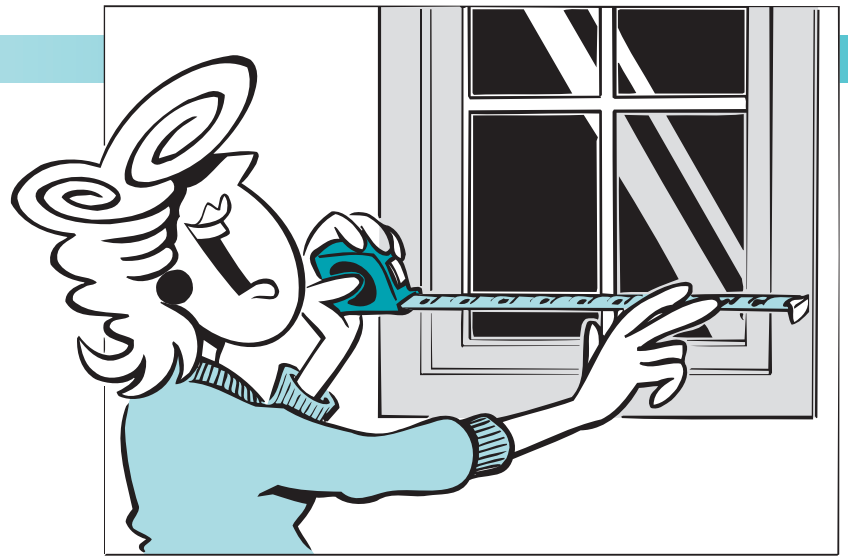
- ♥ Don't think your child is "too old to be read to." Children this age love having parents read stories and books to them!

#### Math skills:

- ♥ Count, read and write numbers up to 1,000.
- ♥ Relate numbers to objects (three cookies, ten blocks, twenty pennies).
- ♥ Understand what each place means in a three-digit number: (435 means four hundreds, three tens and five ones).
- ♥ Be able to do simple, basic adding and subtracting.
- ♥ Be able to read, understand and work simply worded math problems.

#### Ways to build math skills at home:

- ♥ Make up math problems while riding in the car. "Twelve turtles started a race. Eight dropped out.



How many finished?"

- ♥ Play board games where markers need to be moved a certain number of spaces.
- ♥ Ask your child to measure a number of things around the house with a ruler. ("How wide is this little table?" "How high is one stair step?") You'll see if he or she understands inches, feet and yards.
- ♥ Preparing meals lets your child use math concepts: "If we each have four crackers, how many is that? If we ate that many each night, how many would we use in a week?"

### Check These Out!

Public libraries have many books, tapes and videos about parenting and child development. Use your library card to check out these and other excellent resources. Invite your young student along to check out books or tapes, too.

For special resources related to parent education and support in your community, contact local social services, schools, hospitals, libraries or United Way.

**What is it? musical math & science.** (CD)

**Math for all seasons: mind stretching math riddles**

/ by Greg Tang (CB)

**Pick up your socks—and other skills growing children need!** / by Elizabeth Crary (B)

**Learning unlimited: using homework to engage your child's natural intelligence**

/ Dawna Markova and Anne R. Powell. (B)

(B) book, (CD) music, compact disc

(CB) children's book you can read to your child

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# Healthy Stages

## 3RD GRADE

**L**ove and Learning: Your Third-Grader Needs Both! *Healthy Stages* is a free, once-a-year newsletter. It is designed to reach you during your child's current grade in school. Every effort has been made to pack its short articles with helpful facts. We suggest you keep *Healthy Stages* around for the entire school year. Put it in a folder with other important information about your child. Refer to it from time to time. Its articles may help you deal with a problem or try a new approach in parenting.

This is the year in which your child reaches a milestone in learning. He or she will complete the vital "primary education" that provides the background for further studies. The basic skills your child takes away from third grade will make a difference in elementary school, high

school and beyond. Good reading, writing and math skills now are especially important.

By third grade, your youngster may be more relaxed and comfortable about school than in kindergarten and first grade. Even though this independent young student may want to breeze in and out without sharing the school day, make a point to find out how things are going. Be faithful about attending parent-teacher conferences. Ask where your child needs extra help, and give it. Give plenty of love, too. It's something your child never outgrows the need for.

We hope you look forward to all that this year brings. And we hope you'll turn to *Healthy Stages* often. We want to help you make this school year one that both you and your child will remember with joy.



# I Am Eight

The typical third-grade child is eight years old. These traits probably hold true for your third-grader, even if he or she is slightly older or younger.

**"I can do that."** An eight-year-old feels at home in his or her body. A relaxed walk, a straight posture and good body movement identify a child who relishes physical activity. At this age, children enjoy making faces, using gestures, jumping, stretching, and doing "show off" stunts.

**"Let's talk!"** This youngster's growing intellect makes him curious about the world and how things work. Talking is a favorite pastime now, too! There are so many words to use, so many ways to express ideas. Be sure to make time to listen when your youngster wants to share a talk.

**"Those yucky boys! (girls!)"** Boys and girls hang out in their own peer groups. But while they play as equals from time to time, boys and girls are becoming aware of the differences between them. A youngster may want to know more about his or her body and how it works. Continue to answer questions about sex honestly and confidently. The more comfortable your youngster feels discussing sexual issues with you, the less misinformation will get planted in this young growing mind.

**"But I like this TV show!"** Set loving limits on your child's television viewing. The new "rating systems" listed on screen and in viewers guides help you pick

wholesome, positive programs. Do try to find good family TV viewing opportunities. Watch for "teachable moments" in which you can use the action to help your child learn something about our world.

**"Bedtime! Already?"** There may be a desire for a later bedtime at age eight. Getting ready for bed around 8 p.m., with lights out by 9 p.m., works for most children this age. Your third-grader should be able to handle bath and bedtime preparations on his or her own, for the most part. Your role will be the reminder that, "Yes, it is bedtime!"



## Nurturing Yourself

### Well, Well, Well! Healthy Self-Care

The parent of a grade-school youngster has a busy, busy life. You have to keep a household running. Keep family members happy and healthy. Make sure everyone gets to appointments, meetings, and practices. In addition, you may have a job outside the home. That leaves precious little time for you and your health. But, remember, the better you feel, the more productive and positive you'll be about all that you do. Just as important, you're the role model your child will look to as an example of wellness. A few pointers to help you teach a healthy lifestyle to your children:

#### Have a physician.

Whether it's your personal doctor or the family practitioner who cares for all of you, it's very important to have a doctor you can call your own. Ask how often you should have health checkups. Make that appointment and keep it – just as you do for your children!

#### Know your vital signs.

Are you aware of your blood pressure? Your cholesterol level? Get these screenings done as part of your periodic physical. In between, take advantage of the screenings offered locally by health systems. Being aware of your blood pressure, cholesterol and other physical signs can alert you to get treatment before a problem condition worsens.

#### Eat well.

Life-on-the-run can make it hard to assure good nutrition. A library or local health system can be an excellent source of information on how to eat well. Have plenty of variety in fruits and vegetables. Cut fats. Stay away from fad diets! Choose healthful snacks, such as unsalted pretzels, air-popped popcorn and graham crackers. Remember – if you don't buy and bring "junk" food into the house your children won't expect them every day. And they too will learn to eat well.

#### Get some exercise.

Even just a half-hour walk three times a week will be a good start towards fitness. Perhaps you'll walk with a friend, or with your youngster. Keep it brisk! Dress properly for the temperature. Have a pair of athletic shoes which are comfortable and support your foot properly. If you want more variety and guidance in your self-care, treat yourself to a membership in a health and fitness center – or let it be known you'd like a membership as a gift.

## All In The Family

### Teaching the Values of Love and Charity

How do we learn to love? We learn first by being loved at home. A child who knows he or she is loved no matter what, without strings or conditions, is a child who will learn to show others love. Such a child will be ready to act unselfishly in helping someone else. That is charity – the drive to serve others who need our help.

Here are ways you can help your child and every member of your family to know love and to share it in the form of helping others.

#### Separate discipline from love.

When your child does something wrong, make it clear that you are unhappy with the deed, but that you still love – and will always love – the one who did it.

#### Allow room in your heart for "I'm sorry."

Have rules, of course! They're necessary to set limits and keep order. But when a small rule is broken, allow an apology and a promise to do better. Don't jump to punish for everything! Give a hug and forgiveness when a child says, "I'm sorry."

#### Teach responsible care of others.

Begin by letting your child help care for a younger brother or sister. If there's a family pet, encourage your child's care of it. Walking, brushing and feeding the dog can teach great lessons in love and charity.

#### Talk about those less fortunate.

Often a storybook or TV program will give you an opportunity to talk with your child about those less fortunate: the hungry, the homeless, the orphan, the very poor. Share your own feelings about wanting others to have a better life.

#### Praise a child's charitable nature.

Did your child save pennies to give to a good cause? Did he go with you to help serve meals at a homeless shelter? Did she pitch in and pay part of her allowance to give your family gift to a needy child at holiday times? Your kisses and hugs will reinforce your child's discovery that "It feels good to do good."

## Nurturing Notes

### Giving of Yourself as Parent and Teacher



As important as your child's schoolteachers are, they aren't his or her only teachers. You are your youngster's first and most influential teacher. Your voice, your words, your praise, will live on clearly in your child's mind for the rest of his or her life.

Of course, your child has other teachers, too. Family, relatives, friends, and neighbors. Church, scout and team leaders. Television is a powerful teacher, too – for better or worse. Of all these influences, yours is the strongest and most lasting. That's why it's so important to share yourself with your child. Here are just a few ways to do it.

#### Share your childhood.

Tell a bit about life when you were young. What it was like where you lived. Fun you had with a friend. How you fought with – and loved – your brothers and sisters.

#### Look at family pictures.

See if your child can pick you out of groups. Pass on an old photo of you for your child to treasure – proof that you, too, once were small and needed care.

#### Share more than just "the good side."

It's natural to want our children to see us in our best light. But each of us had youthful problems, negative feelings, anger, hurts, and disappointments. It may help a child to hear that you had problems similar to his or hers.

We give our children more than just our genes, protection, and parenting. We pass on our talents, attitudes, survival skills and much more. Let your child know your values and your feelings.

Doing so can help assure that as your youngster grows older, the two of you will grow closer.



## Activities For Now

### Play and Pastimes for Third-Graders

#### Reading is now a pastime.

Most third-graders are beginning to understand how exciting and wonderful books are. A subscription to a children's magazine like National Geographic's World can be a wonderful gift suggestion for grandparents or others.

#### Give writing toys and materials.

This is a year in which your young student should concentrate on clear, neat handwriting. A blackboard is a great gift for playing school, for practicing letters, and for helping do math problems at homework time. Many children enjoy getting their own stationary, stamps and pen to write to distant friends or relatives. Nothing delights a child more than to find "a letter addressed to me," unopened and waiting at home to be read!

#### Music Lessons?

Has your child shown interest in music? Piano, flute, guitar or other music lessons might start now. Be sure your child is really committed to the idea of learning music before investing money in equipment.

#### Board games and cards.

Your child may scorn, "baby games" like Candyland. The more challenging games, like Monopoly, and Yahtzee, become new favorites. Puzzles with lots of pieces offer hours of play and can help a child develop the agile fingers for everything from handwriting to music-making.

#### Drawing is always fun.

Children's drawings now may show a lot more action. Your youngster may like drawing planes and boats, or city and country scenes full of people, trees, buildings, and animals. Keep plenty of drawing supplies on hand. Introduce colored pencil sets, washable paints, and plastic or clay modeling sets. It can be a real treat to go to a toy or art store and let your child choose a new art medium.