

# Helping Children Learn

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

February 2012



Grenada Elementary Schools  
Wanda Merritt, Parent Coordinator

## Beat the winter doldrums with a fun and local family field trip

Teachers know that a lot of real learning takes place outside the classroom. That's why they take students on field trips. But you don't have to wait for a school trip. Why not take your family out for an "inside view" of the workings of a local newspaper or other business? Your entire family will learn something—and usually for a bargain. Most tours are free.

To plan your tour, check your phone book, tourist bureau or chamber of commerce. Some places have tour guides, just waiting to explain what they do, why and how. Or ask a friend who might be willing to guide you through a place your child is curious about.



Wherever you visit, ask your child to follow these rules:

- **Do some research before you go.** Knowing a little in advance can foster good questions and help you get the most out of a visit.
- **Be polite and quiet.** Remember that in a place of business, business must go on.
- **Raise your hand** to get the guide's attention if you have a question.
- **Stay together.** Don't go anywhere that's off limits. Areas of a building are often restricted for safety reasons.

Send a thank-you note when you get home. Writing and drawing pictures of what he's seen helps your child give back and show what he has learned. Tour guides and businesses enjoy knowing what children liked best.



## 'Discipline' is another word for 'teach'

Some parents think that the word *discipline* means punishing a child. But actually, the word discipline comes from the Latin word for teaching. Experts say parents are more effective when they think about discipline as a way of teaching kids to behave in appropriate ways.

And one of the best ways to "teach" is to reward your child for doing something right. Suppose you're working at your computer.

You see your child is working quietly on her math homework. Take a short break. Say, "I am so happy you are letting me do my work. And I see you're working hard on your math. When we're finished, let's do something together." Then spend five or 10 minutes playing together doing something your child enjoys.

Source: T. Parker-Pope, "It's Not Discipline, It's a Teachable Moment," *The New York Times*, [www.nytimes.com/2008/09/15/health/healthspecial2/15discipline.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/15/health/healthspecial2/15discipline.html).

## Rhyme in special valentines

When sending Valentine cards this year, Help your child bring special cheer. Take a small amount of time To make a list of words that rhyme. Form the words to make a line, And send them to your Valentine!

## Your child can 'meet a president'—through books

Reading historical fiction or a biography is a great way to make the past come alive for your child. Together, celebrate Presidents Day on February 20 by reading about a president. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Ask** your librarian for recommendations. You may want to read about a president from your state.
- **Look** for a book with illustrations. A picture really is worth a thousand words.
- **Read** aloud if the book is challenging for your child.
- **Discuss.** Would your child want to have been this president?



Source: E.R. Codell, *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading*, Algonquin Books.

## Soften needed criticism

When you have to criticize your child's schoolwork, do it with love. The goal is to help her learn—not to make her feel bad. Include praise with the criticism. For example, "Your story's plot is so creative! More details would make it even better."

