



REPORT CARDS: ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Juniper Ridge Elementary School

A child's report card can bring feelings of joy, excitement, and pride: it can also cause concern, frustration, and uncertainty. In either case, the reporting period marks a new beginning to set goals and reflect on past work habits, achievements, and hardships. Most important, it is a time for you to communicate with your children and determine a path for future academic enrichment and social-emotional growth.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Regardless of the grades your child brings home, you must first focus on the positive aspects of the report. This is not always an easy task. For some, this might mean highlighting a strong effort or citizenship grade, or praising an academic accomplishment or a perfect attendance record. Starting on a positive note shows your child that you truly care about the accomplishments, not only areas that need improvement.

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Be careful not to overreact to low grades, or grades you view to be unsatisfactory. Instead, use this time to look at past performance and plan for the future. Talk to you child, asking questions to understand how a particular grade was earned:

- Was the work too difficult?
- Could the pace of the class be too fast or too slow?
- Does you child complete all class work or home work and ask questions when issues arise?

The answers you receive might indicate a need to review your child's study habits. Determine whether or not your child is recording all assignments and bringing home all materials necessary to complete them. Does your child have a specific nightly study time (Sunday through Thursday) when they can not be disturbed? If not, this would be a great time to establish one! If so, is it long enough? Does your child have a specific place to study where resources (including someone to answer questions) are available and distractions are minimized? Is your child completing all homework or studying on a nightly basis, or are the assignments being turned in late, or not at all? Once you have determined the problem, you can begin to create a solution.

THE NEXT STEP

Creating a plan to maximize future academic success is an important part of every child's education. Help your child set realistic and attainable goals for the next reporting period. Outline ways in which these goals can be met. Type the 'official plan' and post one copy in a prominent household location, another in your child's binder or planner, and forward another to the teacher. Involving your child give them ownership and importance in this process, and this makes the report card important not only to you, but also to your child.

As parents and teachers, we want the best for children, but in too many cases this is measured only by the number of A's and B's brought home. Emphasize to your child the importance of doing the very best job they can. Encourage them to succeed, and measure their progress in realistic terms, letting them know that you care and are available to help. Break tasks into small steps, so that even the youngest child can measure their growth, and the most advanced child can measure their progress. By reviewing the report card, and developing a plan for the future, you will help your child find the road to success.

Adapted from Pearson Education (2000)