



Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes- March 7, 2014



Dear Parents,

At this week's GPFA meeting, I addressed the topic of homework. I thought I'd share a few of the ideas we discussed, especially the tips for parents. I hope you find them helpful.

One goal of homework is for students to practice and apply the skills they are learning. Other goals include helping them develop independence, a sense of responsibility, and organizational skills. There are many ways parents can support their children:

- ✓ **Establish a homework routine.** It's a good idea to give your child some control over when homework is to be done---right away, after a snack, right before dinner. (After dinner HW time often is problematic, as children and parents are tired.) *Make sure your child has at least 30 minutes before bed (without electronics) to unwind.
- ✓ **Establish a daily homework folder routine-** Have your child unpack the folder, set up HW tasks, choose an order in which tasks will be completed, pack all HW up and put the folder back in the backpack immediately.
- ✓ **Read and respond to notes from the school.** Remove "graded" homework. Decide what should be saved (such as your child's writing) and what can be discarded (such as practice worksheets).
- ✓ **Utilize a family calendar-** Record school events, dates when forms/assignments are due, children's activities, family plans, etc.
- ✓ **Have all materials accessible-** Create a drawer or fill a box with the items your child may need: pencils, sharpener, eraser, counters (pennies), ruler, paper, children's dictionary, scissors, glue stick, colored pencils, markers...
- ✓ **Read the instructions together-** Talk about what is being asked. Have your child paraphrase the instructions and then clear up any misconceptions.
- ✓ **Allow/Encourage** your child to complete the task independently. Watch/support as he gets started/completes one or two problems, and then fade back. Let your child know you are available to help *after* he's tried it on his own.
- ✓ **Celebrate effort and independence first.** Help your child feel proud of himself: "You must feel really good about how hard you worked on this." or "You must be proud of how you did this on your own!"
- ✓ **Review the work- Ask questions, show interest.** "How did you solve that problem?" "What did you learn from this?" Comment on the positive. ("I like how you...") If quality/neatness is an issue, ask, "What can you do to make this better? If your child resists, let the teacher know you would like quality/neatness reinforced.
- ✓ **To correct or Not to Correct?** If you see your child making an error, it is okay to help him correct it. It would be counter-productive for a child to practice doing something incorrectly. However, be careful not to do too much for your child. If he needs a lot of support from you, please send the teacher a note.

There are specific ways to assist your child as he completes homework in math, spelling, and writing. If you have questions, or would like more information, I would be happy to offer another workshop. Please send me your ideas or questions or contact the GPFA to request a workshop topic.

It is important to make quiet reading and study time a pleasant part of every day. Help your child feel accomplished, capable, and secure in himself. Celebrate and honor his effort. Your support makes all the difference!

Enjoy the weekend---Spring ahead!

Lynn Herschlein

