

May

INSIDE
▼ *this issue*

02

Math Tips

05

Take Action: How to Talk
With Your Child When
you Feel Concerned
They may be Struggling
With a Mental Health
Problem

06

How I Can Engage my
Child in Learning in
Everyday Activities

2021

ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca

PARENTS ENGAGED IN EDUCATION



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 57

Welcome to our May newsletter – we are almost there parents just seven weeks left!!

We continue to celebrate parents and educators for the fabulous job they are doing to support students across the province.

On May 9th, we recognized the role and importance of Mothers/ Caregivers/Role Models by celebrating Mother's Day. I hope that these special people took a few minutes to enjoy their family and to take a break from the everyday challenges that life has thrown our way in the past year.

This month we are focusing the newsletter on ideas for parents on how to support their children's mental health. In addition, we have reprinted some of our blogs with fun tips on how parents can engage their children in learning through everyday activities around the house.

You may have seen some news coverage about the opening of our new Family Service Centre featuring CANADA'S FIRST EDUCATION BANK in Scarborough, Ontario. This centre serves low-income families in Toronto, Peel, Durham and Markham due to the geographic location of the centre.

The following link will take you on a virtual tour of our new facility:
<https://youtu.be/bL8zSwgXxE4>

We believe that there should be a Family Service Centre/Education Bank in every city in the Province, and in fact, throughout Canada.

If your school, or school board, is interested in learning more about how to make this happen, please contact parentengagementgroup@gmail.com to discuss.

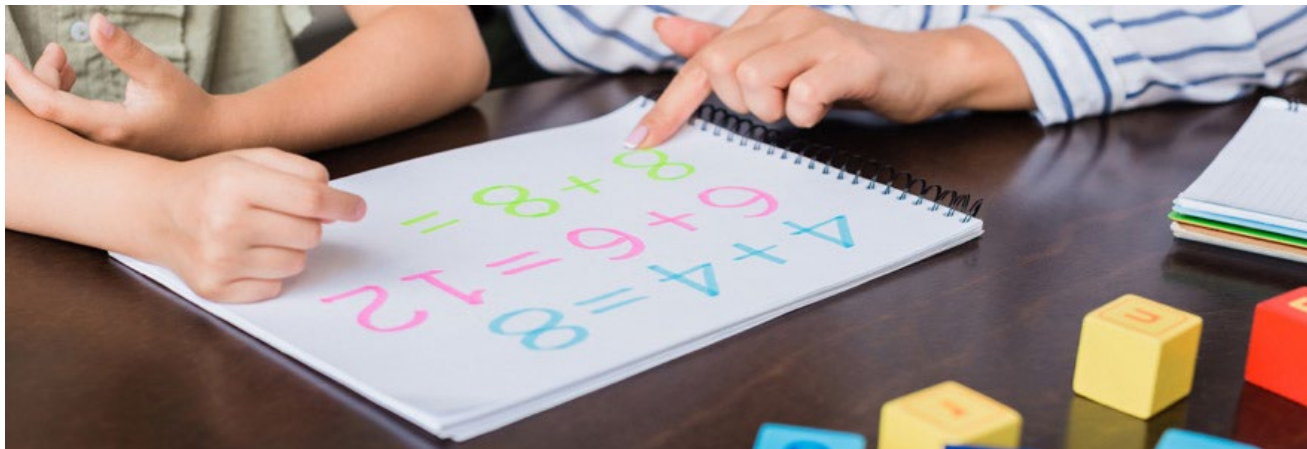
We encourage everyone to get outside, enjoy the sunshine and have some fun as a family!!

Stay well,

Theresa Pastore,
Executive Director, Parents Engaged in Education

MATH TIPS

By Theresa Pastore



Teaching math concepts has been long considered a subject left for the classroom teacher, with many parents feeling unable or unequipped to help their child develop this skill. Parents already do many things with their children that can encourage mathematical thinking. Here are 9 tips for parents on how they can work with their child on math in a positive and fun way.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH MATH

1. CONNECT MATH TO DAILY LIFE.

Let your kids know the importance of math in everyday living. Talk about the ways you use math in your life and around the house. Show them a budget or how you pay the bills. Ask them how they used math during the day.

2. HAVE FUN AT THE CHECKOUT.

Let your kids pay the next time you are at the store and ask what bills and coins are needed to pay for it.

3. PLAY GAMES TOGETHER.

Show them math can be fun and exciting. Play family games to add excitement to math activities, like cards, board games or games in the car such as license plate bingo or adding license plate numbers.

4. COOKING CAN BE COUNTING FUN!

Get older children involved in baking or cooking the family dinner and let them help measure ingredients for dishes or estimate the number of potatoes that are needed to feed everyone.

5. PLAY THE ESTIMATING GAME.

Ask your kids to estimate measurements, distances, time and grocery bills. Be sure to compare the estimate with actual. Or get them to guess how much the apples you are going to buy will weigh and then take them to the scale in the grocery store and find out.

6. FIGURING IT OUT.

Come up with a rhyme and ask your child

to recite it as many times as possible in 15 seconds. After establishing how many times it can be repeated in 15 seconds have them multiply to establish how many time it could be said in 1 minute, 5 minutes etc.

7. USE COMMON TOYS TO UNDERSTAND MATH CONCEPTS.

Build a tower from blocks. Count the blocks. Then talk about the need for a base of the right size and the stability it creates.

8. SPORTS AND MATH.

There is a lot of math used in sports: batting averages, points per game, save percentages – these are math terms that a sports enthusiast will love. If you watch a game with your child, read the newspaper report together sometime the next day and talk about the math concepts.

9. COMPUTERS GAMES.

There are great computer games available for math and perhaps your child's teacher can introduce you to the ones they use in class. There are also a wide variety of websites that have fun math games.

WORKING AND LEARNING MATH TOGETHER WITH YOUR CHILD CAN BE FUN!

Using these tips will help make math fun! Parents can easily use everyday experiences to reinforce and develop mathematical skills and support their child's learning of this important subject area.



Parents Engaged in Education have designed a **"DREAM TREE"** banner.

This vinyl banner is 5' x 6.5' with hundreds of blank leaves for parents and students to write their dreams.

This is a wonderful example of positive messages which will inspire the entire school community all year round.

**GREAT FOR CURRICULUM OR
PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEW NIGHTS!!**

Our aim is to raise enough funds this year to offer priority schools in challenged communities a **"DREAM TREE"** to encourage their communities to strive for the best they can be.

While we work on this program, if your school would like to purchase a **"DREAM TREE"** for your community you may do so by contacting
Theresa.pastore@
parentsengagedineducation.ca.

The cost is \$200.00 plus shipping

(This is cost recovery only,
we do not charge in excess of our cost)



PARENTS ENGAGED
IN EDUCATION

.....

FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE

FEATURING
CANADA'S FIRST
EDUCATION BANK

.....

*A diverse, inclusive
and safe space for
ALL*

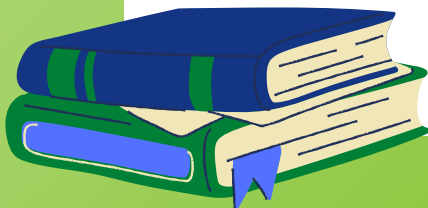
THE FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE IS LOCATED AT
857 MILNER AVE. UNIT 104, SCARBOROUGH, ON M1B 5N6

Our Hours of Operation Are:

Wednesday - 3:30pm to 7pm

Saturday - 10am to 3pm; Sunday - 10am to 3pm

**DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, FAMILIES MUST MAKE
AN APPOINTMENT TO COME INTO THE FAMILY SERVICE
CENTRE/EDUCATION BANK BY CALLING: 416-546-1467**





TAKE ACTION

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILD WHEN YOU FEEL CONCERNED THEY MAY BE STRUGGLING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

It can be challenging to talk about mental health. Sometimes parents, like others, avoid the conversation because they don't know how to start or they worry that they might put thoughts into their child's head that had not been there, and will, therefore, make things worse. Research tells us that this is not the case. Bringing up worries, concerns, changes in behaviour etc. with your child will open the lines of communication rather than worsen the situation.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH:

- Find a quiet time when you are unlikely to have interruptions to begin the conversation.
- Reassure your child that they can tell you anything and you will not get angry with them (even if you get scared).
- Start the conversation with describing changes you have noticed in their mood, behaviour, reactions etc. e.g., "I have noticed that you seem to be crying more." If you have had conversations with your child's teacher about concerns, include comments from the teacher's observations.
- Share that you "wonder" about how your child might be feeling, what they might be thinking, what they might be worried about etc. e.g., "I wonder if you're feeling sad about losing your friendship with Sam."
- Allow your child time to respond before they answer.
- Stay calm and don't abandon the conversation if your child responds with "Nothing is wrong.....leave me alone". If this happens, reassure your child that you are there for them. Give your child some time and then try again.
- If your child tells you anything that makes you worried (e.g., thoughts of suicide, overwhelming anxiety, self-injurious behaviour like cutting) reassure your child that you are glad they told you and you will help them find the right professional to talk to, and you will be there for them throughout the journey.



HOW I CAN ENGAGE MY CHILD IN LEARNING IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

By Theresa Pastore

Today there never seems to be enough time to get everything done. Parents may really want to engage their child in learning, but, it seems almost impossible to find time to think of new challenging activities or books they can learn from. I suggest that all parents take a deep breath, children learn everyday, in everything they do. Here are some suggestions that might help and not require any, or little, additional time for you as a parent.

Before children are at an age when they can read, give them a set of measuring cups. When you are making dinner, ask them to measure out some of the ingredients. While they are measuring it is a great time to ask them some questions, such as, why is it important to measure? If we put one cup of water and one cup of milk in the mix,

how many cups are we putting in? Something as simple as making hot dogs on the BBQ – if we are going to give everyone in the family one hot dog, how many hotdogs do we need? If we have a bun for every hot dog, how many things do we have all together? If we put a knife and fork out for every person in the family, how many utensils are we putting on the table? These questions help them develop simple math skills and teach the concept of adding.

While you are working in the backyard, tell your child a story about your own childhood. Ask them to repeat the story back to you – this helps them listen and exercise their memory (you might be surprised at how their version comes out).

If you are about to tackle a task, ask your child

how they think you should do it. You might be surprised at what a useful suggestion can come out of a 4-6 year old.

As your child is discovering reading they love to impress you with their new found knowledge.

When you receive flyers in the mail ask them what words they can read. Guide them by telling them to look at some of the pictures to see what they might tell them about what that flyer is about.

When you receive a letter or bill, ask your child if they could read you the address on the front as a way to teach them where they live so they can repeat it if they are ever lost or need help.

When you sit outside or go for a walk and someone walks by with a pet, ask your child how to spell “cat” or “dog”. Ask them questions about the animal to see the world through their eyes i.e. Why do you think that dogs have all that fur? I am sure that they wonder why dogs and cats don’t need clothes when we do. It is also a great time to talk about how nature has made these animals to have heavier coats in the winter and lighter coats in the summer. What is it called when their winter fur starts falling out? Why do you think a dog barks if you come near it? is is a great lesson about the affect of strangers. Since an animal will generally bark or even scream out when a stranger approaches it, especially if it is alone, explain to your child that they do this to protect themselves, hoping to ward of people from coming too close. is a great opportunity to talk about stranger safety.

As their math skills progress there are even more opportunities in everyday life to engage them.

If you need a greeting card for a family or friend’s birthday, take you child with you to the store. Ask them to read a few aloud to you so you can pick your favourite. You can really make them feel important if you tell them they can pick the card they think would be best after they read several to you.

If you are buying a toy with an age recommendation, ask your child to read it to you and take it further by asking why they think a child must be a certain age to use the toy. ese lessons can be really helpful if you have younger children because it creates an understanding of why they cannot play with the toy and the older child might take the responsibility to be sure the younger children do not play with it.

IF YOU ARE ABOUT
TO TACKLE A TASK,
ASK YOUR CHILD
HOW THEY THINK
YOU SHOULD DO IT.

When you’re shopping for groceries there are many opportunities to learn. Have them weigh the produce for you so they learn the concept of weight measurement and the effect that has on how much something costs.

When children get to the point of having steady hands and less impulsive actions it is great to involve them further in cooking and kitchen duties. Simple things like letting them measure and mix the ingredients in a recipe. Maybe the recipe was handed down from another generation of your family and this is a great opportunity to talk about them with your child and what the world was like when they were young.

Buy blank cards and have your child write the message to the recipient for a special occasion. Have them ask the whole family what their favourite character or actor is and request that they write a story to read to everyone at dinner which includes these people.

If they are playing video games, sit with them and ask them to teach you how they strategize different



scenarios in order to move on, how many times have they tried that particular level and congratulate them on their perseverance and their desire to be successful. Encourage them to think about how great it would be if they transfer these skills to their academic learning.

Every walk or outside experience opens an abundance of subjects to engage your child. Have them pick up a leaf or two and ask what they know about it. Suggest that they go back and research more information about the tree that this leaf comes from and before they go to bed to tell you all that they learned. Is something you can do as you get the yard work done or walk the dog.

At this age the environment is a fascinating topic for children they likely know more than you might about how clouds are formed, and why there are rainbows. At school they learn about the need to recycle, sort garbage and the benefit of composting – they can now be your teacher!

ENGAGING WITH YOUR CHILD AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

The challenge at the secondary level is that often your child does not want to engage. They see every question you ask as interference in their lives. Often, they start to believe that their parents really don't know anything, they don't care about them and sadly that they are old enough to do everything they need on their own.

It is easy at this time for parents to start separating themselves from their children's education. We comfort ourselves with the idea that we got them that far and now they should be able to get themselves through school. They don't want you involved and you might believe that is actually a relief.

I have always held the opinion that the opposite is true. I believe that our children need us more than ever as they enter their teens and high school.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR CHILD AND THEIR SCHOOL – IT IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE WAYS TO SPEND YOUR TIME.



Apart from the academic struggles they face, often high school is when peer pressure and bullying can increase mental health issues. If we are not engaged with our children's education and school at this stage they may feel that we think they have got it handled and feel less like involving their parents. If education is not an ongoing discussion in your household, they may hesitate to tell you they are struggling with a certain subject, teacher or other issues.

Perhaps starting a discussion with a problem you might have had in school and asking if they have ever had the same issue might inspire them to open up and discuss it.

Find out their specific interests. It may be that you have a budding artist, poet or rock star in your midst. Ask them why they are interested in that area and how they think they can build that talent into their future goals. Don't discourage your future rock star, but, maybe you can impress on them that talent isn't all they need. They need to understand marketing, legal contracts, accounting etc., so education still remains a high priority. Even if they think they can hire people to do that, ask them how they would know if the person has their best interest in mind if they don't understand those things themselves. This is a great way to set a high academic standard for them to achieve without belittling their dreams.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

These are just a few strategies that I have used to keep engaged in my children's education. This article

is meant to be a starting point to the hundreds of ways parents can engage and make learning part of their children's lives everyday whether it's a school day or not.

When presented with a variety of ways they can learn, they might not catch on that they are actually being educated!!

SUMMING UP PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent engagement can mean many things in a child's academic career. From working at the kitchen table, to helping with homework, to everyday activities like those above, to helping out in the classroom, to sitting as a partner with the principal to elevate the academic experience for all children in the school; anything, big or small, will benefit your child's future.

The research states that parent engagement results in the following:

1. Higher academic achievement
2. Better attendance at school
3. Better social skills i.e. Less behaviour issues
4. Higher graduation rates
5. Higher chance a student will move on to post-secondary school
6. Students are more confident

For as challenging as lack of time can be for all of us, the reality is that children seem to grow up very fast and the things we put off until tomorrow can affect their academic achievement in long run.

It's not always easy for students to share what's on their minds.

While our Professional Advisories are designed for teachers, they can be helpful to parents too.

Learn about student mental health, the signs of mental struggle, and how you can help.

Find it at
oct-oeeo.ca/mentalhealth.



Supporting Students' Mental Health

Positive mental health* enables good learning, yet **one in five** students experience a mental illness or concern each year. Learn how you can support at-risk students.

Go to oct-oeeo.ca/StudentMentalHealth to see the complete College advisory, watch our video and hear the audio version.

- 1 Create a Safe Space**
 - Use language that avoids stigmatizing mental illnesses.
 - Notice who students socialize with.
 - Watch how your students are functioning in school.
- 2 Notice the Signs**

Look For

 - constant worrying, frequent, angry outbursts or mood swings
 - significant drops in school marks
 - a lack of energy or motivation.
- 3 Listen & Consult**
 - Validate students' feelings and hear their concerns.
 - Always document and keep good records.
 - Consult your principal or vice-principal frequently.

REMEMBER: Seek help
Do not try to diagnose ailments or propose treatment.
- 4 Know Who to Inform**

If a student is at risk of harm, act immediately according to your employer's protocols. As appropriate, involve:

 - parents/guardians
 - school board psychologists, social workers & school support team
 - elders, knowledge keepers or members of a faith community.
- 5 Consult these Agencies**

If you are unsure whether an action is appropriate, report to your supervisor. For additional information contact these agencies:

 - Aboriginal Health Access Centres
 - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
 - Children's Mental Health Ontario
 - EdCan Network
 - School Mental Health ASSIST
 - Sick Kids' Hospital, Centre for Brain and Mental Health
 - Mental Health Commission of Canada
 - Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
 - Canadian Mental Health Association
 - Ontario Mental Health Association
 - Ontario Ministry of Education
 - Teenmentalhealth.org

The Realities

2030
The year the World Health Organization says mental health disorders will be the world's leading cause of disability.

Suicide
The 2nd leading cause of death among teens.
70% of mental health problems begin in childhood or adolescence.

1.2 million
children and youth are affected by mental illness.
—Less than 20% receive appropriate treatment.

Ontario College of Teachers
Setting the Standard for Great Teaching

*The capacity of each and all of us to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face, as defined by The Public Health Agency of Canada.
Source: Ontario College of Teachers, 2018 Professional Advisory: Supporting Students' Mental Health.



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Setting the
Standard for
Great Teaching

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO



THANK YOU

To educators and parents for everything you are doing at home
We stand with you as your partners in learning

nelson.com/learningonline **NELSON**



**THANK YOU
FRONT-LINE
WORKERS.**

tsu The Toronto Secondary Unit
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

BECOME A PEIE AMBASSADOR AND BE A PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL COMMUNITY



Parents
ENGAGED IN EDUCATION
Ambassador

A P.E.I.E. Ambassador will...

- Promote the mission of the organization.
- Share the organization's resources with their school community.
- Work to engage other parents with their children and their school.
- Be their child's biggest CHEERLEADER in school!

For more information, visit
ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT
AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

ONTARIO ENGLISH
**Catholic
Teachers**
ASSOCIATION

**We're all
in this *together*.**



**Stay strong,
stay safe.**



Unity is our strength.
Education workers,
students, parents,
and families will
get through this
together.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

Helping You... Help Your Child



- 100% Canadian
- Based on Ministry Expectations
- Makes for a great fundraiser for schools to assist parents in helping with their child's education.



Proven Successes

Please tour our web site and find out how these resources can benefit both students and parents from Grade 3 to Grade 10.

Visit www.learningadvantage.ca

Our Learning Advantage Books

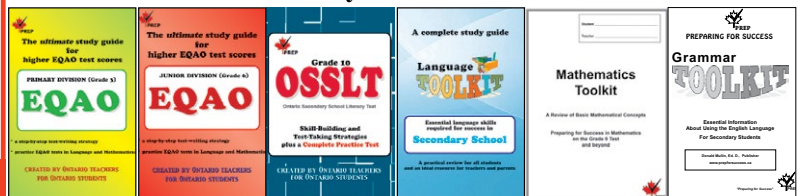


Our French Immersion Books



Grammar Toolkit

An excellent tool for any student in Grade 6 and above!



Seneca

Connect with Us Virtually

- Sign up for a webinar
- Book a virtual advising appointment
- Take a virtual campus tour

Learn more:
senecacollege.ca/visitus



LITTLEDEW
DESIGN STUDIOS
LITTLEDEWDESIGNS@GMAIL.COM

GRAPHIC DESIGN • MARKETING • PHOTOGRAPHY



Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

www.parentsengagedineducation.ca
info@parentsengagedineducation.ca

647-408-2091

Follow us on twitter  @parentengagcons