Welcome to The Parent Post! This newsletter is published four times per year for students and families of the Douglas County School System. For more information, please visit dccsga.org or contact Patti Sullivan at (770) 651-2118 or email patti.sullivan@dcssga.org

The Parent Post
Facilitating Family School Partnerships
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Testing Tips for Parents
By Kayla Arnold, 1st Grade Teacher, Eastside Elementary School

Educators have worked diligently throughout the school year to teach students the state standards, and students have been absorbing all they can along the way. As standardized testing approaches, there are a number of ways you can support your child:

- Make attendance and homework a priority. Arriving at school on time ensures that your child is present for all of the material taught in class. If your child has to miss a day, or a class period, check in with them to make sure they can make-up for what they missed. Homework is an excellent tool that students have to further solidify the content taught in class.
- Communicate with your child’s teachers. Regular communication with your child’s teacher will keep you up to speed on what students are working on, your child’s strengths and weaknesses, and how you can offer extra support at home.
- Communicate with your child. Have open conversations with your child about the purpose of tests and how they help teachers determine the best teaching methods.
- Sleep and nutrition are keys. Make sure your child gets an ample amount of sleep and eats a healthy meal the night before and the morning of the test.
- Ensure your child is on time (or early, if possible) on testing days.
- Relieve testing anxiety. Although testing gives us great insight into a child’s academic performance, it can also be intimidating for some. Help relieve testing anxiety by letting your child know that their best effort will always make you proud.
- Plan a fun treat or activity. After testing is done, reward your child for their hard work with a fun activity or special treat.

Technology IQ
By Charmaine Martin, Instructional Support Specialist, Youth Villages Inner Harbour School

COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major shift in how we use technology in the classroom and home. It also caused a major change in thinking about how much access to technology and screen time a child should have. We cannot eliminate all risk when a child or adolescent is using technology but depending on the age and maturity level, we can set certain expectations and limit access to certain apps and screen time. Here are some helpful advice and resources.

Your kindergartner has already encountered the use of technology. Set expectations with the amount of time allowed using technology and access to google or other search engines. Once your child has hit upper elementary, they are probably helping you navigate the use of technology. Help your child find a healthy balance of time spent using technology collaboratively. Middle schoolers are at a unique stage in life. While wanting to become more independent, they still need healthy boundaries and expectations in their life. Help your adolescent during this transition to become more responsible and aware of the pros and cons of social media because their posts are permanent and for the whole world to see. If you have a high schooler, it is still not too late. You can encourage your high schooler...
Prepare to Show What you Know!
By Julie King, ESOL Teacher, Annette Winn Elementary School

We are racing toward the end of the school year, and our English Language Learners (ELLS) are getting a chance to show what they know! In January, February, and March, all ELLs will take the ACCESS test. This assessment shows how much progress students have made in listening, reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. The ESOL teachers have been preparing students for the ACCESS test, and we know our students are ready to do their best! In April, all third-grade to eighth-grade students will take the Georgia Milestones test (GMAS). High school students are preparing for End of Course tests. ESOL teachers and classroom teachers have been preparing students for these tests. Our ELLs will be ready to show how much they have learned this year. You can help your child to do his or her best on these tests, too!

- Make sure your child is getting plenty of sleep at night.
- Your child needs to eat breakfast, either at home or at school.
- Attendance is important! Please try to make appointments after school.
- Encourage your child to do his or her best!

The ESOL teachers use several computer programs which can help ELLs achieve success. Lexia Core5 Reading is used for Kindergarten-Fifth grade students. Lexia helps students improve their reading, writing, and listening skills in English. Students in middle and high school use Lexia Power Up Literacy. This program focuses on word study, grammar, and comprehension. Both Lexia programs can be used at home, on a computer or an iPad. Check with your child’s ESOL teacher for login information. In the classroom, ESOL teachers use Nearpod to teach interactive lessons that may include videos, games, and activities. Teachers also use Flocabulary to teach academic vocabulary using fun hip hop music. Your ELL student’s teacher may assign activities on Nearpod and Flocabulary through Google Classroom.

While these computer-based programs help ELLs prepare for ACCESS and GMAS testing, there are other options that will help students as well. Reading is the best way to improve your child’s academic performance. You can read to your child, listen to your child read aloud, or just talk to older students about what they are reading. Reading in your native language as well as in English is beneficial to your bilingual learner! Talking with ELLs is another way to prepare them for testing. Having conversations in English and in their first language can expand their vocabulary and improve listening skills.

Thank you, parents, for partnering with us this year! We are proud of our ELLs and expect them to do great things!

Resources for Parents of English Learners!
The Douglas County School System has posted new resources for parents of English Learners on our website. Our goal is to provide effective outreach to parents of our English Learners and to assist them in being involved in their child’s education. Please visit our website here or scan this QR code to access the website with the resources listed.
Finish Strong

Give extra effort to make it through to the end.

This month we are challenging students to work hard and stay determined. We are partnering with you to acknowledge your child’s achievement of goals—big and small! By helping your child develop perseverance now, you can prepare them to learn from their future failures and work hard to achieve future successes. This month, look for opportunities to teach and model the power of perseverance.

1. ENGAGE: Power of Yet

Ask each family member to write down a list of things they would like to learn to do but just haven’t done yet. For example, “I haven’t learned _____.” Choose a few phrases from each family member and repeat these phrases, adding the word “yet” to the end. Remind your family that we must work daily to learn new things and keep trying even when it’s hard.

2. EMPOWER: The Best Version of You

Ask each family member to think of a word that describes the best version of themselves or a word they would like to live out. It may be a word from their class or family Social Contract. (For example, respectful, responsible, a good listener, etc.). After each member decides on one word, ask everyone to identify three actions they can take to persevere and model their word to ensure they become the best version of themselves. Have weekly check-ins to see how things are going.

3. EXCEL: Winning Over Weeds

This spring, plant a garden as a family. It can be big or small! Discuss the daily commitment needed to help this garden grow and the patience necessary as you wait for the final product. Weed this garden together and as you do, discuss how this garden is like many challenges in life. Perseverance helps us to win over weeds!

Conversation Starters

❤️ What is something you’re good at that took a lot of hard work and practice?
❤️ What is something you’re still learning to do in school that is difficult?
❤️ Who is someone at school you feel comfortable asking for help from when you need it?
GMAS Night will be an opportunity for parents and students to learn useful test-taking strategies in preparation for the GMAS.

Parents of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders will have an opportunity to hear about the Georgia Milestones, see sample questions, and get tips to help their child succeed on the English/Language Arts, Math, and Science (5th grade only) tests that students will take in April 2023.

GMAS/Science Night (IN-PERSON)
Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Parents will learn helpful tips and resources to help their child prepare for GMAS. They will also engage in science experiments based on the standards taught in their child’s grade level.

Grounded for Grammar (VIRTUAL)
Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Parents will learn helpful tips and tricks on how to help their children with their homework and study skills.

Gearing Up for Assessments (IN-PERSON)
Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Parents will learn the strategies and tools that we are using to assist with grammar.

Testing Tips (VIRTUAL)
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 5:30 PM
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 12:00 PM
We will discuss testing tips for parents to help their child prepare for the Georgia Milestones and other major tests.

Visit YOUR Title I Parent Resource Center Today!
UPCOMING PARENT WORKSHOPS

Please check the schedule to determine if parent workshops will be virtual or in-person. For additional information, please contact your child’s school at the listed phone numbers below or visit the school website.

Arbor Station Elementary School
9999 Parkway South, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-3000 ases.dcssga.org

We Love to Read a Latte (IN-PERSON)
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 (grades k-2) at 6:00 PM
Thursday, March 2, 2023 (grades 3-5) at 6:00 PM
Parents are invited to read with their child and enjoy hot chocolate, cider and cookies.

Bill Arp Elementary School
6550 Alexander Parkway, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-3200 baes.dcssga.org

Reading Under the Stars (IN-PERSON)
Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 6:00 PM
We will be hosting a reading-themed parent night. Parents are encouraged to join their students for “Reading Under the Stars” as we focus on the academic benefits and enjoyment of reading.

Chapel Hill Elementary School
4433 Coursey Lake Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-3600 ches.dcssga.org

Grade Level Meetings (VIRTUAL)
Monday, March 13, 2023 (grades k, 1, 2, 3 and 4), various times
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 (grade 5) at 5:30 PM
Kindergarten - teachers will share a recording with parents on March 13, 2023.
Grade 1 - 9:00 AM - Fact Fluency: activities to help practice at home
Grade 2 - 2:00 PM - MyOn/Renaissance/AR Tips, Suggestions and Q&A
Grade 3 - 11:00 AM - GMAS Prep
Grade 4 - 12:00 PM - Mastering the Milestones: At-Home Strategies for Reading Test Preparation - during this meeting we will discuss strategies and how to help your child prepare the test.
Grade 5 - 5:30 PM - Georgia Milestones

Factory Shoals Middle School
3301 Shoals School Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-5800 fsms.dcssga.org

Study Skills (VIRTUAL)
Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Families will review GMAS information and learn ways on which to help their students study best for the assessment.

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS:
Spring 2023 Georgia Milestones Testing Calendars

For more information on the upcoming Georgia Milestones testing, scan here to visit the Douglas County School System Testing Calendars.