

# SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

## *School newsletter inserts for your consideration*

### ELEMENTARY

#### **ONLINE MATH GAMES - THINKING ABOUT THE GAMES OUR CHILDREN PLAY (TIPS FROM-NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS NCTM)**

Math games are a wonderful way to engage children. There are many websites which allow children to practice their math facts. While there is a place for this type of practice, there is also a significant place for other websites and games which help children engage in mathematical reasoning and learning. Some questions that might help you determine the value of these types of math games follow:

- Is there variety in the mathematical tasks? If you play the same game over, will you be asked different questions? Are there different pathways to the end?
- Is there a combination of chance and choice in the game? That is, are there both a random component (rolling a dice, drawing a card) and an opportunity to make a decision?
- Is the competition positive and non-threatening?
- If a player gets stuck, are there hints?
- Does the child feel empowered and in control? In other words, do decisions have clear outcomes?
- Does the game encourage social play? The three C's of game playing are: competition, collaboration, and communication. Even one-player games can spark rich discussion of strategy.

#### **Some Good Online Math Games (P-Primary, J-Junior, I-Intermediate)**

Deep Sea Duel (P/J) <http://illuminations.nctm.org/ActivityDetail.aspx?ID=207>

Calculation Nation (J/I) <http://calculationnation.nctm.org/>

Number Twins (P/J) <http://www.coolmath-games.com/0-number-twins/index.html>

Rock-n-Roll Road trip (J/I) <http://www.stem.aetn.org/>

Math Frog (J) <http://cemc2.math.uwaterloo.ca/mathFROG/>

Math Clips (I) <http://oame.on.ca/CLIPS/>

Motion Math Apps (P/J/I) <http://motionmathgames.com/>

Dreambox (14 day free trial) (P/J) <http://www.dreambox.com/ca/parent-subscriptions>



## CRITICAL LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

The digital world is full of texts that are intended to influence others. As wonderful as the internet is, it is full of inaccuracies, misleading information, and hidden messages; all the more reason for us to help our children become critically literate. They need to realize the openness of the internet, which is its greatest asset, is also its greatest problem. The fact that anyone, anywhere, can create and post information means that anyone, anywhere, who has an opinion, bias, or hidden agenda can share these with the world. We need to be savvy when reading and responding to information we encounter online. As critically literate internet users, we need to pay particular attention to the source and intention behind every text we encounter.

Excerpt taken from "Keepin' It Real" by Lisa Donohue

### Questions to Promote Critical Literacy

Encourage your child to ask these questions as a reader themselves and of the author, the text, and the world as they read, write, and learn:

- What did I learn about myself as a reader, writer, learner?
- What techniques did the author use to influence my thinking?
- What does this writing/text/dialogue mean to me?
- Is this text presenting a balanced view of the issue?
- Do I need to consult another source of information?
- Whose voice is represented here? Whose voice is missing?
- How would this be different if ...?
- What if ...?
- What is the author's intent?
- What is the author really trying to say?
- Do I agree with this text?
- Does this information make sense to me?
- Does this information agree with what I already know?
- How is this text changing the way I think?
- What action do I need to take?



## VOLUNTARY, CONFIDENTIAL ABORIGINAL STUDENT SELF-IDENTIFICATION POLICY

In September 2011, the District School Board of Niagara implemented a Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification Policy. This policy allows students to identify as First Nation, Metis or Inuit at any time during the school year. Families may do this on the Student Verification form which can be accessed at the school office.

The Aboriginal Student Self-Identification Policy allows the school board to provide additional supports to our Aboriginal students as well as inform them about Aboriginal events happening in the community. Recently we announced our IGNITE March Break Camp for our Aboriginal students in grade 4-8. Personal invitations were able to be distributed to each Aboriginal student who had self-identified. This method of informing our Aboriginal students proved to be very effective. We will continue to promote DSBN Aboriginal events as well as those in the community with our self-identified students.

Please contact our school secretary if you are interested in identifying your child/youth as Aboriginal. All information is voluntary and confidential.

## HOW CAN PARENTS MODEL GOOD LISTENING SKILLS?

BY CARL SMITH

### Do listening skills affect learning?

The latest studies reveal that listening is a very large part of school learning and one of our primary means of interacting with other people on a personal basis. It is estimated that between 50% and 75% of students' classroom time is spent listening to the teacher, to other students, or to audio media.

### Can parents guide their teens to better listening?

According to research on listening skills, being a good listener means focusing attention on the message and reviewing the important information. Parents can model good listening behaviour for their children and advise them on ways to listen as an active learner, pick out highlights of the conversations, and ask relevant questions. Sometimes it helps to "show" children that an active listener is one who looks the speaker in the eye and is willing to turn the television off to make sure that the listener is not distracted by outside interference.

### Guidelines for Modeling Good Listening Skills

- **Be interested and attentive.** Children can tell whether they have their parent's interest and attention by the way the parent replies. Maintain eye contact to show that you really are engaged with the child.
- **Encourage talking.** Some youth need an invitation to start talking. Teenagers are more likely to share their ideas and feelings when others think they are important.
- **Listen patiently.** People think faster than they speak. Young people often take longer than adults to find the right word. Listen as though you have plenty of time.
- **Hear children out.** Always allow your child to finish her/his thoughts. It may be difficult to listen respectfully and not correct misconceptions, but respect their right to have and express their opinions.
- **Listen to nonverbal messages.** Many messages teens send are communicated nonverbally by their tone of voice, their facial expressions, their energy level, their posture, or changes in their behaviour patterns. You can often tell more from the way your child says something than from what is being said.

### Why are parents important in building communication skills?

Parents play an essential role in building communication skills because children spend more time with their parents than with any other adult. Children also have a deeper involvement with their parents than with any other adult, and the family, as a unit, has lifelong contact with its members.

Adults, parents, and teachers set a powerful example of communication. Communication skills are influenced by the examples teens see and hear. Parents and teachers who listen to their children with interest, attention, and patience set a good example.

The greatest audience children can have is an adult who is important to them and interested in them.

### Works Cited

Smith, Carl. Focus Adolescent Services. 2000.  
<http://www.focusas.com/ListeningSkills.html>.



**ECO-CORNER**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: DSBN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

**Go Bottled Water Free!****Reducing/Eliminating Single Use Plastic Water Bottles**

Millions of single use plastic water bottles are purchased every day in North America....Where does that water and plastic come from? Where will that plastic go? Do some fact finding...here are some facts and websites to get you started.

Get involved at home, at school, or at work...

Bottled Water Free Day on March 15, 2012 (<http://bottledwaterfreeday.ca/en> )

World Water Day on March 22, 2012 (<http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/> )

Let the DSBN Environmental Sustainability Committee know about your school's or family's plan to reduce waste with plastic bottles by uploading your idea to our website @ [www.dsbn.org/esc/](http://www.dsbn.org/esc/)

**Statistics**

Only 23% of the water bottles that Americans use are ever recycled. This means that 38 billion water bottles are filling up in landfills instead of being reused.

**Decomposing**

It takes a plastic water bottle 1,000 years before it will even begin to start decomposing.

**Danger to the Environment**

When water bottles are not recycled, they can do serious damage to the environment. If a water bottle is burned, it releases toxic smoke which destroys the ozone layer (which we need to protect us from UV rays and skin cancer).

**Use for Recycled Bottles**

Recycled water bottles can be turned into many useful items such as carpet, clothing, new bottles, electronic parts and car parts.

**Take Action**

Promote the use of reusable bottles.

- View the video "The story of bottled water" by Annie Leonard, <http://storyofstuff.org/bottledwater/>. Hold a discussion with students about bottled water issues.
- Have the school or green committee logo printed on stainless steel bottles: sell these bottles as promotional items or fundraisers. Give as prizes for activities or draws.

**STATS OR FACTS**

- 1 Bottled water is 2000 times more energy intensive than tap water.
- 2 It takes 3 liters of water to produce 1 liter of bottled water.
- 3 Bottled water is 240 to 10,000 times more expensive than tap water.
- 4 Between April 2008 and April 2009 only 6% of bottled water producers in Canada were inspected by health authorities. And what about tap water? Municipalities often test public water 24 hours a day, and conduct thousands of samples tests for bacteria every day.