

November Upper Elementary Parenting Topic:



The proper amount of sleep is important year round, but during the Winter months and holiday season students can end up on the short end of their sleep needs. As the social calendar fills, many students end up over-tired but not understanding why.

“Sleep researchers have known for a long time that both children and teens who follow a regular early-to-bed, early-to-rise sleep schedule perform better at learning activities than those who are not on a schedule compatible with the body’s natural circadian clock,” said Dr. John Herman, a sleep expert at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas.

How much sleep is enough? Preschoolers sleep about 11 to 12 hours per night. School-age kids need 10 to 11 hours of sleep a night. Teenages need about 9 hours of sleep per night but many don’t get this due to activities, homework and friends. A lack of sleep can result in being less attentive, short-term memory loss and delayed response times. Ideally, children and teenagers should try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning.

A major contributor to sleeplessness, according to Ariana Cha of the Washington Post, is the use of electronic gadgets too close to bedtime that can disrupt sleep cycles. The new screen time guidelines issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics in October can help you set a plan that works for your family. Visit

<http://www.aappublications.org/news/2016/10/21/MediaSchool102116> for more information.

Tips to Help Children Sleep:

- Establish a regular bedtime to help set your child’s biological clock.
- No t.v., computers or cell phones in bedrooms. No use of electronic at least 1 hour before bed.
- Avoid large meals close to bedtime,

- Build in quiet time before bedtime with a relaxing routine.

Sweet dreams and happy sleeping for you and your young ones.

Montessori Material of the Month:



In Upper Elementary, Writing becomes an integral part of every subject. One way we help students get their thoughts down in whatever style is being studied at the time (persuasive, narrative, etc.), it to offer different modes of physical writing. Besides paper and pencil, DCS utilizes a computer-based program called My Access.

For the student who struggles to write with paper and pencil, using an electronic program and a keyboard can offer a viable alternative. As our world moves more toward technology and computer-based formats, this option for students is something they are familiar with and can relate to.

Writing instruction for Upper Elementary students covers a vast array of styles and genres: narrative, expository, persuasive, compare/contrast, and poetry, among others. Grammar lessons are woven throughout instruction with the aim being to produce a clear, concise piece of writing. By the time the students leave us in 6th grade they are able to communicate through writing in a thoughtful, creative, and comprehensive manner.

If you would like more information on My Access, here is their Parent Information Page:

A Parent's Guide to MY Access! What is MY Access!?

MY Access! is an online writing program that helps students to plan, write, receive automatic instructional suggestions, and revise their writing. Each of the writing assignments support practice for district and state tests and align with educational standards. Using MY Access, students (guided by their teacher) will practice with a variety of tools to improve their writing, including interactive outlines, grammar and spell checkers, outlines, rubrics and a "Writer's Guide" with online and printable activities.

Get Involved in Your Child's Learning: Supporting learning at home and setting aside time each week to review assignments is the best way to help your child improve his or her skills and succeed on district, state, and national tests. And as a family member or caregiver, you can have access to MY Access! via the web. You can check assignments, monitor progress and even learn along with your child! To keep you informed of your student's work, MY Access! Parent Letters can let you track your child's latest progress. The letters will provide information such as: The assignment your student is working on: The overall score they received, as well as the writing trait scores broken down by: • Focus & Meaning • Content & Development • Organization • Language Use, Voice, and Style • Mechanics & Conventions

Collaborate to Ensure Success: "Growing Together with MY Access!" combines Vantage Learning's award-winning instructional writing program with on-site parent training and online support. The goal is to encourage both parents and teachers to work together with students to provide an enriching and supportive learning environment at home and in the classroom. Through these joint efforts, students will find the motivation they need to reach their full potential and excel in school and beyond.

Workshops can be offered either on-site or via the Internet on evenings or weekends; additional workshops may be conducted if requested by the participating school or district. Sessions include: "Getting Ready to Use MY Access!" to help you become more computer savvy, "The In's and Out's of MY Access!" to provide information that you and your child need to know about the MY Access! writing instructional program, "Ongoing Parent/Child Support" and "Enhancing Parent Participation" will help you learn how to more effectively: • use feedback to enhance your child's achievement • communicate with your child's teacher • become an ally in the education process

If you are interested in these programs, talk to your child's principal and encourage them to sign up for Vantage Learning' Growing Together with MY Access!

