Parent’s Guide to 2nd Grade

An easy-to-use resource to prep parents and young learners for a new school year

- What to expect at school this year
- How to support learning and responsibility at home
- Tools for social emotional success

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Part 1:
Overview
Changes in Teaching and Learning

The world of education has experienced many exciting changes over the years. Today’s demands of college, the workforce, and the global marketplace have reframed the skills students need in order to meet those challenges. As a result, the way that we teach must also evolve to support the best possible learning outcomes. Oftentimes, that means the classrooms parents grew up with no longer resemble the classrooms of today.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What's the role of technology?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a separate subject</td>
<td>a tool for teaching and learning</td>
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<th>What’s the role of the teacher?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<td></td>
<td>a lecturer</td>
<td>a coach and facilitator</td>
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<th>How important are literacy skills?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<td></td>
<td>reading and writing are taught only in English class</td>
<td>literacy is practiced in math, social studies, science, and electives</td>
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<th>How do students answer questions?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<td></td>
<td>using their outside knowledge and experience</td>
<td>using evidence from the text coupled with knowledge and experience</td>
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<th>What’s important in solving problems?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<td></td>
<td>there is one right answer and one right way to find a solution</td>
<td>there are many different ways to get to a solution, and being able to prove it is key</td>
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<tr>
<th>How do students show what they know?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>answering questions on multiple choice tests</td>
<td>through multiple choice tests, essays, and real-world tasks</td>
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<tr>
<th>What’s important in learning?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<td></td>
<td>memorizing facts and learning skills that aren’t necessarily connected to each other</td>
<td>applying their learning in many different situations and using many skills and strategies to do so</td>
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<tr>
<th>How do students work?</th>
<th>10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Today</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mostly independently</td>
<td>independently and in small groups, with partners, and even with people across the globe!</td>
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Why Are the Changes Happening?

Teachers and parents across the country are working to prepare students for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. The changes in teaching and learning are to ensure all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

As you experience school with your child this year, you might notice that what they are learning and practicing are also skills that will benefit them long after school is over!

Top 10 Skills Employers Seek

1. Ability to work in a team structure
2. Ability to make decisions, think creatively, and solve problems
3. Ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization
4. Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell and influence others

--Source: Forbes Magazine, 10/11/2013
Developing a Connection with Your Child’s Teacher

A positive relationship between you, your child, and your child’s teacher is important to a happy and productive year. Here are some tips to opening the door for that positive relationship!

- Attend back-to-school night (in-person or virtually): This sets the stage for the home-school relationship and shows your eagerness to participate in your child’s learning this year. It is also a great time to meet other parents and families with kids in the class.

- Converse with the teacher: Even though teachers are busy during the school day, they are more than happy to carve out time for a brief meeting before or after school, or virtually.

- Share information: When there is information that is important for your child, let the teacher know. For example, if your child gets embarrassed to ask to use the restroom, the teacher may use a card system instead (e.g. green card means “I’m fine,” red card means “I have to go”).

- Be present: If you need to have an important conversation with your child’s teacher, make sure you are able to focus and be totally present.

- Say thank you: When your child reports that something good happened at school or they liked the book they read, let the teacher know.
### Development Milestones

Every child develops at their own pace. While the sequence of milestones are generally predictable, everyone reaches stages at different times. The milestones below are a reference point for you and not meant as hard and fast rules.

#### Physical Milestones

At this age (7–8), your child is building more muscle strength and developing greater coordination and balance. Your child is able to play and be active for longer periods of time without getting tired. You will probably see your second grader:

- develop their balance (by the end of the year, your child should be able to ride a two-wheel bicycle)
- combine different movements with ease, like jumping to catch a ball and then running with it
- catch a small ball with their hands, without having to hold it against their body
- dribble a ball, do cartwheels and handstands, and jump rope
- run farther and for a longer amount of time
- demonstrate improved handwriting
- draw detailed and recognizable pictures of people and animals
- use scissors to cut along curved and straight lines on a piece of paper, without deviating more than half an inch from the line
- dress and undress themselves easily, handling snaps, buttons, zippers, and tying their shoes

#### Cognitive Milestones

At this age, thinking and problem-solving skills are taking off as your child starts understanding more complicated ideas. Children tend to interact with more peers and adults and start to show more of an interest in specific activities. Cognitively, most children at this age:

- look for the reasons behind things and ask questions to get more information
- understand cause-and-effect relationships and make more in-depth connections (in subject areas, like reading and science, as well as everyday life)
- start planning ahead (e.g., create a drawing of something to build or plan for an experiment they want to conduct)
- identify simple rules of behavior that they should follow, like buckling their seat belt in the car
- have a longer attention span (e.g., sit and pay attention to something that interests them for at least 30–45 minutes)
- like to classify, sort, and collect things, like rocks, crystals, pencils, or something else that interests them
Part 2:
Home Support
Supporting Literacy Learning

In second grade, your child will continue to develop their reading and writing skills, all while building an even bigger vocabulary. At this age, children begin to read more fluently (at an appropriate speed with accuracy and expression). They also gain more strategies to help them read efficiently and understand what they are reading. Kids are learning big ideas, like acceptance or freedom, from every book they read and relating that to information they already know. Throughout second grade, students write different text forms using simple and complex sentences.

2nd Grade Milestones in Literacy

Throughout the year, second graders will tackle the following challenges:

- use word identification strategies to read unknown words
- use strategies (like rereading, questioning, and visualizing) when comprehension becomes difficult
- ask questions (who, what, when, where, why, how) about stories and texts
- retell stories, fables, and folktales from many cultures, and explain the central message, lesson, or moral
- pay attention to details in the text, illustrations, and other graphics to support their understanding of what they read
- compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story
- identify the main idea of paragraphs or the whole text
- pay attention to and use different text features (captions, bold print, subheadings) to find facts and information
- identify the main purpose of a text and describe what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe
- compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts about the same topic
- pick out evidence from the text that supports their answers to questions
- use correct punctuation for simple sentences
- proofread their own work
- write a real or imagined story by putting events in order and including details
- form an opinion about a topic or a text, and defend it with reasons
- write short informational pieces on a topic, stating a main idea and including some facts
- gather facts and information about a topic in short research tasks

As your child enters second grade, they will be reading books that look similar to what they read in first grade, with smaller fonts and an emphasis on using their developing word-attack skills. Both fiction and nonfiction books at this level abound; fiction becomes more complex in plot and depth, and nonfiction begins to include more technical vocabulary. Although pictures may illustrate the text, they no longer offer as much support in terms of decoding text. In second grade, the content is more challenging overall. Chapter books are introduced, and they present complex characters and fewer illustrations.
Some of the typical aspects of a student’s literacy development are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy: Attention to words, sentences, and context</th>
<th>Fluency: Reading smoothly and with expression, aloud and independently</th>
<th>Comprehension: Understanding what is read and being able to use details in the text to support ideas</th>
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<tr>
<td>• uses multiple strategies for solving words (thinking about similar words they already know, using beginning or ending sounds to help break up the word and make meaning)</td>
<td>• reads phrases as word groups (not one word at a time)</td>
<td>• retells the story in more detail</td>
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<tr>
<td>• reads the words around an unknown word to understand meaning (context clues)</td>
<td>• reads sounds like “talk”</td>
<td>• relates new information to things learned in the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>• uses letter clusters such as blends to solve words</td>
<td>• reads with some expression</td>
<td>• infers cause and effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>• looks out for meaning and self-corrects</td>
<td>• knows what to do when coming to different punctuation marks</td>
<td>• makes connections with the text</td>
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- PART 2: HOME SUPPORT
Supporting the Literacy Roadmap
Here are some simple strategies to share with your second grader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helping with Accuracy</th>
<th>Helping with Fluency</th>
<th>Helping with Comprehension</th>
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<tr>
<td>• What other words can you use from this sentence to help you figure out the tricky word?</td>
<td>• How do you know when your voice is supposed to change when you read?</td>
<td>• Can you tell me what important thing just happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you know about this word that can help you figure out the whole word?</td>
<td>• Listen to me read it. <em>(Adjust your voice to reflect the story.)</em> Can you try it?</td>
<td>• Who is speaking/thinking right now? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did that make sense?</td>
<td>• Does what you just read remind you of anything?</td>
<td>• Does what you just read remind you of anything?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What other strategies can you use?</td>
<td>• What happened? Why did it happen?</td>
<td>• What happened? Why did it happen?</td>
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**PART 2: HOME SUPPORT**

- What in the story makes you think that?
- What will happen next? Why?
- What do you think (character’s name) will do? Why?
- Is this fiction or nonfiction? What clues in the story told you that?
A Note About Leveled Readers

Many schools use a leveled reading system to match your child to the right book. In many cases, your child’s reading level at school may be a “stretch level,” so that the teacher can support your child to persevere and “productively struggle” through texts that are more complex.

Many experts recommend that if you are using leveled books in the home, parents should select a title that is a level below the level a child is tackling in school. If a text is too difficult, a young reader may need a lot of adult support to take away enough meaning. If it’s too easy, your child will not practice the skills they need to develop critical reading skills. Using texts that are “just right” at home will help your child grow as a reader by providing enough complexity and challenge independently.

But don’t worry! You don’t need to know your child’s school level in order to help pick the right books. Below are a couple of simple tests that can help you and your child figure out if their book is good for independent reading at home. These tests will also help your child take ownership in choosing appropriate books for themselves. (Please note that while most book levels progress from less complex to more, no book leveling system is exactly the same.)

**The Five Finger Test**
Open a book to a random page and have your child read and count on their fingers each word they struggle with. If they reach five words on a page, that book might be a little too challenging. Try a different book but put that book in a pile to try next week, or next month! (Or even better, read that book to your child tonight!)

**Cover and Tell**
Have your child read a passage in the book that can be completely covered with their hand. After they read, cover up the text and have your child tell you what that passage was about. They should be able to tell you a summary, not a memorization, of the passage! If your child is able to provide the key details in their own words, then that book is probably the right fit!
Great Reads: 2nd Grade

A visit to your local library or a visit to an online bookseller will present you with a ton of great reading options. Share the selection process with your young reader. To get you started, here are some picks from our Education.com teacher advisors.

**Picture Books**

*The Other Side*, Jacqueline Woodson

This award-winning picture book shows how powerful children can be. Two young girls ignore the ideas of segregation so they can be friends.

*Hi, Koo!: A Year of Seasons*, Jon J. Muth

This book of poems uses a charming panda as the vehicle to highlight fun and unique aspects of each of the four seasons.

*After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)*, Dan Santat

Many children are familiar with the tale of Humpty Dumpty taking a great fall, but does anyone know what happened after he fell? This book tackles the topics of fear and anxiety, and how to get back on our feet.

*Thunder Underground*, Jane Yolen

In this nonfiction collection of poems, the author takes readers on an exploration of the world underground.

*Selvakumar Knew Better*, Virginia Kroll

In December of 2004, a devastating tsunami almost tore apart a family. This book chronicles the true story of how a clever, scruffy dog saved a young boy’s life.

*The Name Jar*, Yangsook Choi

Being the new kid was difficult for Unhei, who just moved from Korea to America. This story teaches us all to embrace our true selves.

*Two Bad Ants*, Chris Van Allsburg

Two ants decide to leave the safety of the others and venture into a kitchen, where they encounter many dangerous situations. This book leads readers to make predictions and infer what the ants got themselves into!

*Rainbow Weaver*, Linda Elovitz Marshall

This bilingual book shows the creativity and perseverance of a young girl who wants to learn how to weave on traditional looms.

**Chapter Books**

*Meet Yasmin!*, Saadia Faruqi

Yasmin is a relatable second grader who is always trying to solve life’s little problems. She couples her big imagination with her surroundings to boldly face any situation that comes her way.

*The Chocolate Touch*, Patrick Skene Catling

Everything the main character touches turns to chocolate, but he soon finds out that too much of anything is not good!

*The Magic Tree House series*, Mary Pope Osborne

This series of books is about siblings Jack and Annie and the adventures they take through their magical treehouse. Not only are they highly entertaining for readers, but they teach history and science facts along the way.
Supporting Math Learning

Math education provides students with rich and challenging content and also engages students in solving real-world problems. In second grade, teachers are building the foundation of students’ mathematical understanding with purposeful math instruction. Instructors connect math concepts to their importance in everyday life, and prepare students for future learning. Class and peer discussions allow students to debate challenging ideas and cement their ideas and opinions.

New second graders will solidify their understanding of the value of numbers and begin quickly adding and subtracting numbers with various techniques. Their past lessons will help them build a stronger understanding of the base-ten system, where each digit in each place represents amounts of thousands, hundreds, tens, or ones (e.g., 746 is 7 hundreds + 4 tens + 6 ones). They will also transition from non-traditional measurement devices to standard tools, such as rulers and measuring tapes. Children will continue to use hands-on activities with shapes to analyze and describe shapes with appropriate vocabulary.

Second Grade Milestones in Math

Throughout the year, second graders will tackle the following challenges:
- skip count by 5s, 10s, and 100s
- understand standard (739) and expanded notation (700 + 30 + 9 = 739) of numbers up to 1,000
- read standard (seven hundred thirty-nine) and expanded (7 hundreds + 3 tens + 9 ones) notation and write them in word form
- compare three-digit numbers using their understanding of place value and number lines
- read word problems to add and subtract within 100 using memorized patterns and various strategies
- work with equal groups of objects to gain foundations for multiplication
- begin to create rectangular arrays and find the total number of objects in the array
- discuss and identify odd and even numbers
- develop their understanding of measurement and understand the need for standard units of measurement like inches and centimeters
- estimate the length of objects using inches, centimeters, feet, and meters as a reference point
- represent and interpret data on simple line plots, bar graphs, or picture graphs
- identify attributes of shapes (number of angles and faces) and partition them into equal groups
Helping @ Home

Modeling positivity about math and how useful it is in everyday life is so important for your second grader! Here are some ways you can support math learning at home.

- Estimate, estimate, estimate! Ask your child to estimate: How many steps do you think it is from here to the door? How long do you think it will take to make your bed? How many cups of water will fill this pot?
- Help your child count by 2s, 5s, 10s, and 100s.
- Solve real-life math problems with your child. Look for opportunities to add and subtract groups of things with everyday objects like clothes, boxed juice or water, or sticker packets.
- Let your child see you read and “do” math like telling the time or counting down. Talk to them about how you use these skills in your life.
- Show how math isn’t just calculating numbers in isolation. Math is measurement, time, money, and geometry! This means that shopping, gardening, setting the table, and road trips have mathematical ideas like shape, size, and quantity.
- Read books aloud to your child that discuss mathematical ideas, such as Measuring Penny by Loreen Leedy or The Lion’s Share by Matthew McElligott.

Math Talk

Talking about math and using the language of math will help your child thrive as a mathematical thinker. Familiarize your child with “math talk” vocabulary when you discuss math-related ideas. Here are some ways to use math talk every day:

- Take measurements for a project around the house. How many inches are there? How many feet? How many yards?
- Get your child ready for multiplication by asking them how many fingers or toes everyone in your family has. Help them understand they can count the fingers and toes faster by grouping them.
- I want to double or halve this cookie recipe. Can you help me figure it out?
- How many cupcakes will we need if everyone eats half a cupcake?
- Ask your child to estimate the height of a building based on the known height of the car next to it.
- Count by 7s and then 1s to find the number of days until an upcoming event using a calendar.
- When you’re doing the laundry, have your child match all the pairs of socks. How many socks are there? How many pairs? Can you group the socks somehow to find the total faster (e.g., counting by two)?
- Ask follow-up questions to your child’s answers:
  - “How do you know that’s the right answer?”
  - “Is there a different way to get the same answer?”
  - “Can you prove it?”
Games that Build 2nd Grade Math Skills

Practicing math by playing games is a great way to reinforce concepts and practice skills. Check out these fun, easy math games.

Close Call: An Addition Card Game

Builds: Understanding of addition patterns
Materials: a deck of cards with face cards removed, paper, pencils
2+ players

GOAL: Have the most points at the end of the final round

Directions:
1. Shuffle the deck and place it face down in the center of the table.
2. Each player should select four cards from the deck and place them face up.
3. Ask players to rearrange their cards and try to create two-digit number pairs that when added together come close to 100. For example, the cards 4, 1, 4, and 9 can be arranged to create two larger numbers: 41 and 49. When added together 41 and 49 equal 90.
4. When everyone’s ready, they should share their final numbers. Whoever is closest to 100 receives a point.
5. Play for 10 rounds. The player with the most points at the end of the final round wins.

Make Money “Cents”

Builds: Ability to add coins and work with various values
Materials: play or real coins (approximately 50 pennies, 10 nickels, 4 dimes, and 2 quarters)
die, paper, pencil
2+ players

Goal: The first person who reaches 25 cents and can trade in their coins for a quarter is the winner

Directions:
1. Take turns rolling the die. Each player rolls the die once per turn and each dot on the die equals one cent.
2. On each turn, players record the number from the die as dots on a sheet of paper next to their name, labeling the turn each time.
3. Take the number of cents corresponding to the number you rolled on the die.
4. On any given turn, players should circle the coins that they can trade for a higher value coin if possible. For example, a player can trade five cents for a nickel and 10 cents for a dime, etc.
5. After each trade, draw and record on paper what the trade looks like.
6. The first person who reaches 25 cents and can trade in their coins for a quarter is the winner.
**Tips for Handling Homework**

Traditionally, homework is a way for children to practice what they are learning in school at home, with the support of their parents or caregivers. With homework assignments, children can show their understanding of the lessons of the day and help solidify their understanding of the concepts. While the intention of homework is great, the amount of homework children should have in second grade is a debated issue—your child may have 20 minutes of homework a night, or your child may not even have any assigned homework. Regardless of whether your child does or does not have assigned homework, there are some things you can do to help increase home learning using homework assignments or reading time.

If teachers assign homework, it should be interactive and exploratory in nature. They may give worksheets, but you can help interact with the information on the worksheet by having conversations about the topic and exploring ideas from the worksheet with your child. For example, if your child brings home a worksheet with sight words like “said,” explore those words with them in other ways. Ask your child where and when they have seen the word, and use hands-on tools like play dough to practice the letter sounds and spelling of the word.

If your child has no assigned homework, there are other ways to support home learning! You can complete a weekly reading chart (https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/weekly-reading-response/Bb). Encourage your child to read with you for 15 minutes a day and either discuss the story with you or draw a picture about what they read that day. Integrate some read-aloud story time and don’t be afraid to let your child listen to audiobooks or interactive readers. Your child will need to grow into an independent, thoughtful reader to excel in other subjects like math and science.

**Make learning fun!** Your enthusiasm for learning new ideas and reading can be infectious. Always be ready to learn something new with your child to help instill a sense of curiosity. When you look in a book for new information or search the internet for ideas or facts about a topic, you are showing your child how to find the answers themselves.

Show your enthusiasm for learning by:
- Reading your own book while your child is reading.
- Writing a letter to friends or your child.
- Enrolling in a class at your local library or community center.
- Hosting a book club in your home.
Helping @ Home

Below are some homework tips you can try at home.

Venting
Homework can be a source of stress for young learners and children sometimes need to express themselves when it comes to doing homework. [Most adults usually need to vent before they can be productive!] In the case of your child, they generally just want to be heard and understood, even when we may think their feelings are a little out of proportion to the situation. Oftentimes, they don’t have the words to express that need.

To help facilitate your child’s tapping into those feelings, here are a few conversation starters:

• Wow, that’s a lot of work.
• Yes, our schedule was packed this week.
• You sound upset. I would be upset too.
• How can I help?

Chunk it Out
Sometimes the hardest part of any task is simply getting started. Ann Dolin, author of Homework Made Simple calls this strategy “Five Minutes of Fury.” Set a timer for 5 minutes and have your child do as much work as possible in that time. When the timer is up, take a break or keep going. Remember to make sure to check for errors or correct messiness before turning it in.

Role Reversal
We all learn better when we need to teach someone else. Here are some questions to help that process: What were you doing in math today? Great, how have you been practicing it in class? I know one way to do that, but you probably know a different way. Can you please teach me how to do it? Often through these conversations you will uncover the real assignment, and the real source of the confusion.

Call it Quits
No one wants tears at homework time! If you’ve reached the point the tears are coming (yours or your child’s), it’s okay to stop. Congratulate your child for perseverance through something hard. Put a sticky note on the homework: “I worked with Luna on her homework for 30 minutes tonight and it was a struggle. Could you please let me know how I can best explain this concept at home? We are happy to work on it again tonight with a little direction.” Second graders can even write those notes on their own!
A Smart Space

Many children do their homework all over the place: riding in the car, at dance practice, or in front of the television. However, a consistent and quiet environment can make all the difference in how much learning happens during homework time. Below are some tips for how to transform a small corner of your home into a smart study space!

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Your 2nd Grader’s Smart Space

1. Table or Desk: Furnish the study space with a small desk or table that is the perfect height for your learner. Declutter the area so books, papers, or notebooks fit easily during study time.
2. Flexible Seating: Everyone has a different preference on workspace. Make it okay to sit, stand, or sprawl.
3. Message Board: Use a cork board or magnetic whiteboard to post notes and reminders. Rotate through schoolwork that makes your child proud. Add a note of encouragement!
4. Clock or Timer: Give homework a time limit, or practice in smaller chunks. Don’t forget to work in some brain breaks if needed! Even just a few minutes of physical activity can recharge little brains.
5. Calendar: Post a calendar on the wall to record important dates and activities. Calendars are helpful for keeping everyone organized.
6. Supplies: It’s important to have all the supplies you might need at hand. Some supplies that can be handy are pencils, a pencil sharpener, ruler, crayons, scissors, glue, and tape.
7. Snacks: We all work better when we’re well fed! Have healthy snacks to help homework time be delicious and more productive.
Part 3:
Tools for Social Emotional Success
Supporting Social and Emotional Learning at Home

We want our children to do well in school, but we also want them to do well in life. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), helping children process their emotions and get along with others, is an important component in both of these pursuits. SEL includes skills like understanding emotions, setting and achieving goals, developing empathy, and making good decisions. SEL skills have been shown to not only help students form and maintain positive relationships, but also to do well in school.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines five key components of SEL:

- self-awareness
- self-management
- social awareness
- relationship skills
- responsible decision making

Research has found that children do best when these components are worked on at school and at home. To support your child at home, try these suggestions:

**Self-Awareness**

Help develop self-awareness by encouraging emotional awareness. Have your child name the emotions that they experience. Use this internal weather report (https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/my-internal-weather-report/) to have your child report on their feelings. It’s also important to give your child opportunities to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth. Normalize struggle by encouraging your child to talk about things that they find hard. For example, if making friends is challenging for your child, talk about what your child is currently doing. Make a plan for how to help your child develop friendship skills, like walking through exactly what to say when approaching a potential friend.

**Self-Management**

Self-management is the ability to manage your impulses, control stress, and meet goals. Teach your child that all emotions are okay, but there are positive and negative ways to react to emotions. Help your child learn calm-down strategies to help process big emotions. Consider making a calm down bottle to help your child manage stress or developing a peace corner for your child to retreat to when upset. Whatever you decide, empower your child to pick go-to calm-down strategies that work for them. Not everyone will find the same strategies helpful, which is totally okay!
Social Awareness

Encourage your child to see other people’s perspectives in real life and while reading. Using literature is a great way to help your child practice analyzing others’ motivations and developing empathy. As you read, ask questions like, “Why do you think she did that?” or “What do you think he is feeling?” Then transfer this approach to real life. As your child has disagreements or misunderstandings with others, encourage the use of the same questions.

Relationship Skills

 Likely you are already teaching your child the basics of how to get along with others. But relationship skills have a wide variety of components, from resolving conflicts to resisting inappropriate peer pressure. Help your child to negotiate the complexities of relationships through role plays. For example, if you have noticed your child being persuaded by a friend to ride a bike without a helmet, role play this situation. Show your child exactly what could be done to resist peer pressure in this situation.

Responsible Decision Making

All of us, children and adults, have to make so many decisions throughout a day. When making decisions, encourage your child to consider who will be affected by the decision. By developing forward-thinking skills, your child will learn how to anticipate the consequences of decisions. Consider walking through different outcomes that would come from different decisions by asking questions like, “What do you think would happen if you did that?” and “What would happen if you chose a different approach?”
Social Emotional Milestones in 2nd Grade

In second grade, children are developing socially and emotionally. Peer influence plays a big role in relationships for kids at this age, and they get a lot of practice managing their emotions and expectations in relationships. Most kids are eager to fit in and try out new personalities to see where they fit.

Throughout second grade, many children:

- want to be independent and do things on their own,
- evaluate themselves and care what others think of them,
- begin to empathize with their peers and others they interact with,
- have moments of extreme insecurity, in which they need a lot of encouragement from caregivers,
- identify basic emotions they feel (like sadness, happiness, and fear) and are able to describe and understand what causes these emotions,
- start narrowing down their social circle to a few good friends,
- enjoy being part of a team, group, or club,
- are able to set goals and work toward them,
- spend more time with peers, and are easily influenced by them,
- experience periods of dramatic emotional swings (one moment feeling impatient and upset, and the next moment feeling fine)
- start seeing things from other people’s points of view, incorporating that into everyday life and their decisions, and
- are able to see how their behavior and decisions can affect other people.
Checking in with Your Child

Mom: “How was your day?”
Child: “Fine.”
Mom: “How was school?”
Child: “Fine.”
Mom: “What did you learn?”
Child: “Nothing.”

If this happens to you and you find yourself feeling like you’d like a bit more information, try some of these questions instead!

- Did you see anyone doing something funny today?
- Who had the best lunch today?
- What was the nicest thing you did for someone else today?
- What is the most popular thing to do at recess?
- What is the hardest rule to follow in school?
- What is one new fact you learned today?
- Which person in your class is most like you?
- Which person in your class is the most opposite?
- Which person in your class would you like to get to know better?
- Did anyone push your buttons today?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your day?
- Does everyone have someone to play with at recess?
- What (or who) made you laugh today?
- What was one highlight and one lowlight?
- What made your teacher smile today?
- What are you most proud of today?
- If you could switch seats with anyone, who would you switch with?
- Did you ask any questions today?
- What are you looking forward to about tomorrow?
- Who’s the silliest person in your class?
Part 4:
Tools for Building Resilience
The Importance of Sleep

Take Steps Towards Successful Shuteye

Is bedtime a power struggle for you and your child? Bedtime doesn’t have to equal “dreaded time” in your home! Many of the tips in this guide can help ensure peaceful sleep: monitor screen time, avoid overscheduling activities, and keep a regular routine. Set a realistic daily schedule that your family can consistently follow to make sleep a priority—your child will find comfort and security in the predictability of the day!

Those predictable days will ideally lead to a smooth bedtime. Night routines can include books, teeth brushing, bathing, and bedtime. The first few days of your new chosen routine may have some speed bumps in the form of complaining or sloth-like behavior, but persevere! Your diligence will pay off on more hectic days when your child surprisingly reminds you about what comes next in the nightly routine.

The research is clear: children learn more and are healthier when they get enough sleep. While there are no hard-and-fast rules for bedtime, you can use this chart as a guide to help you set a bedtime you can consistently maintain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wake Up Time</th>
<th>Age 5</th>
<th>Age 6</th>
<th>Age 7</th>
<th>Age 8</th>
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<th>Age 10</th>
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Tackling Technology

Technology is everywhere! In today’s schools it can take the form of computers, televisions, tablets, and, yes, even cellphones. Educators often see an increase in learning and engagement with technology use. Digital tools can help accommodate various learning styles and support audio and visual learning.

While technology can be an engaging tool for learning, socializing, and fun, parents still need to set boundaries on technology use! Talk to your child often about how to use technology appropriately and how to stay safe online.

Helping @ Home

Be available and present when your child is using technology, especially when completing online assignments for school. Below are some suggestions on how to support and encourage the safe and effective use of technology.

1. **Talk to your child.** Parents ask their children where they are going and who they are going with whenever they leave the house. They should take the same approach when their children go on the Internet—where are they going and who are they with?

2. **Develop rules.** Together with your child, develop rules about acceptable and safe behaviors for all electronic media. Check out the digital citizenship pledge on page 7 for inspiration.

3. **Explore the Internet.** Visit the websites your child frequents. Many websites and online activities are beneficial.

4. **Talk with others.** Talk to other parents about how they have discussed technology use with their children.

5. **Connect with the school.** Work to develop a partnership around technology use in and out of school.

6. **Educate yourself.** Stay informed about the new devices and websites your child is using. Continually talk with your child and explore the technology yourself.

Source: Centers for Disease Control
Healthy Screen Time Habits

Screen time is almost inevitable in the home and classroom. While computers, televisions, and tablets are used in the classroom as educational tools, second graders should only spend a limited time on the screen. Setting screen time limits—and helping kids moderate their own habits—are all about finding the right balance for your family’s needs and lifestyle.

After you have chosen what your child can do on the screen, discuss your expectations and set limits on their use. The limits can be in time, but you can also limit the types of programs or websites your children interact with.

Tips to Foster Healthy Screen Time Habits

• Make rules about screen use, including place (e.g., only in the living room and not in the dining room or bedroom) and time (e.g., 30 minutes a day on the weekends). Setting a timer is a great strategy for children.

• Be with your child and interact with them while they are on the screen. Talk about the game or app they are playing, and encourage them to tell you their thinking process. The same goes for TV shows or videos—talk to your child and have them describe what they watch.

• Research each app or game before you let your child use it. Many games claim to be educational but aren’t actually age-appropriate or instructive. Read reviews and pay attention to what pediatricians, educators, and other parents say.

• Avoid screen time before bed. If your child avoids screens prior to bedtime, they are more likely to fall asleep easily.

• Schedule physical activity and outdoor play as much as possible for your child before they spend time on a screen. Think of screen time as the last thing on your child’s to-do list. There are many more important and beneficial activities for your child to do, such as digging in the dirt, painting, dancing, or building a fort. Screen time can be a form of relaxing after exercise and a little is okay.
Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship is when users of technology have appropriate and responsible behavior when using technology. How do we teach appropriate and responsible behavior in a technological context? As with any new tool or topic, children need guidance to fully understand expectations. Having conversations about appropriate behavior while using digital tools will help your child take ownership of their actions while using those tools.

Even though children are not face-to-face with someone while using technology, they may still interact with people online or produce creative products that others may see. Digital citizens are mindful and sensitive of how people will respond to their digital footprint, or behavior with technology. While using technology, a digital citizen:

- Knows the rules and expectations.
- Respects themselves and others.
- Makes good choices.
- Balances the time they spend online and using media with other activities, like reading a book.
- Reports cyberbullying to parents and school officials.

Steps to Educate Your Child About Digital Citizenship

- Review the definition of digital citizenship and discuss examples and non-examples.
- Brainstorm words that can be kind and helpful online and talk about hurtful language that should not be used online.
- Discuss keeping private information private, like passwords, addresses, and phone numbers.
- Ask children if they can or should believe everything they see or read online.
- Set expectations for digital use in the home.
- Consider writing expectations down and have everyone in the house sign it as a visual reminder of their pledge to adhere to those expectations.
- Refer to written expectations when situations arise, such as the amount of time they spend on their devices.
- Remember to frequently review responsible and respectful behavior for technology use.

We have included a Digital Citizenship Pledge on the next page that you can share with your child. https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/digital-citizenship-pledge/
**Digital Citizenship Pledge**

**Directions:** Increase your child’s digital literacy by reviewing the vocabulary words in the word bank. Next, invite your child to take the digital citizenship pledge so they can learn about healthy ways to use technology!

1. I can keep my password in a safe place. I will only share my password with safe adults.
2. I can use kind words and keep my hands on my own device.
3. I can keep myself and my device safe by only using websites and apps that I’m allowed to use.
4. When an adult tells me it’s time to get off of my device, I can turn it off and put it away.

Child’s Name: ____________________________

**Word Bank**

- **device** - a smartphone, computer, or tablet
- **password** - numbers, letters, and symbols
- **website** - a place on the World Wide Web that has information about people, animals, and much more
Part 5:
Time Management
Setting Up Your 2nd Grader for Success

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from stress, challenge, and adversity, and ultimately be strengthened by facing that challenge. As a result, resilient children become more adaptable to change and increasingly able to tackle bigger and bigger challenges. We all make mistakes and fail, but resilient people get back up again.

Resiliency starts from attitudes and beliefs children hold of themselves, factors that are internal such as optimism, humor, and flexibility. These are all traits that we can continue to strengthen as children grow and develop.

Here are some ways to foster and encourage resilience in your child:

**Foster Optimism**
Resilient people are also optimistic. Help your child to see the glass as half full whenever possible, while still accepting their feelings. Give validation and respect to their take on the world, and also gently show them a more optimistic one.

**Keep Perspective**
Starting in the elementary school years and well beyond, things that seem little to adults can be internalized as much bigger by your child. When this happens, remember not to minimize their view of the problem. Let them talk and process, then help your child problem solve solutions and ways to respond to challenges and stressful feelings in the future.

**Praise Effort**
When an adult praises a certain behavior in a child, it shows them what is most valued. When you praise your child, focus on effort. By doing this, it helps to guide your child to learn from their mistakes and feel good about working hard, even if the outcome did not happen as expected.

**Don’t Rescue (all the time)**
As parents we all rescue sometimes, but it’s important not to do it every single time. It’s important to let children learn how to manage challenges. If there are reasonable times where there are natural consequences (like forgetting homework at home), allow those to unfold. When challenges do arise, always remind your child, “I trust you because you got this!”

**Support Responsibility**
Encouraging the growth of responsibility by establishing consistent routines and systems helps build resilience also. Things like regular chores will help your child self-regulate their own behavior, develop self-management skills, as well as help them to feel accomplished. (See the next section for age-appropriate ways to give some responsibility over to your child.)
Setting Up Chores

Although some children may complain about chores, having a regular set of age-appropriate responsibilities helps children develop independence, strong learning habits, and a sense of pride! Keeping a chore chart can be visual inspiration as children add stickers or cross off completed tasks. When they explore new tasks, they will learn by trial-and-error and can better apply their learning to other situations.

Sometimes it is helpful to have a few chores for your child to choose from for the week. There can be chores that they need to do for themselves, and some optional chores that help the whole household. In the beginning of the week, have a list of potential tasks for the household and allow your child to choose a few from the list that they will complete throughout the week. Using a blank chore chart, fill in the chores they “must do,” and then have your child add their chosen chores. Having this choice will help encourage independence and give ownership over their tasks, which will motivate them to complete all their tasks!

2nd Grade Age-Appropriate Chores

• Sort clothes
• Fold and put away clothes in drawers
• Choose and set out clothes the night before
• Pack and unpack their backpacks with assistance
• Take out the garbage
• Sort the recycling
• Put away some groceries
• Organize and vacuum their bedroom
• Dust and vacuum a communal room in the home
• Wash dishes and/or place them in the dishwasher
• Put away dishes from the dishwasher
• Set the table
• Clear the table
**Time Management**

Our children are busy! When the school year begins there is homework, after school activities, music lessons, activities, chores, and family time. That’s a lot to do before bedtime! This packed schedule can be overwhelming for parents and for kids.

The key to keeping on top of all these activities is planning and organization. Second grade is the perfect time to begin supporting your child in the very early foundations of prioritizing. While they will be able to do this independently in a few years, starting now will set habits to help your second grader internalize them.

Below are a couple of useful tools and techniques that will help your second grader navigate their busy schedules.

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**Five Steps for Prioritizing Activities with Your Child**

Co-manage your child’s time by:

1. **Teaching how to measure time**: Use a visual timer, like an online timer or an hourglass, and have your child do something fun or creative for 30 minutes using the timer. Discuss how much time has passed and how much they were able to accomplish in that time.

2. **Sorting activities by priority**: Distinguish between necessary activities, like going to school, and those that would be nice to do if there is time. Complete a chart with activities written on rectangles and sort them into the chart based on “Must-Do,” “Maybe,” and “No” activities.

3. **Labeling the time frames in a daily calendar**: Block off school time on the list. Then add time periods in 30 minutes to 1 hour increments on the daily schedule.

4. **Organizing activities in a daily calendar**: Place time-dependent activities on the schedule first followed by the “Must-Do” activities. If there is not enough time for the “Must-Do” activities, return to the prioritization conversation.

5. **Sticking to the agreed-upon schedule**: Follow-through is important. Once you make a commitment to someone or an activity, do your best to keep the appointment. If your child does not want to attend something they showed interest in earlier, make sure to probe for a reason and talk through options and commitments before deciding not to do it.

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**Do you have a long-term project?**

If your child already has an established schedule, why not organize tasks and activities on a to-do list for each day? Use a simple to-do list that has first-priority, second-priority, and long-term tasks sorted. Crossing off completed activities helps instill a sense of pride and accomplishment.
Is It Time to Say No?

It’s okay to say no!

There are so many activities and events that are worthy of your child’s time. Most activities will help them mature as they are challenged to work with others, be more independent, and learn new skills. But sometimes there is just not enough time in the day to fit everything in. Sometimes, trying to squeeze everything into a day leads to frustration or exhaustion.

The Play with Prioritization chart has children sort their activities into three categories, including a “no” column. Do not be afraid to say no and give reasons why it has to be so. Saying no to one thing will:

- Teach your child to assess activities based on the merits of the activity and personal preferences
- Help your child to get the most out of every activity without rushing from one activity to the other
- Allow your child to specialize in something and decide if they enjoy it

If your child decides they do not like the activity anymore, it is okay to stop the activity or lower it on the priority list. Be flexible and assess activity prioritization daily or weekly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Must-Do</th>
<th>Maybe, will do.</th>
<th>No, will not do.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chore:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name ____________________________  Date ____________________________

Playing with Priorities

Chart Directions: Cut out the dashed rectangles. Write activities for the day on them. Sort them into the T-chart based on importance for the day.