

Dear Learning Partners,

These monthly PICKS ideas can give each child some additional experiences with reading, writing, math, and science skills beyond the classroom setting. Every parent can help supervise their child's learning by participating in this educational experience.





## Parental Involvement Checklist

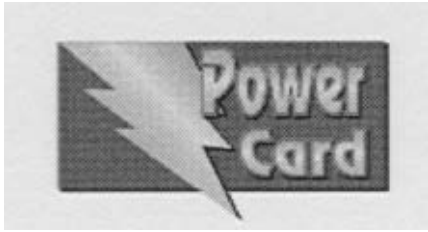
This checklist is to help you participate in activities that promote high student achievement. You can select one week in each grading period to tally your participation. When you talk with your child about school, expect them to do well, and stay involved with their education at home and at the school, your child is more likely to do well in school. YOU can really make a difference. Contact your child's teacher for more ideas to support learning.

<b>Home Involvement</b>	<b>Make a mark each time you do the following:</b>	WEEK in 1 <sup>st</sup> Grading Period	WEEK in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grading Period	WEEK in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grading Period	MS & HS WEEK in 4 <sup>th</sup> Grading Period
	Read with child daily				
	Visited library				
	Played an educational game together				
	Watched and talked about a good TV show or video with child				
	Helped with homework				
	Did a PICKS or other interactive activity				
	Other				
	Total # of Interactions				

<b>School Involvement</b>	<b>Make a mark each time you do the following:</b>	WEEK in 1 <sup>st</sup> Grading Period	WEEK in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grading Period	WEEK in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grading Period	MS & HS WEEK in 4 <sup>th</sup> Grading Period
	Had a parent-teacher conference				
	Attended meeting at school (PTA, PTO, SAC, PLC)				
	Participated in an event at my child's school				
	Volunteered in child's classroom				
	Reviewed child's report card				
	Other				
	Total # of Participations				

## August Take Home Page-Homework Help!

Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

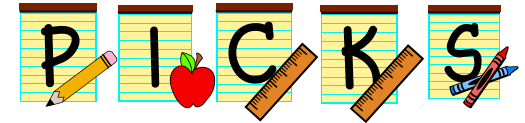


Get the power of a library card to work for you! Find out about public libraries near you and plan a visit. Find a book to read with your family from the public, school, or your home library. The library is a terrific

place to explore many references such as fiction, nonfiction, biographies, poetry, plays, and fairytales.

Homework can and should be fun!

1. Families should work together and make a plan to be sure that homework is done everyday. After everyone has agreed on the best time and place, the suggestions should be written and followed.
2. Children need help getting organized. Your assistance in setting up a special place for their homework materials and supplies would be helpful. Keeping all school items in one place helps teach children how much easier life can be when they are organized and plan ahead.
3. One-way to assist the children become more organized is to have them help prepare a "Homework Box". Find a sturdy cardboard box or carton large enough to hold notebooks and other school related supplies (pencils, glue, scissors). Work together to decorate this special box. Find a spot where this box will be always be available to your child.
4. Let your child know that his/ her school things go in the box as soon as he/she comes home from school. All homework and anything else needed for school the next day should go in the box.
5. Do the Self Assessment- Are You Winning the Homework Battle with your child.



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Homework is a valuable tool to assist your child in becoming a successful learner. Every child has the ability to succeed in school and every parent, family member and/or caregiver can assist.

In order to assist your child with his/her homework, we suggest the following homework tips:

- (1) Assume that your child will be assigned work or reading to do every night.
- (2) Show your child that you believe homework is important. Assist your child but do not do the assignments for them. Help them learn to do it
- (3) Establish a specific time each evening for homework. Suggested guidelines for amount of time for homework are: Grades K-2 --10 to 20 minutes---Grades 3-6 --30 minutes to one hour. Be consistent and follow you time schedule.
- (4) Ask to check homework and praise your child for completing his/her assignment.

FOR FREE HELP WITH HOMEWORK,  
CALL THE **HOMework HOTLINE!**  
640-5042, 688-5303, 688-5304, 1-800-548-0245  
Help available in English, Creole and Spanish.



**SELF-ASSESSMENT: ARE YOU WINNING THE HOMEWORK BATTLE?**

Is your home an environment where continuous learning and continuous improvement is a way of life? We have provided a self-assessment to help you figure that out. With your child, read each behavior and check whether it is in evidence, “always,” “sometimes” or “never.” Then, work on ways to move them all to “always.”

Always                      Sometimes                      Never

**Parent-Child Interaction**

- You communicate to your child(ren) that by working hard s/he will “get smarter?” \_\_\_\_\_
- You tell your child(ren) that you expect the best work from him/her? \_\_\_\_\_
- You make clear the consequences for not completing homework? \_\_\_\_\_
- You are physically present during homework? \_\_\_\_\_
- You help with homework when asked? \_\_\_\_\_
- You praise your child’s concentration on homework? \_\_\_\_\_
- You encourage your child (without judgment) to stick with it–find another way to figure it out? \_\_\_\_\_

**The Physical Environment**

- Homework is a regular part of the daily routine? \_\_\_\_\_
- Homework is done in a place where child cannot be distracted? \_\_\_\_\_
- TV is turned off? \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone calls are held until after homework? \_\_\_\_\_
- All the tools and materials needed for homework are available and are in a convenient place? \_\_\_\_\_

**Learning Behaviors – Effective Effort**

- Child commits to doing homework and holds him/herself responsible? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child works through assignments carefully and thoroughly? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child works independently? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child asks questions and requests your help when needed? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child breaks homework into manageable pieces? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child uses different ways to figure something out? \_\_\_\_\_
- Child pays close attention to mistakes and incorrect answers and corrects them? \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Writing Fun

### Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Writing is an experience that can be fun, entertaining, informational, and pleasurable. Children start writing in kindergarten by writing their name and letters, and drawing pictures. Students in elementary, middle and high school write stories, poems, and essays. Children begin to spell words and sometimes invent the spelling. You can accept this. Children should brainstorm ideas and put those ideas into focus in an organized fashion so that it makes sense to the reader. The reader will have a complete understanding of the writer's purpose if the writing is focused and the content sends a clear message. Have students read their stories to you.

When writing a paragraph a student should:

1. Focus on a purpose
2. Have organized thoughts and events in order
3. Use a wide range of rich vocabulary
4. Give details that support the ideas
5. Tie the conclusion back to the purpose

Sit down with your family and talk about something that you enjoy, whether it is a trip to the beach, going out to a restaurant, visiting friends or taking a vacation.



### My Trip to the Beach

#### Brainstorming Log



I visited the beach.

It was fun, because we did so many things.

List the things that you did:

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We brought things to play with. List the things that you brought:

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We saw many things and people at the beach.

List what you saw:

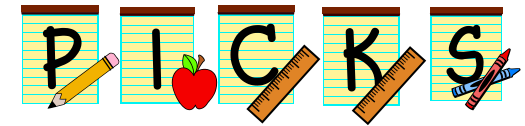
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#### Write Your Story

#### My Trip to the Beach

(You can use the other side of this paper)



Reading and writing support each other. The more your child does of each, the better she will be at both. Reading can also stimulate your child to write about her own family or school life. If your child has a particular favorite story or author, ask her why she thinks that story or that person's writing is special.

As you read and write more with your child, you will be building an important foundation, and taking steps that will help your child to become a better reader, writer, and student. Your efforts now will make a difference — and it may be just the difference that your child needs to succeed!

- ✚ Make sure your child sees you writing. She will learn about writing by watching you write. Talk with her about your writing so that she begins to understand why writing is important and the many ways it can be used.
- ✚ Encourage your child to write. Give your child opportunities to practice writing by helping her sign birthday cards, write stories, and make lists.
- ✚ Write together. Have your child help you with the writing you do, including writing letters, shopping lists, and messages.
- ✚ Suggest note-taking. Encourage your child to take notes on trips or outings, and to describe what she saw. This could include a description of nature walks, a boat ride, or a car trip.
- ✚ Encourage copying. If your child likes a particular song, suggest that she learn the words by writing them down. Also encourage copying favorite poems or quotations from books and plays.
- ✚ Hang a family message board in the kitchen. Offer to write notes there for your child. Be sure that she finds notes left there for her and she responds.
- ✚ Help your child write letters and emails to relatives and friends. These may include thank you notes or just a special note to say hello. Be sure to send your child a letter or card once in awhile too so that she is reminded of how special it is to get a letter in the mail.
- ✚ Consider finding a pen pal for your child.
- ✚ Encourage keeping a journal. This is excellent writing practice as well as a good outlet for venting feelings.

HAVE YOUR PARENT (LEARNING PARTNER) SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR TEACHER.

## Making Money

Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Math is a very important part of life. We use math to set an alarm clock, buy groceries or keep score or time at a game.

Children can be confused by money. Some might think that the larger a coin is the more valuable it is—so a penny or nickel would be more valuable than a dime.

Playing counting games at home can be valuable in helping children deal with numbers and math concepts in school. Help your child learn about money.

### What You Need

Dice

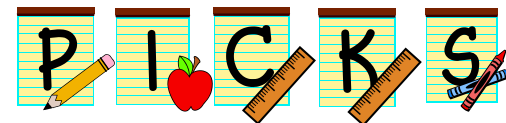
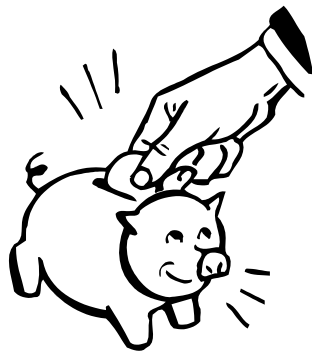
Pennies, nickels, dimes,

### What to Do

- This is a good game to play with the family. Have each player roll the dice and say the number. Then give the player that number of pennies.
- When a player gets five pennies, replace the pennies with a nickel. When he gets ten pennies, replace them with a dime.
- The first player to reach the set amount—25 or 50 cents, for example—wins.

“**Helping Your Child Learn Math**” is a booklet that helps families boost math achievement by using materials found inside the home and transforming routine tasks, such as shopping or cooking, into an enjoyable educational experience. To get your **FREE** booklet sent to your home **call 1-877-433-7827**. Also available in Spanish.

HAVE YOUR PARENT (LEARNING PARTNER) SIGN  
AND RETURN TO YOUR TEACHER.



We use Mathematics in our everyday lives from calculating distances, gauging our weight and height, measuring in cooking, reading a paycheck, balancing a checkbook, spending money at a restaurant or store, pumping gas at a gas station and many more uses. No matter where we look, mathematics is all around us! Children in kindergarten start by matching numbers and begin relating the numbers to sets. Elementary, middle and high school students place groups of information on graphs and interpret the data. Parents and children can make mathematics a fun learning experience around the house.

- What is your child’s favorite collection? Count how many dolls, baseball cards or seashells your child may have in their favorite collection.
- Count the number of jellybeans in a bowl, then subtract the number your child eats.
- Practice basic math skills using games such as Dominos, dice and playing cards.
- Rhyme numbers with words:  $2+2=$  four, door,  $3+7=$  ten, pen
- At snack time, have your child evenly divide the crackers, orange slices, or other snack among siblings or parents.
- Open a joint checking account to calculate the money added to the account each month.
- Use measuring cups in the kitchen to teach your child fractions while cooking or baking.
- Use junk mail to help calculate prices. Have your child make a pretend order. Use the pictures and the prices indicated. Add up how much you will spend on the order.

### TO SOLVE WORD PROBLEMS, YOU SHOULD:

1. **Read**  
Read the problem two or three times until it makes sense.
2. **Plan**  
Think of how you can get the answer.
3. **Solve**  
Do the math. Figure out the answer.
4. **Check**  
Check your work.  
Be sure your answer makes sense.

## Steering You in the Right Direction

### Read a Good Book

After you have finished reading your good book it is time to begin thinking about what you have read. Then you write down the information that you have learned from reading the story. List the problem of the story and the solution of the story. List the main characters in the story and where the story took place. Sequence the events in order by writing what happened first, what happened second and what happened third in the story. A Story Map is a great way to show your understanding of a good book!

#### STORY MAP

**Problem in the story:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Solution in the story:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Characters:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

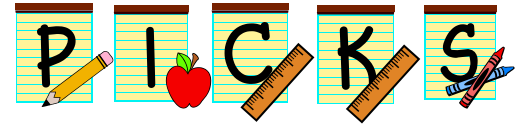
**Setting of the story:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sequencing the Events:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

We become partners in Reading when we invest the time to read with our children at home. We can give them the opportunities to discover the pleasure of reading and how reading unlocks the doors to new discoveries. Reading time is the best time well spent all the time!

### Reading Tips That Will Bring the Joy of Reading into Your Home

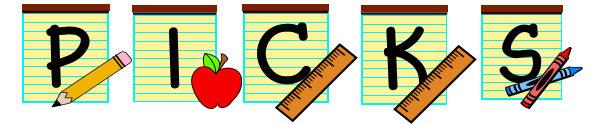
- Know your child's interests.
- Help your child to select a wide range of subjects to read.
- Help your child select a wide range of reading resources.
- Make reading time a commitment in your home.
- Be a role model and read with your child.
- Select a favorite author and everyone in the house read the same book.
- Discuss your favorite book with a family member or friend.
- Brag about your favorite book and encourage others to read it.
- Find a relaxing place in your home where you can enjoy that good book.

## TV Guide



Make television watching a family event. Take time to review program guides in the newspapers or magazines and decide together to watch a show that is age and topic appropriate. After viewing let each family member answer these questions:

1. Who is your favorite character? Why?
2. In most TV shows the characters are dealing with a problem. Was there a problem in this show? How was the problem solved?
3. Have you had a similar problem in real life? How did you solve your problem?
4. Count the commercials. Do the commercials make you want to go out and buy the product? Why?
5. Was there violence in this show? How did it make you feel? Think of ways the violence could be avoided.
6. Was there a topic mentioned that you want to know more about? Try to find a book that has more information.
7. On a piece of paper work with your family to draw a picture or write your own episode of the show. Have everyone sign the paper and return your work to your teacher.



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Parents and teachers are concerned about the possible effects of excessive television viewing on children. Time spent watching television takes away from important activities such as schoolwork, reading, playing, family interaction, and exercise. Studies show that children who watch too much television have lower grades in school, read fewer books, exercise less, and may be overweight. To ensure that children have a positive experience with television parents can:

- **Eliminate some television watching.** Set some basic rules such as no television watching during meals, or before completing household tasks and definitely not during homework and study time.
- **Plan.** Encourage your children to plan their viewing with you. The television should be turned on only for specific shows and turned off when they are over. Choose shows that are appropriate for your child's age. Children's shows on public TV are good, but soap operas, adult sitcoms, and adult talk shows are not.
- **Participate.** Know what your children watch, watch with them, and talk about the programs afterward. Explain situations that are confusing. Help children understand that TV shows are pretend, not real. Ask why any violent scenes occurred, how painful they were, and talk about ways the conflict could have been resolved without violence.
- **Set Limits.** Know how many hours of television your children watch. Don't allow children to watch long blocks of TV. Parents can ban any programs they find offensive.
- **Encourage children to watch programs about characters that cooperate and care for each other.** These programs can influence children in positive ways by setting good examples.
- **Analyze commercials.** Children need help to critically evaluate commercials and realize there are exaggerations and that advertisers pay to influence them.



## *Recipes for Learning*

Cooking can be lots of fun and very useful. You can learn how to follow directions. Use the recipe below to make granola bars that are chock-full of goodies and will sustain the most tired student.

### **Homemade Energy Bars**

#### **You will need:**

A large bowl and an 8"x8" square baking pan

A mixing spoon

A measuring cup and spoon

1 egg

½ cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup granola

½ cup raisins or any other dried fruit

½ cup nuts

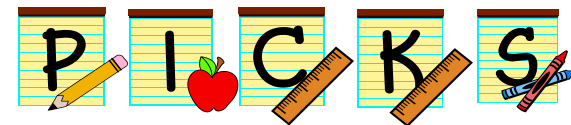
1 small package of M&M's chocolate candies (optional)

Butter or oil

#### **Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350° and generously butter or oil the baking pan.
2. Crack an egg into bowl and add the sugar and vanilla.
3. Mix thoroughly.
4. Stir in granola, dried fruit, nuts and M&M's and mix until combined.
5. Transfer into pan and spread evenly over bottom, pressing firmly with your hands.
6. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Cool and cut into bars or squares. Serves 8 to 12.

Bars can be wrapped individually for tucking into school backpacks.



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Many students will soon be preparing for testing. You can help your child get ready by reading and discussing the following test-taking tips. Cut them out and post them on the refrigerator.



### **PARENT RECIPE FOR MAKING GOOD TEST-TAKING SKILLS**

- ✓ **Know when your child will be taking tests.** You can find this information on the school calendar or ask someone at school.
- ✓ **Contact your child's teacher** if you have questions about testing.
- ✓ **Talk with your child** about why tests are given. Standardized tests determine reading, writing, and math grade levels. Performance on these tests is very important.
- ✓ **Remind your child to read directions carefully** and ask questions if they don't understand.
- ✓ Make sure your child **gets to bed early and has a good breakfast.**
- ✓ **Listen to your child's concerns** about testing and contact the school if necessary.
- ✓ Make sure your child is **on time** and has **proper supplies.**
- ✓ **Give your child a positive, "You can do it!" attitude.** A positive attitude can really make a difference.

## *Caring In Action*

Talk about what it means to be a *caring* person and what that person would do in certain circumstances. Also discuss why *caring* is important to you and your family.

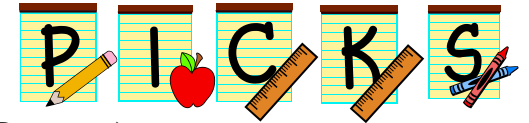
Have your child describe what a *caring* person would do in the following situations:

- A new student has started school and doesn't know anyone.
- A classmate is always left out of social or sporting activities.
- A friend uses tobacco or drinks alcohol.
- You didn't do your chores at home.
- A friend drops some money and you find it.

After discussing these situations with your child, ask them why you think being a caring person is important. Have your child write a story or draw a picture about a caring moment in their life.



**HAVE YOUR PARENT (LEARNING PARTNER) SIGN YOUR PAPER AND RETURN TO YOUR TEACHER.**

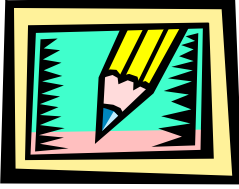


Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Many parents recall a time in their life when someone was caring to them. *Caring* people often go above and beyond what is expected. Making someone feel good about themselves or their choices is an important character trait for each of us to embrace. Share your stories with your child and let them know how you felt when someone was kind to you.

### **Tips for parents:**

- *Model caring* behavior for your children – they learn from watching you.
- *Encourage* your child to take care of their things such as toys, pets and their bedrooms. Caring begins at home.
- *Volunteer* in the classroom or other activity your child is engaged in to show how much you care about them.
- *Listen* to your child as they talk about their school day. Listening is a great way to show how much you care.
- *Write a kind note* to your child when they have done something good to thank them.



## TEST TAKING TIPS FOR PARENTS

The following tips are provided to assist parents in helping their children with test stress and anxiety. Some common symptoms of stress and anxiety are: stomachaches, headaches, nail biting, worrying, nervousness, nightmares, insomnia, and refusal to go to school.

- √ Talk to your child about the upcoming test and let him/her discuss feelings- this alone can reduce stress.
- √ Let your child know it is normal to be a little anxious and that it is okay.
- √ Encourage your child to do well, but don't pressure him/her.
- √ If your child seems overly stressed and anxious, talk to your child's school counselor and/or teacher.
- √ Make sure your child does all of his/her homework and reading assignments throughout the school year in order to be prepared for the test.
- √ Even if you are anxious about your child's test, keep a positive attitude around your child.
- √ Help your child practice for the test. Ask your child's teacher what you can work on or where you can go for sample questions or formats.
- √ Let your child relax for a little while before bed time.
- √ Ensure on test day that your child eats a healthy breakfast that is not too heavy or sugar laden.
- √ Be sure that your child gets a good night's sleep prior to the test day.

When parents are less stressed, children are too. Look for ways to reduce your stress. Find ways to laugh and find the humor in life.

Your love for your child coupled with realistic and consistent expectations will go far in helping your child reduce test stress and anxiety.

## Game Time

Here are some fun & easy games you can play with your children that will help them increase their memory skills.

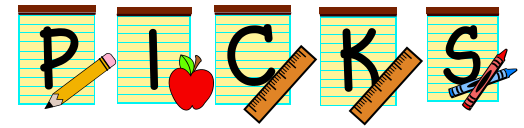
Directions: Ask your child to listen as you say a sequence of items, and then have him/her repeat what you said.

1- **Sequences** - A sequence is a series of things that are in a certain order.

- Give a series of numbers, letters, or words to your child.
- Have them repeat the sequence.
- Start with just a few items (3-4) to remember then increase it.
- The average person can remember a series of seven (7) digits.
- How many can you get?

2- **Rhythms to Remember**- This activity builds listening and memory skills.

- Find a glass or jar and a pencil
- On the glass, tap out a rhythm with the pencil.
- Have your child repeat the rhythm
- Use lots of different objects to tap out different rhythms.



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

Learning can be fun! Make a game night with your family and learn more about yourself and each other. Games can be an excellent educational tool and they offer a chance to gather together as a family or with friends, to socialize, to challenge yourselves, and to engage in friendly competition.

You can use both commercial and homemade games to practice your skills and review what you've learned. Any educational material can be made into a game, or a game can be used to liven up memory work, drills, or review.

There are many different types of commercial games that can be used in learning. There are many math, strategy, and reasoning games for all ages, such as: Hi-Ho Cherry-O, Go Fish and Concentration. These games can be used at different ages to reinforce and build mental math skills, problem-solving skills, and advanced reasoning capabilities. There are also language games available, such as: Scrabble, Boggle, and many others. These can easily be used to build vocabulary, practice spelling, or reinforce foreign languages.

You can use the material your child is learning in school and turn it into a learning game. Everyone in your family can participate in dreaming up and making games. Just the practice of making a game can be a wonderful drill for children, particularly if the game involves question cards for which they must research the answers. For any game, there is an element of challenge in planning and executing a design, and assessing its effectiveness in terms of playability.

## Nature Walk Fun!

It is time to get out in the community, stretch your legs, and really take in the beauty of the world. What surprises will you see as you take a nature walk at your favorite local park? With your family and friends right by your side, they too can be part of this wonderful nature experience.

1. Get your eyes and ears wide open ready to explore.
2. Take a notepad and pencil with a paper bag to gather items.
3. Look and listen along the path. Write down bird or animal noises that you may hear along the way.
4. Write down animals, insects, and birds sighted.
5. Write down plants and trees sighted.
6. Write down animal homes sighted.
7. Write down any animal, insect or bird behavior sighted.
8. Collect your favorite leaves. Write down the names of the leaves and the colors.
9. When you get home make a nature book of the things that you investigated along the way!

### My Nature Book

**Place I visited:**

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**Animals, insects, and birds sighted:**

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**Colors of plants, trees, and leaves:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Colors of animals and insects:**

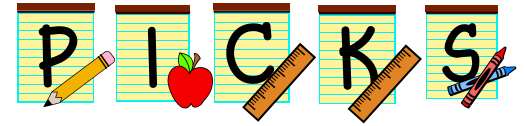
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**Animal, insect, or bird behavior sighted:**

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**Draw pictures of any interesting plants, animals, insects, and birds sighted.**

**Return your nature book to the school by**\_\_\_\_\_.



Dear Parents (Learning Partners),

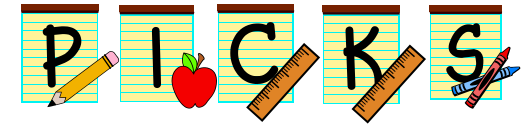


**Look** Around and See



**What Your Community Has to Offer**

1. Look around your neighborhood, down the block and around the corner. Our world is filled with many things to see and explore. Whether it is going on your favorite nature walk or a visit to the science museum or your local zoo, your community has something to offer everyone.
2. During the year set your sights on visiting places that your children will enjoy.
3. Investigate places that offer learning opportunities and experiences that will challenge your child's learning.
4. Visit your favorite library for plays, puppet theatres, books and movies.
5. Pack a lunch and go to the park to spend an afternoon exercising and relaxing there.
6. Go to a nature center to explore the plants and animals.
7. Take your swimming gear along and have a fun day at the beach.
8. Spend parent and child time at various pleasure spots in your community. This will provide rich experiences and stimulate discussion about your most favorite place to visit.



## Trash into Treasure

Celebrate Earth Day by recycling objects that some may think are junk.



1. Gather old newspapers and magazines.
2. Use a large piece of construction paper or cardboard as your WANTED poster.
3. Write WANTED on the poster with your name on it.
4. Cut out pictures that would reflect your personality. Examples of someone singing, dancing, eating at a restaurant, going to movies, playing a sport, reading a book, etc.
5. Paste the pictures on the paper or board.
6. Use words from the print that describe you: happy, surprised, excited, funny, humorous, talented, creative, etc.
7. Use old buttons, badges, ribbon, stamps, or anything that will add to your poster description to really send the message that the poster is all about you.

Talk about ways you and your family can help take care of the earth. Make a list of your ideas and bring them to your class by \_\_\_\_\_.

Dear Parents (Learning Partners):

National Earth Week was developed by the PTA in 1990 to focus attention on the importance of the environment to the health and safety of children and all living things. Talk with your child about how everyone is needed to help take care of our world. Here are few ideas to get you started:

Plant some seeds and take care of them together. Explain that plants give us air to breathe.

Organize a “clean up” day in your yard, neighborhood, or park.

Give your child the job of setting out the recycling bins.

Make a bird feeder. Count how many birds you see in your yard before you put up the feeder and then count again after putting up the feeder.

Hold a neighborhood “Swap Shop” to show your child how practical reusing can be.

Teach your child the 3 R’s of Earth Day:

Reduce – Buy and use only what you need. Reduce the water you use by turning off the water while you brush your teeth.

Recycle – Use your recycling bins for paper, plastics, and aluminum.

Reuse - Think about giving good items that you no longer need to someone else who does need them.