

**Bellevue Union School District
Parent/Student Manual**

We are proud of our students! Bellevue students are safe, respectful, responsible, and at school for the purpose of learning. The faculty and staff celebrate the parent and student support of our schools. Please read the behavioral code, expectations, discipline protocol, school rules and discuss them with your child. When you have finished discussing the manual and our expectations and the causes for suspension and expulsion are understood, please sign the parent and student signature portion of the **Back to School Documents Form** and return it to the teacher.

**BELLEVUE BEHAVIOR CODE: BE SAFE, BE RESPECTFUL,
BE RESPONSIBLE**

**Student Discipline and the Maintenance of a
Positive School Culture**

District Philosophy: The goal of a student discipline plan is to maintain a positive, safe and secure school environment. A comprehensive student discipline plan endeavors to foster the behavior and skills, in a developmentally appropriate manner student will utilize throughout their lives as responsible people in a democratic society. Discipline is not about punishment. It is to be instructive so that the child learns the skills to make positive choices in the present and future. We intend for our students to remain safe, respectful to others, and responsible for their behavior and decisions. Further, we endeavor to build and maintain a nurturing school climate that is welcoming, fosters a sense of belonging and mutual respect, and eliminates behaviors such as bullying and teasing that can negatively affect a child's sense of joy about being at school.

Bellevue students can and do behave in a responsible and respectful manner the majority of the time. Students feel safe and secure at school when they and others follow the rules and clear consequences are outlined and enforced. A school wide discipline plan is most effective, and students feel most secure, when they understand the expectations so well that they know what the consequences will be before choosing to commit an infraction of the rules. Students feel comfortable at school when their parents and teachers show clearly that they believe in them and support them in being responsible for the rules. Our principals and teachers instruct the students in the rules and consequences at the beginning of each school year and assist students in building life skills throughout the year.

Serious Infractions and Consequences: Suspension and Expulsion: The big four offenses leading to suspension are fighting, harassing, disrupting classroom learning, and possession of a weapon or other dangerous object. Also, a student may be suspended or expelled for committing any of the acts enumerated in California Education Code 48900 (displayed below) if the act is related to a school activity, is committed anytime while on school grounds, going to or coming from school, during the lunch period on or off campus; during or while going to, coming from, or during a school-sponsored activity.

No student or group of students shall, through physical, written, verbal, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any other student or school personnel. (BP 5131.2)

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
2. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, any controlled substance including an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully offered or arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance including an alcoholic beverage or an intoxicant of any kind; and then either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
5. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
6. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property. "School property" includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
7. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property. "School property" includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
8. Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products; including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
9. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
10. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.
11. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
12. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property. "School property" includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.

13. Possessed an imitation firearm. As used in this section, "imitation firearm" means a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
14. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289; or committed a sexual battery as defined Penal Code 243.4.
15. Harassed, threatened or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of either preventing that student from being a witness; or retaliating against that student for being a witness, or both.
16. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
17. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing, as defined in Education Code sections 32050 and 48900 (s).
18. Aids or abets, as defined in Penal Code 31, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
19. Committed sexual harassment as defined in Education Code 212.5. This conduct must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance; or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This sub-section shall not apply to students enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive. (Education Code 48900.2)
20. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence as defined in subdivision (e) of Education Code 233.
21. This sub-section applies to students enrolled in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive. (Education Code 48900.3)
22. Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or students that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or students by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This sub-section applies to students enrolled in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive. (Education Code 48900.4)
23. Making terrorist threats, as defined, against school officials or school property, or both. (Education Code 48900.7)

What is Expulsion? When a crime is committed, the police are called in and the student is suspended (excluded) from school pending the outcome of an expulsion hearing. An expulsion takes place in at least two parts. First the child and his/her parents appear at a hearing before an administrative panel. Second, the Board of Trustees acts on the recommendation of the administrative panel. The Board can uphold the recommendation as written or with modifications, or the Board can reject the recommendation and institute a different consequence within legal limitations. Public school districts may not accept the enrollment of a child expelled by another public school district during the term of expulsion without a board

hearing. Ed. Code 48900.8 requires that each offense committed by a child that results in suspension and/or expulsion be identified by offense committed in the child's permanent school record.

Willful Misconduct and Vandalism: Did you know that parents are held financially responsible for the vandalism committed by their minor children? Education Code section 48904 provides that the parent or guardian is liable for all damages caused by the willful misconduct of their minor children that results in

1. the injury or death of any pupil, school district employee, private school employee, or school volunteer.
2. any damage to real or personal property belonging to the school district or private school, or personal property belonging to a school employee.

The liability limit for parents for the willful misconduct of their minor children is adjusted each year by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to reflect Federal guidelines and is anticipated to be approximately \$20,000 per incident for 2013-14. Also, parents/guardians are liable for any reward up to \$10,000, paid by local agencies for information leading to the identification and apprehension of their child who willfully damaged or destroyed property, or whose willful misconduct resulted in injury or death to any person. The main sources of expensive vandalism on our sites result from skateboarding, graffiti, and "mud ball" (playing on the fields when they are closed due to saturation and damaging the turf and/or irrigation system through sliding on it until it becomes muddy). Parents will be held financially liable for damage their children do to school property when engaged in these activities, even if their child is not a current student at the school he/she has damaged.

Tobacco Use is Prohibited: Tobacco use of any kind is prohibited all hours, on all days of every year on all campuses of the Bellevue Union School District.

Skateboards: Skateboarding, skating, and rollerblading is prohibited on our school campuses by anyone at any time. There are city ordinances, Board Policies, and state laws prohibiting skateboarding in specified locations to protect the public interest and investment in these facilities due to the damage these activities can cause to school facilities.

Please help us keep our schools safe by calling the RESCQ (Redwood Empire Schools' Care Quest) line at **1-877-570-7770**, 24 hours per day, to report school arson, vandalism, bomb threats, violence against students or staff, and weapons on campus. There is a reward of up to \$1,000 offered to persons who provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators of crimes on campus.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES
BE SAFE BE RESPECTFUL BE RESPONSIBLE

Specific behavior expectations for areas throughout the school are listed on the following pages. In addition, please follow the rules below:

FOOD: CANDY and other non-nutritional foods are not allowed in the classrooms or only as determined by the classroom teacher.

RECESS SNACKS are to be eaten only in designated areas. CHEWING GUM not allowed on campus.

TOYS, GAMES, AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT should not be brought to school or on the bus.

GLASS CONTAINERS are not allowed.

SPITTING is prohibited.

PLAYING on the fields when saturated, muddy, or closed is not allowed.

DISPLAY OF GANG AFFINITY, i.e., gang clothing, symbols, styles, and/or signing or signaling is not allowed. SKATEBOARDS, SKATES, HEELIES, AND SCOOTERS are not allowed to be used on campus. (Santa Rosa City Code, Section 9.22.020)

DRESS CODE

Students in the Bellevue Union School District dress for success in Common Dress. Wearing Common Dress is important because it helps students avoid clothing distractions and concentrate on their learning.

Please follow these rules:

1. For tops, students are asked to wear collared shirts or school spirit shirts.
 1. Bellevue shirt colors: black/white/grey collared shirts & Bellevue blue spirit shirts
 2. BUSD Dual Immersion shirt colors: black/grey collared shirts and school spirit shirts in lime green and orange

3. Kawana Academy shirt colors: black/grey/dark green collared shirts
 4. Meadow View shirt colors: black/white collared shirts & purple Meadow View spirit shirts
 5. Taylor Mountain shirt colors: black/white/burgundy collared shirts & burgundy Taylor Mountain spirit shirts
2. On the bottom, students may wear pants, shorts or skirts in blue, black or tan jean material (no sweats or leggings)
 3. Shorts and skirts need to be at least fingertip length.
 4. Hair that is distracting from the educational process, make-up, artificial nails, perfume, and cologne are not appropriate at the elementary level and are not to be worn at school.
 5. Spiked clothing (like belts) and spiked or gauged jewelry (like earrings) are not permitted.

No clothing, accessories, or possessions may display, describe, or signify: drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexuality, violence, nudity, or dangerous or unsafe activity, or be obscene, vulgar, or racially or sexually discriminatory.

No display is permitted of indications of gang inclinations or involvement, such as hair nets, bandanas, beanies, chains, colors or other gang significations as verified by the Santa Rosa Police Department.

The schools may designate certain days of the year for special kinds of clothing or costume.

Students participating in nationally recognized youth organizations shall be allowed to wear uniforms on days when the organization has a scheduled meeting.

FAQ Regarding Absences in the Bellevue Union School District

Q. What is considered an excused absence?

A. Student illness, student's doctor's visit (with note), religious holiday and bereavement.

Q. What is considered an unexcused absence?

A. Anything other than what is stated above.

Q. What should I do if my child is sick and will not be coming to school?

A. Please call the attendance line daily by 10 a.m. the morning of the absence and leave a message stating your name, your child's name and why they are going to be absent (sick, vacation, doctor's appointment, etc.).

Q. What if we are going to be out of town and my child will be missing less than 5 days of school?

A. If you know ahead of time that your child will be missing school you may write a note and turn it into the office, call the attendance line and leave a message, or you may email the office manager. Vacation absences are **not** considered an excused absence.

Q. What if my child will be missing 5 or more school days because of a planned vacation?

A. A student may enroll in Independent study prior to a scheduled absence of five or more days. Requests must be made a week in advance. After ten (10) days of unexcused absences students will be unenrolled from school. Vacation absences are **not** considered an excused absence.

Q. What if my child has a doctor's appointment and will be missing school?

A. Upon the student's return please turn in a note from your doctor's office. This will be considered an excused absence.

Q. How many absences can be excused for illness without a doctor's note?

A. You may excuse your student's absence due to illness a total of 10 times per school year. If your child has been absent more than 10 times without a doctor's note, a note will be needed from your doctor for every single absence after that for the remainder of the school year.

Q. What is Truancy?

A. By law it is your responsibility as a parent to see that your child not only attends school but arrives to school on time and is picked up on time. **Every tardy** is recorded in your child's attendance. If your child arrives after the start of the school day or departs before the end of the school your child is tardy. Tardies are disruptive to students in the classroom on time and have a negative effect on your student's education experience. Excessive tardies will result in a meeting with the principal. After 3 times of being more than 30 minutes late or picked up more than 30 minutes early and/or not notifying the office of an absence, your child will be declared a truant. You will receive a notice and a copy of the notice will be put into your child's cumulative record. If the problem persists, you will be referred to the district attorney's office.

Q. What type of absence is considered in truancy reporting?

A. If a parent has not called in, written a note or emailed the office manager the absence is considered an unexcused absence. On the 3rd unexcused absence your child will be declared a truant. Also, if your child is more than 30 minutes late to school without a doctor's note, it is counted towards one of the 3 absences that triggers the student being declared a truant.

Q. When is coming late to school or being picked up early excused?

A. The only excused reason for being late to school or picked up early is a student's doctor's appointment or student illness.

Student Safety

* Stress to your child that he or she should feel comfortable telling you anything, especially if it involves another adult. If your child does not feel comfortable being completely honest with you, then together you should find another trusted adult your child can talk to in confidence.

* Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times. Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule that your children check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans. You should also let them know when YOU are running late or if your plans have changed so that they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.

* Never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it is running or not. Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone, or with others, in automobiles, as the potential dangers to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children NEVER to hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone in a car who they do not know or trust, or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.

* Be involved in your children's activities. As an active participant, you will have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.

* Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you that they do not want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.

* Notice when someone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. Take the time to talk to your children about this person and find out why the person is acting in this way.

* Teach your children that they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others. Teach them to tell you immediately if this happens. Reassure them that you are there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.

* Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, non-critical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern and work with them to get the help they need to resolve the problem.

* Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers. Many states now have public registries that allow parents to screen individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to their responses.

* Practice basic safety skills with your children. Make an outing to a mall or a park a "teachable" experience in which your children can practice checking with you, using pay phones, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating the adults who can help if they need assistance. Remember that allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed (especially first name or nickname) can bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people who may be looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.

* Remember that there is no substitute for your attention and supervision. Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

* Also remember that in the vast majority of cases (up to 90%), children are molested by someone they know. Your efforts at keeping your child safe must be informed by this fact and not focused exclusively on the danger that strangers may present.

<http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>

SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM POLICY

The Bellevue Union School District supports the use of video cameras throughout the school district buildings and campuses for the purpose of enhancing school safety and security. Our

goals are to promote and foster a safe and secure teaching and learning environment for students and staff, to ensure public safety for community members who visit or use our school property, and diminish the potential for personal and district loss or destruction of property. Security camera recordings will be viewable by authorized designee/s only.

Signage and Notification

Appropriate signage will be posted at major entrances to school buildings that notify students, staff and the general public of the District's use of security cameras. Students and staff will receive additional notification at the beginning of the school year regarding the use of security cameras in the schools, and on school grounds. Such notification will include, but not be limited to, employee handbooks and student handbooks. Signs will be posted in public entryways to the buildings and other conspicuous locations informing persons that the buildings and grounds may be under video surveillance.

Camera Placement

The security camera system is installed in public areas only. These areas include grounds, athletic areas, exterior entrances or exits to school buildings and large gathering spaces such as classroom corridors, cafeteria/MPR, lobby and main entries. Security camera usage is prohibited in any space where there is a reasonable expectation for privacy (Restrooms, changing rooms, private offices, nurse's offices and locker rooms).

Access to Video Recordings

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her expressly authorized designee/s shall oversee video surveillance. The Bellevue Union School District Security Camera System will be in operation and may be monitored by school personnel throughout the year. Recorded information will be available with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools or his/her expressly authorized designee/s for use as necessary by appropriate school officials, and/or law enforcement personnel upon request.

Data Storage

All video recordings are stored on the District's computer network. Recordings will be saved for no less than 30 days and no greater than one school year. All recordings will be appropriately deleted. Information obtained through video surveillance may only be used for identifying persons attempting to enter the school buildings, investigating violations of student conduct, suspected illegal activity, or any activity that may threaten the safety and security of students and/or the school staff. No sound is to be monitored or recorded in connection with the video surveillance system. Any video recordings used for security purposes in school buildings or grounds are the sole property of BUSD.

Release of such videos will be made only as permissible pursuant to applicable law and with the permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee/s.

Bellevue Union School District
BP 5030

Student Wellness--Food and Nutrition Policy: Abridged Version

The Governing Board recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity for district students.

It is the policy of the Bellevue Union School District ('District') to educate students about nutrition and to provide each student access to a nutritious lunch each day. The District endeavors to promote health-consciousness and help students excel at learning through better nutrition. The District will educate students in ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits that will benefit them and the larger community in which they live.

Goals:

1. Embrace and support the concept of "wellness" in the District by promoting nutrition education and physical fitness activities.
2. Assist students in self-regulating their food selections to minimize the consumption of less nutritious foods that compete with healthier choices at mealtime.
3. Ensure that no student in the District lacks basic nutritional needs during the school day.
4. Make a healthy lunch available every day for all students desiring it.
5. Ensure that all children who are eligible for the free lunch program have the opportunity to apply.
6. Maintain nutrient-based lunch menu planning (per USDA guidelines) to allow for more flexible food selection.
7. Serve meals in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good manners and respect for fellow students.
8. Integrate nutrition into the District's Education Program in health, science and physical education curricula.

All students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education, recess, school athletic programs, extracurricular programs, after-school programs and other structured and unstructured activities.

The Superintendent/Principals shall encourage staff to serve as positive role models.

Celebrations

Celebrations are to take place at the end of the day and are limited to healthy snacks that are in alignment with the district's nutritional guidelines. The district will supply to parents information on safe and healthy food ideas. There will be three class parties allowed per year (Valentine's Day, Christmas, and End of year) where one "non-conforming" food item will be allowed. Soda is not allowed.

Fundraising Activities

Superintendent or designee will encourage school organizations to use healthy food items or non-food items for fundraising purposes. There will be no more than three fundraisers, which include sales of food items that do not meet the district's nutritional guidelines, per year per site as determined by site administrator. There is no limit on fundraising activities taking place off site, including the exchange of money and collection of items.

Fundraising Ideas

1. Read-a-thon with the incentive to be principal for a day
2. Art show and sale
3. Runs, walks, bike rides, dance a thon, hula hoop competition, turkey trot, 5k run with a theme
4. Taste of the town – local chefs and restaurants bringing samples or teaching.
5. School cookbooks
6. Sell garden starter plants – get plants donated or start seedlings.
7. Set up a farmers market with the school garden (sometimes local farmers will donate)
8. Sell cuties on Valentine's Day.

Other ideas please check out www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks

Volunteer Information

The Bellevue Union School District recognizes and appreciates the value of volunteers in our schools. Volunteering within the school district is easy and all parents/guardians and community members are welcome to participate.

All volunteers working directly with students in the Bellevue Union School District must pass both a Department of Justice and a FBI criminal background check and abide by all district policies, regulations and school rules (*AR/BP 1240*)

To volunteer with the Bellevue Union School District all volunteers must complete the following steps:

1. Obtain a negative Tuberculosis (TB) test from your physician or local clinic. This test must be within the last 4 years and will need to be renewed every 4 years.
2. Bring the negative TB test along with a driver's license or identification card to the district office located next to Taylor Mountain Elementary School at 3150 Education Drive Santa Rosa, CA 95407.
3. You will receive a form to get your fingerprint clearance set up. This is free of cost to all volunteers.
4. Once your fingerprints have been cleared through the Department of Justice and the FBI, you will be given notice by phone or email that you are cleared to volunteer. The school site(s) in which you wish to volunteer at will also be notified of your clearance.

For additional information, please find our current volunteer policy online at www.busd.org.

If you have any questions please feel free to call Amy Littlejohn at (707) 542-5197 x5

Parent Classroom Visits

In order to ensure no disruption to the academic day, parents wishing to visit classrooms are asked to follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Classroom visits by parent/guardians require 24 hours notice. This notice is to be given to the school office.
2. On the day of visitation, parents are required to sign in and sign out at the school office.
2. Parents wishing to observe classrooms longer than 30 minutes, must follow the district volunteer policy---TB and fingerprint clearance.
3. Parents observing in classrooms are to observe only, and not to interact with the students or teacher.
4. If parent visitation causes a disruption in the classroom, the parent may be asked to leave.
5. If a parent has questions or concerns, these can be discussed with the teacher at an appointed time.

Help Your Student Get the Most Out of Homework

From the National Education Association (NEA):

Many students try to avoid it, but teaching and learning research indicates that children who spend more time on regularly assigned, meaningful homework, on average, do better in school, and that the academic benefits of homework increase as children move into the upper grades. Parents and families play an important role in the process. Together, families and teachers can help children develop good study habits and attitudes to become lifelong learners. This article written by the National Education Association (NEA) answers to questions many people have about homework, as well as specific advice for helping your children.

Why do teachers give homework? Homework is also the link between school and home that shows what children are studying. Research shows that when homework is turned in to the teacher, graded, and discussed with students, it can improve students' grades and understanding of their schoolwork. Teachers use homework:

- * to help students understand and review the work that has been covered in class
- * to see whether students understand the lesson
- * to help students learn how to find and use more information on a subject.

How much time should my children spend each night on homework? Your children's teachers can tell you how much time they expect students to spend on homework. Place most concern on whether the homework is meaningful and whether over a period homework is assigned in all of the student's subjects. Ask your principal if your school or school district has a homework policy. If it does, make sure that you and your children know and understand that policy. (The district policy is reprinted below.) Most educators agree that:

- * for children in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 20 minutes each school day
- * older children, in grades 3-6, can handle 30-60 minutes a day
- * in junior and senior high school, the amount of homework will vary by subject. Older students will also have homework projects, such as research papers and oral reports that may have deadlines weeks away. They may need help organizing assignments and planning work times to make sure homework is ready to turn in on time.

How can I help with homework? Make homework a daily activity and help your children develop good homework habits. There are several ways in which you can help:

- * Send your children to school each day, well rested, fed and with a positive outlook.
- * Take an active interest in your children's schooling. Ask specific questions about what happens at school each day and how your children feel about it.
- * Try not to let any of your own negative experiences keep you from supporting and encouraging your children's learning. Let them know how much you care about education by continuing your own learning both informally and formally, to impress its importance upon them.
- * If possible, set up a quiet, comfortable study area with good lighting and the school supplies that your children need. This can be almost anyplace in your home; you don't need a special room.
- * Set a family "quiet time" where you and your children can work together on homework, reading, letter writing and playing games.

Can my children do homework while listening to music or watching television?

Some students can work with a radio or stereo on, while others must work in silence. Television can be a big problem. Many teachers ask that the television be turned off while children are doing homework. Research shows that American children on average spend far more time watching television than they do completing homework. Although it's worth noting that television can be a learning tool, it's best to leave the television off during homework time.

How much help should I give?

This depends on each child's grade level and study habits. Younger students often need extra homework help. First, make sure the child understands the directions. Do a few problems together, and then watch your child do a few problems. When your child is finished, check the work. Praise right answers, and show how to correct mistakes. Avoid doing your children's homework for them. Teachers need to see where your children are having trouble.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to show your children that you think homework is important. Many children today do their homework while their parents are at work. When you are at home, ask to see your children's homework and discuss it with them. Ask questions and be supportive.

What if I don't understand my child's assignment?

Today's students, particularly at the high school level, may have subjects that you never had or that you didn't like when you were in school. You can still help your children by praising their progress, getting help from a public library, and talking with their teachers. You don't have to be an expert in a subject to help with homework. There are many places to go for help.

Do teachers really want me to ask them questions about homework? Teachers want children to learn and want parents and families to be involved in their children's education. When you stay in touch with your children's teachers, they can ease your worries and offer their own homework tips and ideas on how you can help your children learn. Meet each of your children's teachers and ask what kind of homework will be given. This is very important, even if you have children in junior or senior high school. Early in the school year and on occasion, ask teachers about your children's subjects and about homework policies. For example, ask what books your children will be using, what kinds of assignments will be given, and when the teacher is available to answer questions.

One of my children tries hard but still has problems with homework. What can I do to help? There could be a number of reasons for your child's trouble. Suggest that the child ask the teacher for extra help before or after school. Tell your child it's good to ask the teacher about homework or anything else he or she doesn't understand. Set a time to meet with the teacher to discuss the problem. You may need to meet again during the year to check on how your child is doing. If your child understands the work but is still having trouble, ask for a meeting with the teacher. The two of you should work out a plan to meet your child's needs.

My child seems bored by homework. Is this normal? It's normal for students not to want to do their homework. But if your child always seems bored or unhappy, you need to try to find out the reason by talking with your child. Then talk with the teacher to come up with a solution. Teachers want students to learn from homework. Tell the teacher if your child thinks the homework is too easy or too hard. This will help the teacher match homework with student ability and maturity levels.

When I ask my children if they have homework, they say that it's finished or that they don't have any. How do I make sure they're really doing their work? Make studying, not just homework, a daily habit. Students can always review lessons, read a book, or work on practice exercises during quiet time, even if they don't have homework. Ask younger children to show you their homework so that you can check it, sign it, and date it. Teachers like to see that adults have checked children's homework. If your children often have no homework to do, you should let their teachers know. Don't ask your children if they have homework each night — assume that they always have homework or studying to do.

What if my child still isn't turning homework in? State clearly and assertively to your child that you expect homework to be done and turned in to the teacher. Let your child know you will not tolerate irresponsible behavior about homework. Don't wait until grades come out to find out if the problem has been solved. You may need weekly contact with the teacher until the student develops new habits.

Should I reward my children for doing homework or for getting good grades? Children like to know when they've done a good job. Your approval means a lot. Praise your children's work often. Show pride when your children do their best, no matter what grades they get. Be careful about giving money or gifts as rewards. Most teachers want parents to reward students' work in other ways. The next time your child does a good job on a school project, plan a special family activity as a reward.

Homework Hints

1. Assume that your children will have studying to do every night.
2. Ask your children if they understand their homework. If they do not, work a few examples together.
3. Ask your children to show you their homework after the teacher returns it, to learn where they're having trouble and where they're doing well. See if your children did the work correctly.
4. Stay in touch with your children's teachers. Ask about their classes and what they are studying. Ask their teachers how you can support what they are studying (flash cards, spelling, etc.).
5. Remember, you and their teachers want the same thing — to help your children learn.
6. Don't be afraid to get in touch with the teacher if you and your child don't understand an assignment or if your child is having a great deal of trouble. Almost all parents run into these problems, and teachers are glad to help.
7. Don't do your children's work for them. Help them learn how to do it themselves.
8. Show your children that you think homework is important. If you are at work during homework time, ask to see their work when you get home.
9. Praise your children for doing well. Make praise a habit.
10. Maintain a portfolio of your child's "best pieces."
11. Ask your school about tips or guides for helping your children develop good study habits.
12. Help older students organize their assignments by recording them on calendars or planners, along with due dates, dates turned in, etc.

Developing Self-Esteem in Children

Nurturing your child's self-esteem may seem like a hefty responsibility. After all, a feeling of self-worth lays the foundation for your child's future as he sets out to try new things on his own. "Self-esteem comes from having a sense of belonging, believing that we're capable, and knowing our contributions are valued and worthwhile," says California family therapist Jane Nelsen, co-author of the Positive Discipline series. Noted childhood development expert Lilian Katz, T. Berry Brazelton, MD. and other experts in the field discuss how parents and

schools work together to help children develop self-esteem in their articles summarized and excerpted below.

Parents can play an important role in strengthening their children's self-esteem by loving them unconditionally, treating them honestly and respectfully, taking their views and opinions seriously, expressing appreciation to them, believing in their abilities, and expecting them to do well. Above all, parents must keep in mind that self-esteem is an important part of every child's development (Katz). In school, the primary way self-esteem is developed is through academic achievement. Children gain self-esteem and develop a strong work ethic leading to self-reliance by accomplishing difficult, meaningful, and challenging things. When they can say, "Whew! That was hard, but I did it!" and when they stretch themselves to overcome frustration, they build self-esteem. Self-esteem is eroded when children feel that the important people in their lives don't believe in their ability to overcome the difficult, or when those people endeavor to make things too easy or protect them from valuable learning opportunities by not holding them accountable for their work and behavior, and when they try to get them out of having to do a challenging task. The elementary school years help students build the skills and habits they will need for future learning. It is their time to learn, explore and apply their skills; time to earn new privileges and rights by taking on responsibilities within a secure and consistent, reliable structure. All of these things help students develop healthy self-esteem that they need for a successful future (Brazelton).

How Can We Help Children Develop a Healthy Sense of Self-Esteem? According to expert pediatrician, T. Berry Brazelton, self-esteem is "the confidence you have in your abilities, the satisfaction you take in your accomplishments and the respect you have for yourself. It is the result of an inner sense of success, satisfaction and optimism. Self-esteem grows out of three key elements: acceptance, competence, purpose." According to Lilian Katz, self-esteem is related to children's feelings of belonging to a group and being able to adequately function in their various groups. When toddlers become preschoolers, for example, they are expected to control their impulses and adopt the rules of the family, preschool, and community in which they are growing. Successfully adjusting to these groups helps to strengthen feelings of belonging to them. In school, children gain a sense of belonging by contributing to their class and school, following the rules and doing what is expected of them. Children are unlikely to have their self-esteem strengthened from excessive praise or flattery. On the contrary, it may raise some doubts in children; many children can see through flattery and may even dismiss an adult who heaps on praise, particularly for menial performance, as a poor source of support--one who is not very believable and doesn't believe in their ability to master the difficult (Katz).

The following points may be helpful to you in strengthening and supporting a healthy sense of self-esteem in your child (Katz):

- As they grow, children become increasingly sensitive to the evaluations of their peers. You and your child's teachers can help your child learn to build healthy relationships with peers. You can help your child by being clear about your own values and keeping the lines of communication open about experiences outside the home.

- Children benefit more from tasks and activities that offer a real challenge than from those that are merely frivolous or fun. For example, you can involve your child in chores around the house, such as preparing meals, caring for pets, and contributing to others that stretch his or her abilities and give him/her a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

- Self-esteem is most likely to be fostered when children are esteemed by the adults who are important to them. To esteem children means to treat them respectfully, ask their views and opinions, take their views and opinions seriously, and give them meaningful, honest, and realistic feedback.

- You can help your child develop and maintain healthy self-esteem by helping him or her cope with defeats, rather than emphasizing constant successes and triumphs. During times of disappointment or crisis, your child's weakened self-esteem can be strengthened when you let the child know that your love and support remain unchanged. When the crisis has passed, you can help your child reflect on what went wrong. The next time a crisis occurs, your child can use the knowledge gained from overcoming past difficulties to help cope with a new crisis. A child's sense of self-worth and self-confidence is not likely to deepen when adults deny that life has its ups and downs.

Noted child development expert Sarah Henry adds these tips:

- Teach limits. Establish a few reasonable rules for your child. For instance, if you tell him to wear his helmet when he rides his bike in the driveway, don't let him go without it at his friend's house. Knowing that certain family rules and school rules are set in stone will help him feel more secure. It is important to be clear and consistent and show him/her that you trust and expect him/her to do the right thing.

- Support healthy risks. Encourage your child to explore something new, such as trying a different food, making a new friend, or playing a new game or sport. Though there's always the possibility of failure, without risk there's little opportunity for success. So let your child safely experiment, and resist the urge to intervene. For instance, try not to "rescue" him the minute he's showing mild frustration at figuring out how to read a tricky word. Jumping in to

say, "I'll do it" can foster dependence and diminish your child's confidence. You'll build his self-esteem by balancing your need to protect him with his need to tackle new tasks.

- Let mistakes happen. The flip side of having choices and taking risks is that sometimes your child is bound to make mistakes. These are valuable lessons for your child's confidence. So if your child misses the school bus because he was dawdling in his bedroom, encourage him to think about what he might do differently next time. That way your child will understand that it's okay to make mistakes sometimes and that he/she can learn from them. When you goof up yourself, admit it, says Daniel Meier, assistant professor of elementary education at San Francisco State University. Acknowledging and recovering from your mistakes sends a powerful message to your child — it makes it easier for your child to accept his own difficulties.

- Provide encouragement. Praise the effort your child is making rather than his/her innate ability. For example, "I love the way you developed the character in your story" vs. "You are a great writer". Every child needs the kind of support from loved ones that signals, "I believe in you. I see your effort. Keep going!" Encouragement means acknowledging progress — not just rewarding achievement. So if your child is struggling with a math problem, say: "You're trying very hard and you almost have it!" instead of "Not like that. Let me do it." There's a difference between praise and encouragement. One rewards the task while the other rewards the person ("You did it!" rather than "I'm proud of you!"). Praise can make a child feel that he's only "good" if he does something perfectly. Encouragement, on the other hand, acknowledges the effort. "Tell me about the game. I saw you really hustling out there" is more helpful than saying, "You're the best player on the team." Too much praise can sap self-esteem because it can create pressure to perform and set up a continual need for approval from others. So dole out the praise judiciously and offer encouragement liberally; it will help your child grow up to feel good about him/herself and achieve to the highest measure of his/her potential.

You can find the articles used in this summary on-line at

<http://www.kidsource.com>, <http://www.parents-talk.com/expertsadvice/parenting.html>,
<http://parentcenter.babycenter.com/refcap/bigkid/gdevelopment/67755.html>

