

Books Are Friends!

Your child needs his or her own public library card. It's one of life's best values, and it's free! Now is a great time to teach your child about books and library use.

- ♥ **Respect for books.** Show your child how to turn pages gently. Make it clear that we never write in books, tear pages or fold them.
- ♥ **Quiet, please!** Libraries can be a quiet place, where people like to read without being disturbed. However, the children's section of a library is often alive with activities. Check with the library. Laughter and song are often encouraged in the children's area!
- ♥ **Getting help.** Teach your child how to think about what he or she wants: a book on the stars? Fairy tales? Adventure stories? Tell your child that librarians are friendly helpers. A child needs to know that wonderful facts, ideas and stories are there for the asking.



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.

How to be school smart : secrets of successful schoolwork / by Elizabeth James & Carol Barkin (B)

Raising self-reliant children in a self-indulgent world : seven building blocks for developing capable young people / H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen. (B)

How to say it to your kids ; the right words to solve problems, soothe feelings & teach values / Dr. Paul Coleman. (B)

My first green video a kids' guide to ecology and environmental Activities (V)

Click, clack, moo: cows that type / by Doreen Cronin (CB)

(B) book, (V) video

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

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The Parent-Teacher Partnership

Let's Get Organized

In second-grade your child will move toward more independent study. The ability to work silently and in a focused way is essential to success. The time you spend teaching your child about attention to detail, focusing on tasks, and organizing work will be well spent. Here are some suggested strategies.

- ♥ **A place to study at home.** If possible, your child should have a desk in the bedroom. It should be kept neat for study. The desk lamp or room lighting should make close work possible without eye strain. If your child's "study place" is somewhere else – perhaps at the kitchen or dining room table – the area should be clean, quiet and as free of activity as possible during studies.
- ♥ **Attention to detail is a habit.** Good students pay attention to what they are doing. They read over what they have written, to find spelling mistakes. They check math problems to be sure the answer is correct. Help your second-grader figure out trouble areas. Perhaps you could assist in making a checklist your youngster can use. List things like:



- Is spelling correct?
- Did I double-check my adding and subtracting?
- Is my writing neat?
- Did I follow directions?
Let your child check off each item before you join him or her to do a final check of homework.

- ♥ **Provide rules and tools.** Teaching your child how to be orderly and organized is far better than punishing for not being organized. Show your second-grader how an orderly desk should look. Help him or her break an assignment into parts and tackle small pieces of it, one by one. Make sure your child has a notebook for writing down homework and instructions. Check to be sure there's plenty of paper, sharpened pencils and other needed school supplies.

- ♥ **As always, stay in touch with the school and your child's teacher!** Make a point to discuss your student's progress and behavior frequently.

Your efforts now in helping your child become organized can pay real dividends, from better self-esteem to better grades!

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Healthy Stages

2ND GRADE

Plan for a First-Rate Second-Grade Year! *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.

What a wonderful year! Second-grade is when those very basic skills learned in first-grade sud-

denly blossom. The words your son struggled to learn now leap out like old friends. He points to them in newspapers and on billboards. He is reading! The numbers whose strange shapes your daughter traced over and over now have meaning. Five pennies add up to a nickel. Eat three of your four cookies and there's just one left. She's learning mathematics.

How can a parent help?
Be observant: notice areas where your child needs

help and offer it. Be patient: a kind word from Mom or Dad can go a long way when schoolwork seems tough. Be proud: display artwork and tests. Be there: even when time is short and you're tired, give your child some close attention and affection every day.

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 Seven

Many children enter second-grade at age seven. These traits probably hold true for your second-grader, even if he or she is slightly older or younger.

"I'm growing up." He's calmer and a bit quieter than at six. She's deep into her own thoughts, whether reading a story or watching a TV program. Your second-grader is reaching a new level of maturity.

"Mom, I'm home." A second-grader is often very attached to Mother. But other attachments are forming, too. Dad is important. Brothers and sisters, especially small ones, get a big share of love. Second-graders may also be very fond of teachers.

"But why do I have to?" Seven is an age of growing independence. Second graders will sometimes resist being told what to do. They may even sulk, mutter things about "this dumb family" and hold themselves apart from Mom or Dad for a while. It's all a natural part of growing up.

"I need a bigger eraser." Your seven-year-old is more careful and self-critical about schoolwork. "It's crooked," she says of a letter or number. "I'll do it over," he says of a mistake on homework. All that erasing and reworking is a sign your child is trying to improve and produce acceptable work.



Activities For Now

Play and Pastimes for Second-Graders

Your young boy or girl probably has some strong personal tastes in play now. He or she can spend hours with whatever that big interest is: from comic books and cutting out paper dolls to building a collection of cars or stuffed animals.

Bicycle selection and safety

This is an age when most children really want a two-wheel bicycle if they haven't had one yet. Keep these important points in mind:

- ♥ Choose a bike that is neither too large nor too small, since an ill-fitting one can lead to injuries.
- ♥ Make sure the bicycle is in safe working order. Check it from time to time to see that it continues to be safe. Don't allow your child to ride a bike that is unsafe.
- ♥ Safety experts recommend that children under age 8 not ride in streets.
- ♥ Every child should wear a proper safety helmet when riding bikes. In many cities today, it's the law.
- ♥ See that your child dresses properly for bike-riding. Rubber soled shoes grip pedals best. No extremely loose clothes should be worn. Loose pants or long shirts can get caught and cause a bike to overturn, with possible injury to your child.

Active sports

A seven-year-old seems stronger and better coordinated than he or she may have been just a year ago. Roller skating, tree-climbing and workouts on "jungle gym" equipment are popular. Stress safety with all active pastimes.

Board Games

Children's board games can keep a group of second-graders absorbed for hours. Now, your child is more intent on game strategies and less insistent that "I win!" Ask your child's teacher or a toy store manager which ones are best.

Family outings

At this age, your child may really enjoy an active family vacation of camping, skiing or other outdoor fun. Be sure you're on hand to give plenty of help and instruction in the safety aspects. You may want to pack your own nutritious snacks too.

"It's almost my birthday month." The second-grader is more and more aware of the environment we live in. What time it is. What month it is. There's interest in the world, the sun, the moon, the stars. There's curiosity about people of the community: the police officer, fire fighter, doctor and nurse. He or she may also show a spiritual side. Now is an ideal time to introduce your second-grader to life in the community. Consider the wide variety of activities which support children's emotional, physical, mental and spiritual growth.

"Tell me about when I was a baby." As children grow, they love looking back with you to "when I was little." At the same time, they need questions about where babies come from to be answered in ways appropriate to their age. Area bookstores have, or can order, excellent books on what children of various ages are ready to learn about sex. Also ask local librarians for guidance on this topic.



All In The Family

Teaching a Family Value: Honesty

Stop, look and listen to the world around you. Characters in TV cartoons lie to each other and draw gales of laughter. The popular culture is full of instances in which dishonesty is ignored or even admired. How do you teach your wonderful little youngster to be honest in spite of it all?

- ♥ **Give an honestly good example.** Be honest with your child. Try never to tell "white lies" around him or her. Never ask your child to lie for you; for instance when the telephone rings, telling your child, "Say I'm not home." Don't exaggerate your problems or feelings. Never say, "I'm so tired I could die," when what you mean is, "I'm really worn out and need to relax."
- ♥ **Have talks about honesty.** Tell your child stories where honesty is put to the challenge and ask what he or she should do. "Suppose you're in a store. You buy a toy and the sales person gives you \$5 too much change. What do you do?" Explain gently that the money would be returned because it was not yours. Describe the good glow inside that comes from doing the right things.
- ♥ **Give a second chance to be truthful.** Don't jump on your child when you catch him or her in a lie. Say, "Now let's think. It's important to tell the truth, isn't it?" Then suggest another try at the truth. If you are told the truth, praise your child for the good change of heart.

Be an honest role model. Give your child frequent feedback about the consequences of lying and the value of truth. With your loving help, your child can learn to cherish truthfulness all through life.

Nurturing Yourself

Every Child Needs Self-Esteem



What is self-esteem? It's the ability to like yourself. It's something every one of us needs for a rewarding life.

Why do we all need it? When you try hard at something, but fail, self-esteem helps you pick yourself up and try again. It tells you, "You're okay." It keeps you from punishing yourself or from reliving bad moments over and over. It protects you from letting others treat you unfairly. Self-esteem helps you weather life's storms and keep on growing.

Why do children especially need it? Research has shown that children with good self-esteem are better achievers. It can also help prevent problems later on, such as drug or alcohol abuse and teen pregnancy. And, let's face it; life is just plain better when we wake up feeling good about ourselves!

How can I help my child turn off negative feelings?

When a child says, "I'm no good at reading." Or "Nobody likes me," take a two-part approach. First, understand the feeling. Say, "I know it hurts to do badly on class work." Then gently disagree with the put-down. Say, "But I can't go along with you that you're no good. You are a good person."

How can I be more positive in talking to my child?

Avoid focusing blame on a child. "It's your fault this house is such a mess." Instead, be positive: "I know you can keep your room neat if you try." Look for reasons to praise your child. Give "a pat on the back" for good effort as well as good results. Remove from your vocabulary any mean-spirited word like "brat" or "crybaby." Encourage all family members to treat each other with respect.

My child relies on me too much. That can't be good for self-esteem. You're right to want your child to develop more independence. Encourage your child to dress and handle his or her personal care as much as possible. Persuade your child to be a self-starter about homework, keeping things neat and doing chores. Praise your child for working independently. When it's really needed give help in a loving way. Your efforts will help your child learn to cope with all that life has in store.

Nurturing You

Take a Breather!

Is your life so busy you sometimes don't have a minute to catch a breath? Start making time every day – several times a day, if possible! It takes just minutes to do deep breathing and stress-relief exercises.

1. First take a deep breath. Did you suck your stomach in and raise your shoulders? That's not a proper deep breathing pattern. Do it again, this time with your hand on your tummy. Now breathe in and let your stomach puff out, with very little movement of your upper body. Breathe in and out to a count of five, feeling your stomach move, while your shoulders and chest stay still. That's relaxed, deep breathing.
2. Now relax your muscles. Sit for a few minutes in a peaceful frame of mind. Let your jaw, neck, face, shoulders, arms, body, legs, and feet get relaxed. Mentally find "tense places" and let them go limp.
3. Try this "quieting reflex." While relaxed, smile to yourself. Let the tension slip away from your eyes, forehead, cheeks and mouth. Silently give yourself this positive message: "Calm Body. Alert mind." Then inhale easily and gently. Now exhale, letting your jaw, tongue and shoulders get limp and relaxed. (This is called the Stroebel Quieting Reflex. It is used by millions to help calm fear, worry or anxiety.)

When you give yourself the few minutes it takes to consciously relax and let go of tension, you'll look and feel better. Once you've mastered this technique, teach it to your child! It works wonders for children who get tense before a test or a big game.