

SYCAMORE RIDGE



Round-Up

October 2009

Vol. 5, Issue 1



Principal's Message

Greetings Stallion Parents and Students!

The first few weeks of school have been filled with excitement and energy; we are off to a great start in our fifth year as a school community. I'd like to send a hearty welcome to our new students, Kindergarteners and families!

The entire Sycamore Ridge Staff values educating the whole child. Emphasizing strong academics as well as strong citizenship is our goal. We recently learned about how our students performed on the standards-based STAR assessment administered to our second through sixth grade students. The results of the STAR exam are used to determine a school's Academic Performance Index (API). Last year at this time, our API was 926. Anything over 800 is noteworthy (the state goal for all schools in California), but we believe in continuous improvement! The students and staff deserve credit and congratulations for advancing our API score to 959 this year, a 33 point gain! This validates that our kids are learning the state standards, and more importantly, it provides us with summative data upon which we can make informed instructional decisions. While our gains are to be celebrated, we still have some student groups who are struggling, and we are working in a focused, systematic way to help those students, and at the same time push on students who are proficient in grade level state standards. You can access API scores for every public school in California at www.cde.ca.gov. We are proud to be in the TOP TEN Schools in the county!

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A Note from the PTA President...

On behalf of the PTA Board I would like to welcome you to the 2009-2010 school year! As we enter our 5th year as a school community, the PTA is hard at work planning programs and events to enhance the experience of our students, families and teachers/staff. I would like to thank the PTA Board Members and their Chairpeople for all of their hard work over the summer and so far this school year.

Have you joined the PTA yet? If you were a member last year, did you know that you need to renew your PTA membership annually? Did you renew? If not, it is not too late! You will find a form that you can fill out and submit to your child's teacher within this newsletter, you can download the form off of the school website (on the PTA page) or you can find forms in the cubbies in the office. Thank you to the 150+ families that have already joined or renewed their membership. Your membership is the backbone of our organization. YOU ARE THE PTA!

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...and much more

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

1st
Sally Foster Orders Due!

5th
Coffee with the Principal
8:15am– Staff lounge

6th
Dad's Lunch
11:15am– Meet in the MUR
11:30-12:15 Lunch & Recess

7th
International Walk to School Day

Make-up Picture Day

12th-16th
Red Ribbon Week

14th
"Turn Your Back On Drugs"
Backward Clothes Day

Special Parent Education Night Talk
by Dr. Dana Fillmore
6:30pm (MUR)
Free Childcare Available. Must RSVP.

15th
Reflections "Beauty Is..." Submissions Due
Collected at front of school 7:45-8:15am

19th-23rd
Parent Teacher Conference Week
12:30pm Dismissal ALL GRADES ALL WEEK

Book Fair

26th
Reading Strategies &
Everyone a Reader Training
6:30pm (Rm. E-3)
Free childcare available. Must RSVP.

28th
Reading Strategies &
Everyone A Reader Training
8:15am (Rm. E-3)

Board of Trustees Meeting
5:45pm (Del Mar Hills PAC)

NOVEMBER

11th
No School– Veteran's Day Holiday

16th
Del Mar Schools Education
Foundation (DMSEF)
Phone-A-Thon

18th
Board of Trustees Meeting
5:45pm (Del Mar Hills PAC)

23rd-27th
No School– Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

Dec. 21st– January 1st
No School– Winter Break



Reading Strategies Workshop & Everyone-A-Reader Training

Are you interested in learning strategies to help your child become a better reader? Do you struggle with helping your child read? Are you interested in working one-on-one with students to help them improve their reading skills? Come to the "Reading Strategies & Everyone-A-Reader Training". This free workshop is open to all who are interested. The first portion of the workshop will be for those who want to gain techniques to help their own children in reading. The second portion of the workshop will be geared to those interested in becoming reading tutors for our Everyone-A-Reader program. Workshops will be held: Monday, Oct. 26th at 6:30pm and Wednesday, Oct. 28th at 8:15am in Room E-3. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Lisa Blazer: ldblazer@san.rr.com.

A Note from the Office

Thank you to all who are volunteering at Sycamore Ridge. Please remember that all volunteers need to have a current, signed Volunteer form as well as a TB test. Your negative TB test (or x-ray results if the TB test was deemed positive) is good for 4 years from the date the results were read.

For the safety of our students as well as your own, please sign in and take a badge at the front desk, returning the badge to the office and signing out when you have completed your volunteer time. We also ask that you turn your cell phone to "Vibrate" and refrain from using your cell phone while on campus.

Are You Connected?

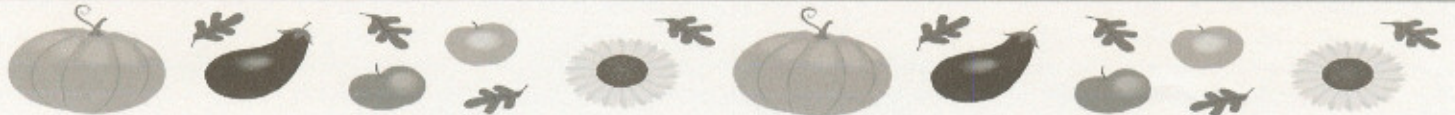
Interested in receiving communication from your child's room parent? Want to stay connected and be involved? Please help us make this possible by providing your e-mail address to the room parent. Not sure who that wonderful person is? Send your contact information (your name, your child's name, classroom teacher, and your e-mail address) to Lisa Blazer at ldblazer@san.rr.com and we'll be sure to get the information distributed to you!



Please join us for
"Coffee with the Principal"
and
PTA General Association Meeting
Monday, October 5th
8:15 am in the Staff Lounge

Please join us at our first PTA meeting of the year followed by Ms. Disney speaking about the 7/11 committee and Sycamore Ridge achievement information.

Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA



STUDENT COUNCIL

We are proud to announce our Student Council for this year:

President– Sarah C.
Vice President– Tegan A.
Secretary– Jacqueline F.
Treasurer– Anthony K.
6th grade Representatives– Ryan M. & Wasef A.
5th grade class reps– Aaron T. & Noah J.
4th grade class reps– Jake B., Brian B., & Daniel B.
6th Grade Historian- Sierra C.
5th Grade Historian- Sara S.

Look for more information to come about Spirit Days and fun events!

Around the World in 1st Grade

The 1st grade students are taking a trip around the world this year visiting all 7 continents in 180 days. We are starting off with maps, as the students learn to identify themselves on the map. As the year progresses, we will be discovering the world within each subject. In our curriculum program, our students will be studying about the world, people, plants, animals, habitats, culture, peace, weather, and the environment. Teachers and the ESC team are busy working together to collaborate on our worldly theme. For example, in technology the students are creating their passports to start their trip around the world. The students are using new technology from Photo Booth and Kid Pix to create real life photos and personal information to resemble the real thing. They will be using these passports throughout the year, as they discover each continent within the curriculum. We are all looking forward to our many travels and a fun year of exploration.





REFLECTIONS



Every student in all grade levels
Please consider sharing your talents by entering!!

“Beauty is...”

Six categories for entry:

Visual Arts, Photography, Literature,
Musical Composition, Dance Choreography
& Film/Video Production

Entries collected:

Thursday, October 15, 7:45 am - 8:15 am
Drop off area in front of school

Exhibit and Reception:

Thursday, February 4th, 6 pm - 8 pm in the MUR



*Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA *
For more information, please contact Eileen Lundquist, laiwing8@gmail.com

Extended Studies News

Technology

Mrs. Jennifer Oliveira



Welcome Back to the Computer Lab!!

I had a great summer rebooting my system and updating my software so I can better support our students! For me, updating my software included attending a great technology conference in Washington, D.C., called NECC (National Educators Computing Conference), an international event attended by technology teachers for all over. I was blown away! It's always very exciting to see what other teachers are doing around the country! I couldn't wait to start school and dive in with our kids!

One of the areas I will be making sure our fourth through sixth grade students understand VERY well is the topic of Digital Citizenship! I have always talked about it, but breezed through it. Not this year. What I realize more and more is that our students are using the tools in ways many of us cannot fathom, and way more often than we realize. If you've never read it, Marc Prensky's article about Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives is significant in understanding how our kids are using the tools (<http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/>).

So, in an effort to help our students use their power for good, not for evil, Ms. Disney and I have decided the students in fourth through sixth grade will have to earn a Digital Driver's License. My first lesson with them was in their classrooms, away from the computers, and we had an in-depth discussion about email, SPAM, pirating, using images, social network sites, protecting themselves online, responsibilities online, the health and wellness of using computers, cell phones, etiquette, etc. Their second lesson was to take a nine question test on these topics. After the test, we created Driver's Licenses using Photo Booth and MS Word. We will print and laminate the licenses so we can take them out during lab time as a reminder of our commitment to use the tools responsibly.

On our agenda this year for all grades is to continue podcasts, creating videos, and extending the classroom standards. Some of our brave teachers will also be testing out some new tools like wikis and podcasts to enhance their classrooms. In the future, you can see many of our products by checking out the "Sycamore Ridge Technology" button underneath the main picture on the web site.

Art

Ms. Jacque Folgner



Hi, my name is Ms. Folgner and I am one of the art teachers at Sycamore Ridge. I am at the school Monday, Tuesday and every other Wednesday. I have heard great things about the school and how creative and fun the students are at Sycamore. Drop by to introduce yourself. I would love to meet you. I am enjoying your kids and soon, I hope, will know all their names.

We're off and thinking and creating in the art room. That's right, artists do a lot of thinking, deciding, reasoning, comparing and connection making. All students Kindergarten through 6th grade create artworks using the elements and principles of design. These elements and principles are the building blocks used to create all works of art.

Kindergarten artists started the year with abstract crayon designs using straight lines to create shapes filled in with patterns. We discussed abstract artist Victor Vasarely.

1st grade artists learned about abstract art and Victor Vasarely. The 1st grade is now creating Flower Drawings emphasizing line and color using pen and watercolor.

2nd grade artists discussed abstract art and Victor Vasarely and now are creating imaginary fish cut from black paper and printed with found objects using gold, silver, copper and white paint.

We started the year in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade discussing artist Keith Haring and creating Keith Haring self-portraits. Keith Haring wanted to inspire peoples' imaginations and emotions and the student self-portraits did just that.

3rd grade is now creating Scarecrow contour drawings emphasizing foreground, middle ground, and background. The students will be painting and using collage techniques for the scarecrow.

4th grade students will start Tap-Tap Buses discussing the use of busses in Haiti and South America with emphasis on "Folk" art, low-relief assemblage, and recycling.

5th grade artists will be creating self-portraits carving linoleum blocks and then printing on various papers. We discussed artist Andy Warhol and his self-portraits.

As you can see, we are very busy in the Art Room. As the students learn, I want them to enjoy the process and to feel confident. I am looking forward to an exciting and fun-filled year with your kids.

Science

Miss Kelsey Dumoff



There are many exciting things happening in science this year! On Fridays, I will be having Zoo Crew club during lunch recess for the 4th-6th graders. Zoo Crew gives the students an opportunity to learn more about our classroom pets and become experts in caring for our bearded dragon, leopard gecko, tortoise and chinchilla. Garden Club will also be starting soon on Thursdays for those students with green thumbs! We hope to be able to harvest more vegetables this year so that the students can enjoy some healthy "home grown" snacks. Please contact me at kdumoff@dmusd.org if you are interested in helping out in our learning garden.

The students are so excited to become young scientists and learn more about life, earth and physical science. Here is a list of topics that your students are beginning to study in my science class:

- Kindergarten: 5 senses
- 1st grade: Matter: solids, liquids and gases
- 2nd grade: Magnetism
- 3rd grade: Energy
- 4th grade: Magnetism and Electricity
- 5th grade: Cells and Body Systems
- 6th grade: Earth Science



I am thrilled to be teaching science at Sycamore Ridge again this year and I'm looking forward to a great year with the students!

Music

Mrs. Stephanie Ilkhanipour



I am so pleased and honored to be back at Sycamore Ridge this year. I can't imagine a better place to be.

We are already super busy in the Music room. The third graders are working hard on a music review that we will hopefully be ready to present in Mid October based on Songs of America in conjunction with their 3rd grade standard of American government and colonization.

The 3rd-6th graders have started their Music Memory curriculum and are well on their way to learning 16 composers and their music. The music memory competition is set for May 20th of next year. You can check out more information on this at: http://www.sdco.org/music_memory.shtml Music Memory is sponsored by Orchestra Nova San Diego (formerly the San Diego Chamber Orchestra). And even though the K-2 graders aren't listed on this curriculum officially, I feel it is never too early to start enjoying the music of the masters; therefore, K-2 grade students will enjoy a modified version of this curriculum.

The Stallion Theatre Co. has voted to present 101 Dalmatians this year for our full scale musical. Willy Wonka was such a huge success last year that the kids want to put on another one. Audition information was given out on Wed., Sept. 16th during our Theatre meeting. Auditions will begin on Wed., September 23rd. Stallion Theatre Co. is open to all students grades 4-6.

Band has already begun this year for our 5-6 grade stallions. With the overwhelming interest, looks like it's gonna be another fantastic year!

And finally, again this year, ALL grade levels will be presenting a grade level performance in conjunction with their grade level standards. Please check my Sycamore Ridge blog as well as your child's Wednesday folders for all upcoming performances.



Physical Education

Coach John Sink

Welcome back Stallion families! I am excited to return to Sycamore Ridge this year as a physical education teacher. Physical education provides experiences for all students to develop positive, active, and healthy lifestyles. Activities are designed for maximum student participation, cooperation, success, challenge and enjoyment.

I am pleased to see so many students remembering to bring hats and reusable water bottles to class. Staying hydrated and sun protection are two important issues that are stressed in class. Having a reusable water bottle also shows you care about the environment. Please send your son or daughter prepared for class.

Let's not forget about the health of our children. Remembering to pack your son or daughter a healthy lunch and snack will ensure their academic success at school. Some examples of things you can pack your child include: almonds, raisins, yogurt, fruit, vegetables, trail mix, peanut butter and celery, hard boiled eggs, and whole grain breakfast cereal. Remember, "Good health comes from making good choices".

I am so happy to see so many students getting involved with the activities offered at recess. This is a great opportunity for students to get involved in organized games, sports, and tournaments at lunch. Organized recess games provide an opportunity for students to not only engage in physical activity, but also to learn about and build their character, develop cooperation skills and practice social interaction. I look forward to more students joining in at lunch.

Red Ribbon Week- October 12-16, 2009

"I pledge to make healthy choices, to be a positive role model for my friends, and to support the mission of Ribbon Week- to lead a healthy lifestyle, drug free."

Red Ribbon Week is a nationwide program, endorsed by the Del Mar School District and sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA. It was organized to honor the memory of Federal Agent Enrique Camarena from San Diego county who was murdered in 1985 by a drug cartel in Mexico.

The purpose of Red Ribbon Week is to establish a commitment to forming a healthy lifestyle and to create an awareness of the problems related to the underage use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs

During Red Ribbon Week, Sycamore Ridge students will participate in activities designed to emphasize the importance of living healthy, drug-free lives. Our fun-filled and educational week of activities include:

- Ms. Disney reading "The Red Ribbon- A Story of Hope" to the lower grades
- Coach Sink incorporating healthy lifestyle and Red Ribbon Week themed activities during P.E.
- Teachers and children decorating and signing posters to be displayed on classroom doors where they "Pledge to Live a Healthy Lifestyle"
- High school teenagers (specially screened) to talk with 5th-6th graders about why they choose to live drug free
- Wednesday, Oct. 14th- wear your clothes backward to show you "Turn your back on drugs"
- Percussion Assembly for all grades
- Wednesday, Oct. 14th- special parent education night talk by Dr. Dana Fillmore at 6:30pm in the MUR. Free childcare available for the duration of the talk.

For more information or to RSVP for childcare for Dr. Fillmore's talk, please contact Carrie Nydahl at: cnydahl@san.rr.com.

Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA

Library News

Mrs. Kathy Pechtimaldjian



Hello Stallion Readers and welcome back! It's my third year here; I can't believe it. I just love starting a new year and seeing how much all the students have grown. We are getting into full gear in the library. The kindergartners started checking out books and everyone is doing a fantastic job of following the rules. One of my goals for this year is to get the students to remember to return their library books *every* week. Encourage your child to be responsible for his/her book and not rely on you to remember it.

Lost and damaged books must be paid for per our policy below. Overdue notices are sent home monthly for books that are more than 2 weeks late. Please call or e-mail me if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Library Club: Monday and Fridays I have Library Club during the lunch recess. Students can come to the library and get books, play quiet board games, do puzzles, use the computer, and do arts and crafts. Donations are always welcome for gently used board games and craft supplies. I would love to have one of the large checkerboard game towels.

This year in the library we have the **Book Fair coming up in October (10/19-10/23)**. The popular bookmark design contest will be in November and of course our reading incentive program in February.

Please support our annual fundraisers so that we can keep our library collection updated with the latest books and resources for our students and teachers. These include the Book Fair, the Stallion Birthday Book Club (flyer sent home about this), and the Used Book Sale held in May.

Volunteers are always needed to help shelve books and assist with various projects to keep the library running smoothly. If you have a little time to spare and love children's literature, this is a great opportunity. Volunteers can check out books, too!

Thank you for your support. I look forward to a great year.

Kathy Pechtimaldjian (Mrs. P.)
Library Media Specialist
858-755-1060 ext. 3893
kpechtimaldjian@dmusd.org

Replacement Books Costs:

Hardcover books \$25-\$30
Paperback \$10-\$20

Everyone A Reader



The Sycamore Ridge Everyone-A-Reader program is beginning its 5th year and we're looking for some dedicated volunteers. We'd like to invite any parents (or interested community members) to join our team of "reading buddies" for Sycamore Ridge students. The commitment is November through May, and is simply one hour a week (you help choose the day and time that suits you best!). If you're interested in learning more about how you can make a difference, please contact Lisa Blazer at ldblazer@san.rr.com or 858-945-6920 and learn more about this wonderful program!

Geek Squad

Mrs. Oliveira is happy to announce the members of her Geek Squad: Aditya, Tegan, Mona, Niharika, Sesang, Ryan M, Donnell, Alex M, Jason K., Kevin X., Wasef, and Sarah C. A special thanks to Tegan, Kevin X., and Jason for all of their help at the beginning of school!

DMSEF

Dear Parents,

We have a challenging year ahead of us, and along with challenges, come opportunities. Specifically, the opportunity for our community to work together again to help raise funds for our Extended Studies Curriculum (ESC) which includes Music, Art, Science, Technology and PE.

Last year, approximately \$3.3 million was needed to cover the cost of our ESC programs for the 2009/2010 school year. The District paid \$1.7 million, and through your generous donations, the Del Mar Schools Education Foundation (DMSEF) contributed approximately \$1.6 million to cover the gap. Using this as a baseline, and considering the ongoing school budget crisis, we are asking each family to contribute \$800 per child to help cover the expected costs of the ESC programs for the 2010/2011 school year.

All donations, large and small, increase our ability to continue the great success that we have had with our ESC programs. Not all families can give at these levels, so please give generously according to your means. By raising the funds to help implement these programs, everyone's contribution will result in a strong educational foundation for our children and will allow them to grow and flourish.

The DMSEF Board is a non-profit organization run by parent volunteers. And, like most nonprofits, we need to fund our accounting, administrative and other operating expenses, thus 9.5% of DMSEF Annual Appeal donations will be used for expenses and/or reserves.

We are so fortunate to have our children attend the Del Mar Unified School District with 2008 API test scores in the top 5% of all districts statewide. For more information, take a look at the enclosed materials and visit our website at delmarkids.org.

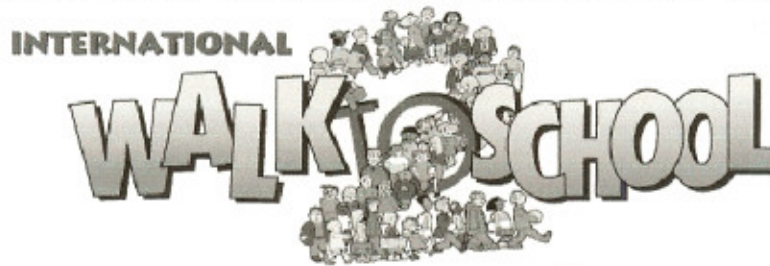
Please help us step up and give to our children's education.
Sincerely,

Chris Stevenson
President, DMSEF



Save the Date!

Sycamore Ridge PTA is proud to present the 5th Annual



Wednesday, October 7th

7:35 am - 7:55 am

Look for more information in your child's Wednesday folder next week.
Please contact Sylvia Wahr at (619)778-6404 for more information or to volunteer.

Need Homework Help?

It's fall again and school bells are ringing throughout San Diego. Your children are encountering new friends, new teachers, new classrooms... and a new homework regimen. The San Diego Public Library has a variety of free homework resources to make this transition easier, and it is only a click away. Whether students simply need to brush up on a few skills, or they are feeling a little behind, the library has them covered.

Live Homework Help offers one-on-one expert online tutoring for all grade levels in math, English, social studies and science every day from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m.

San Diego SchoolRooms, based on the California curriculum and built by teachers and librarians, is an interactive learning environment with thousands of pages of fun, multimedia content to supplement classroom lessons. SchoolRooms makes online research simple and fun for students by providing grade-appropriate reference information on a number of topics.

Log onto www.sandiegolibrary.org or stop by your nearest Public Library branch and get your child on the road to success!



Have you ever parked in the two reserved spots in the parking lot marked
"Reserved for RidgeRaising High Bidder"?

Please don't!

Those two spaces were auctioned off at our RidgeRaising Dinner/Auction in November
and the families who won the spaces donated hundreds of dollars to support the
Sycamore Ridge PTA for the privilege of being able to park there.

Please help us maintain the value of the spaces by keeping them open for the families who paid to be able to
park there, especially during drop-off and pick-up times.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Principal's Message
(Continued from page 1)

How can you help your child make the most of his or her school day? Teach responsibility for learning and behavior! A child who understands and accepts responsibility will do better in school. And the very best place for your child to learn to take responsibility is right at home. Teach your child to:

- **Set goals.** At the beginning of the week, help your child identify one goal, write it or draw a picture of it (depending on their age) and post it in a prominent spot. Talk about how to accomplish the goal. Help your child break it down into smaller steps. At the end of the week, did your child achieve the goal? Talk together about why or why not.
- **Be organized for school.** Together decide where your child can keep belongings for school-books, supplies, completed assignments, school communication, etc. Your child's final responsibility each evening before getting ready for bed is to put everything for school the following day in that place. Allow your child to experience the consequences (*natural consequences*) when assignments are not done or commitments are not honored. Most importantly, praise your child for demonstrating responsibility.

Have you heard your son or daughter recite our pledge to build peace at home, at school and in our community? If not, please ask your child to teach you our **PeaceBuilders Pledge**. We begin each day with reciting our school-wide pledge to peace over the morning announcements.

Changing and improving the social climate at school, say experts, requires that all students learn a small number of universally agreed upon behavioral expectations. At Sycamore Ridge, not only are children asked to learn and live by the PeaceBuilder's six universal behavioral principles, adults are asked to as well. PeaceBuilders is a program model for children and adults. It's simple, that is, if you're willing to model, teach, practice and celebrate these six universal principles on an ongoing basis.

I invite you to partner with us to build peace at home, at school and in our community by supporting and modeling the PeaceBuilder's Six Universal Principles of Behavior:

1 PRAISE PEOPLE

All relationships stand to improve when those closest to us recognize our accomplishments, value our contributions, encourage us to try our best, and praise us for our efforts. It's true at home, at work and at school. PeaceBuilders is designed to catch us at our best and reinforce us for our efforts.

2 GIVE UP PUT DOWNS

Anyone can have melt downs, angry outbursts, or moments of rage. Behavioral acts with some serious negative consequences can start with a put-down. By using ongoing role-plays and other activities that demonstrate positive and negative choices with likely ramifications, children learn how to recognize them, how to ignore them, and how to execute new replacement behaviors that are much less likely to lead to disagreements, fights, or for some children, eventual suspension.

3 SEEK WISE PEOPLE

Adults on our campus are coached on ways to serve in this capacity and children are provided ample opportunities through Morning Meetings, Village activities and classroom lessons to form these attachments. By learning to seek out wise people, our students learn to change bystander behavior. Bullying, for example, can be decreased when we all agree to seek out a wise person when someone's in danger. Children learn that when it comes to safety, there's a difference between reporting and tattling.

4 NOTICE AND SPEAK UP ABOUT HURTS

Empathy for others can increase with practice. Noticing and speaking up about hurts we have caused provides us with the practice. It also serves as a way to reflect and learn that it is not responsible to blame others for our own wrongdoing.

5 RIGHT WRONGS

If you make a mistake, then it's time to "right the wrong". The curriculum provides strategies and activities that teach children ways to do this.

6 HELP OTHERS

PeaceBuilders are ready and willing to reach out to help others. Coaching others through difficult situations, which is what we train our 5th and 6th grade PeaceCoaches to do, is a way we at SR help our kids, as well as model reaching out to help each other.

If you would like to learn more about this program, log on to the Peacebuilders Website, www.peacebuilders.com

Failure, Consequences, And Learning
 Submitted by Rich Griswold, Ph.D.
 DMUSD School Psychologist
 Sycamore Ridge and Sage Canyon

My 14 year-old son initiated the 9th grade at Cathedral Catholic High School this fall. Like any first time high school student, he is faced with new and more difficult demands than those he experienced in junior high school. He also has recently joined a local Carmel Valley competitive soccer club. There are practices (2 to 3 times a week), school activities, and increased academic responsibilities. He is required to leave our house in Carlsbad by 6:30 am, with his lunch, backpack, and soccer gear in hand. He has done pretty well this first couple of weeks. However, today he made his first error. He forgot his soccer bag. Our plan was for him to bring his gear to school, I would pick him up, bring him back to my school to spend the 3 hours prior to practice, snacking, reading, studying, and resting. At the same time I intended to spend the time getting ahead in the work that I do at Sage Canyon and Sycamore Ridge. My wife called me to let me know that Nolan had left his soccer bag at home and my first reaction was to drive home and pick up his gear for him (I would do this after giving him a lecture on being responsible and threatening punishment if it happens again). My wife suggested that he wear his school tennis shoes and shorts, but in my initial thought that idea was not suitable. After all, he'd be slipping without cleats, he'd be hot, he'd be embarrassed, he wouldn't do as well, and his coach would not be happy! Then it dawned on me, while it was true he would experience all of the above-mentioned consequences, he would not be psychologically scarred for life, he would survive the inconvenience, and, just maybe, the natural consequences he reaped would help him learn and retain a valuable lesson. Stifling my impulse to rescue him and allowing him to experience the results of his actions, or lack thereof was actually the most loving and helpful choice I could make in this instance!

The concept of "Natural Consequences" is not new, but seems to be even more topical today than when it was introduced over 50 years ago by Rudolph Dreikurs. As the above example points out, I'm right there with each and everyone of you who on a daily basis "save" your children from experiencing the consequences of their behavior and as a result, prevent them from learning valuable lessons of life. If the kindergartner slides down a wet slide after being told not to by the teacher the child will get his/her clothes wet, if the 3rd grader forgets their lunch, she/he will be hungry, if the 6th grader forgets to bring a book home to study, he/she may earn a less than suitable grade. We as parents can jump in and rescue our children in every one of these and thousands of other instances in an effort to make sure they will not be the "victim" of what really are logical consequences (e.g. being wet and uncomfortable, being hungry, or being disappointed by a bad grade). Perhaps I'm being picky here, but in the above examples the subtle message we give by saving our children from experiencing these consequences is that they don't have to listen to the teacher, they don't need to remember to take their lunch, and it isn't important to remember the books needed for studying because in each instance mom, dad, or a teacher will step in and make it right! Allowing Natural Consequences to teach our children how to accept responsibility for mistakes and misbehavior is a parental gift that will pay dividends for the future and will result in self-sufficient, confident, and pro-social children.

Now you may be asking yourself, how do Natural Consequences apply when a child is proceeding in a line of behavior that has possibilities of disastrous consequences, e.g. running into the busy street? Additionally, what about behaviors that do not appear to have a natural consequence such as walking into the just cleaned house with sand all over his/her feet? In these cases and in the thousands of other situations like them, Logical Consequences should be the appropriate response. Logical Consequences are predicated on foundation of respect, the development of a reasonable response, and the application of a response that is related to the behavior. In the example of sand tracked into the house the response is obvious. The child is directed in a respectful manner to right what he/she has wronged. He/She will need to clean the floor, returning it to its original state. If a child runs into the street, they lose their privilege of playing in the yard or outside for a period of time. So, when a Natural Consequence is not appropriate try to find a Logical Consequence.

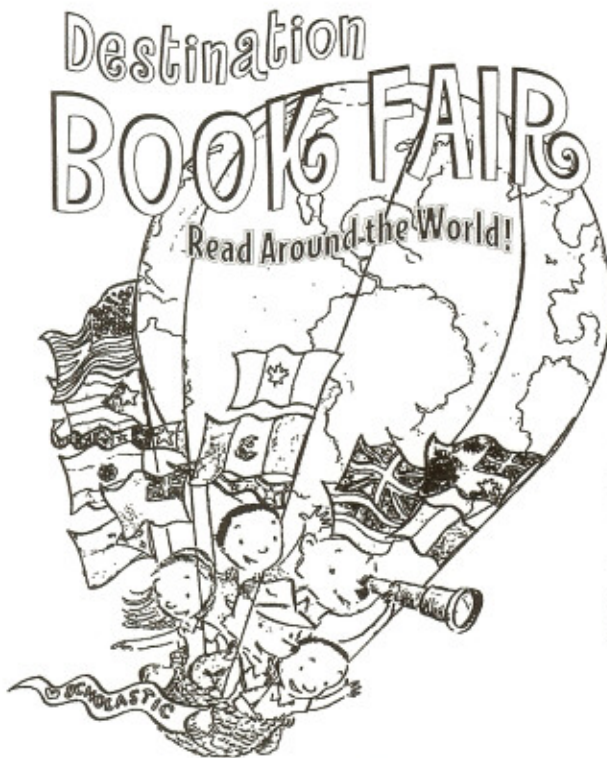
This short introduction to the concept of Natural and Logical consequences is offered as a jumping off point for those who are interested in changing or developing their parenting skills. I have to admit that I am hitting the books, once again in this area, as it is obvious I have fallen into the "rescue trap." For parents and teachers interested in the subject of Natural and Logical Consequences the following references may be useful:

Children: the challenge, Rudolph Dreikurs with Vicki Soltz
The Shelys Need Help: A Choose-Your-Own-Solutions Guidebook for Parents, Dr. Ken West

Elementary school is the foundation for future learning and habits. Our goal at Sycamore Ridge is to ensure high levels of academic achievement as well as helping each learner to become the best citizen they can be. Understand that children need to make mistakes in order to learn and grow. Try to keep things in perspective. Will this be a crisis tomorrow? As the significant adults in their lives we must ask ourselves... How can I turn this situation into a learning opportunity? Remember that challenges are a part of life. As parents, our natural inclination is to protect our kids, but we must remember that by teaching, modeling and practicing strategies to deal with adversity, we are giving them tools for life and their future.

I am looking forward to working with each of you to make this a fabulously rewarding year for our "Villagers." As always, my door is open to your thoughts, concerns and ideas.

Warm wishes,
 Emily Disney, Principal



Read Around the World at the Book Fair!!! Coming October 19-23, 2009

Our annual Scholastic book fair runs October 19-23rd so mark your calendars. This is our biggest fundraiser for the library so be sure to stop by and get some wonderful new books. A portion of the proceeds goes directly to the Sycamore Ridge Library to buy new books for our students to enjoy.

This event is sponsored by the PTA and will feature a soon to be revealed Family Night event as well as the popular Doughnuts for Dads morning. More information will be sent home soon so check your child's Wednesday folder.

Volunteers Needed: Volunteers are greatly needed to make the book fair a fun and successful event. If you can volunteer, please email Kathy Pechtimaldjian at kpechtimaldjian@dmusd.org or Julie Anderson at janderso@san.rr.com.



Kids Korps USA
Developing leaders
through youth
volunteerism

Kids Korps USA is a national non-profit youth volunteer organization that engages young people, ages 5-18, in community service. It operates on the premise that volunteering encourages our youth to care about their social and natural environment and, thus, has a positive influence on their lives. Kids Korps develops a society of children and families with compassion and caring for others, leadership and team-building, personal and social responsibility, self-esteem and confidence.

Last year was our first year having a chapter at Sycamore Ridge, and we are looking forward to an even better chapter this year. We hold meetings at school as well as coordinate off-site events so that the children get directly involved in our community. Some of our projects last year included making blankets and cards for our Troops overseas, feeding the homeless, community and school clean-up projects, recycling projects, holiday caroling for the elderly, and decorating a homeless shelter for the holidays.

Please look for the flyer that was sent home in the Wednesday folder.
Please register your family at www.kidskorps.com

Our first meeting at school is Monday October 5th, and we will be working on a project to support an organization called Soldier's Angels: www.soldiersangels.org

If you have questions about this organization and our chapter at Sycamore Ridge - please email Marie LeRose at marierose@gmail.com

*President's Message
(Continued from page 1)*

Coming soon will be the Sycamore Ridge Directory! Many thanks to Joy Toro for her work as our Membership Chair and to Richard Kaleta for putting the PTA directory together year after year. It is a valued resource and we appreciate all of the effort put into producing it. If you submitted the directory form that came home in the first day packets with your child (and checked the box to have your information published), you will be included in the directory. If you did not submit the form, you will not be included. Please contact Joy Toro at joytoro@gmail.com with any questions.

The year was kicked off with the Welcome Back Teacher & Staff Luncheon on the Friday before school started. Thanks so much to Janet Ross and her volunteers for putting together a beautiful luncheon for 60 teachers and staff at our school. Our local Souplantation generously donated the food for the luncheon and volunteers brought desserts for the staff to enjoy. It was a great (and delicious!) way to start off the school year for the dedicated employees of our school.

Kindergarten parents were consoled by treats and tissues on the first day of school at our 5th annual Boo Hoo Breakfast. Thanks to Shelley Aberle and her team of volunteers for organizing this special event for our parents. It is always wonderful to see families sharing this momentous occasion with others in the same situation.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Susan Stephens for planning yet another successful Stallion Stampede and to all of the volunteers who helped pull it off. Stampede is one my favorite events of the year as it gives our school community a wonderful opportunity to come together and celebrate the beginning of a new school year.

The PTA's main fundraiser, the Sally Foster gift wrap drive, wraps up tomorrow, October 1st. Many thanks to all of the students and families who participated. Your support of this fundraiser helps the PTA provide the programs, events, and assemblies at our school. I would also like to thank Darcy Buchanan, Trisha Klimisch and their team of volunteers for organizing and running this fundraiser for the PTA.

Coming up on Monday, October 5th at 8:15am in the Staff Lounge is our first PTA General Association meeting at Coffee with the Principal. Please join us as we present the budget and programs for the school year and information from Ms. Disney about the 7/11 Committee and Sycamore Ridge achievement.

In addition to the Coffee with the Principal, there are many more events coming in the weeks ahead. Please see the calendar in the front of the newsletter for more information. The first Dad's Club event, Dad's Lunch, is Tuesday, October 6th at 11:15am. Walk to School Day is Wednesday, October 7th and Red Ribbon Week is coming up October 12-16th. Our first Parent Education Night will be Wednesday, October 14th at 6:30 and childcare will be provided. The National PTA Reflections program, an arts recognition and achievement program for students, is back again this year. This year's theme is "Beauty is..." and submissions will be collected on October 15th. The Everyone A Reader program will be providing some parent seminars and trainings and finally, the Scholastic Book Fair will be coming to the library during conference week, October 19-23. Bookfair is a great opportunity to add to your home library or shop for the upcoming holidays and support the library at the same time.

Thanks to all of you for making Sycamore Ridge such a special place of learning. Every year I feel more and more grateful that my family and I are a part of this community. As always, if I can answer any questions, if you have feedback or suggestions or would like to get involved please contact me. I am happy to help in any way that I can.

Happy Fall!

Shannon Cary
PTA President
shancary@gmail.com
(858) 481-5489

Sycamore Ridge FAQs:

What is the PTA and what do they do?

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a non-profit organization run completely by volunteers. The PTA provides multiple programs throughout the year to help build the Sycamore Ridge community. Please check the school website for information about ongoing programs and upcoming events. The PTA is always in need of parents willing to volunteer even an hour of their time to help us continue to provide quality programs for our school.

What is the Del Mar Schools Education Foundation?

The Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization. The Foundation's primary goal is to raise funds to support our music, art, science, technology and physical education programs at each of our Del Mar Schools.

What are ESC classes and how often do kids have ESC?

Extended Studies Classes (ESC) are taught by certificated teachers with a specialization in a subject area. The ESC courses at Sycamore Ridge are: Technology, Music, Science, Art and P.E. Every child at Sycamore Ridge attends these classes during the regular school week. We are able to offer this specialized instruction that goes beyond the California State requirements through funding through the Del Mar School Educational Foundation (see above).

What is the Wed. folder?

The Wednesday folder is the means in which you will receive most of the communications from the school. Flyers will be put in the Wed. folder for upcoming school events, fundraisers, etc. If you have more than one child at the school, your youngest child will be the only one to receive the Wed. folder information.

How does the hot lunch program work? Where do the kids go?

Hot lunches must be ordered and paid for in advance. Lunch forms will go home in the Wed. folder with your child each month. If you wish to order hot lunch for the first weeks of school, please check the district website for ordering deadlines. The first few weeks, Kindergarten children walk over with their teacher to get their hot lunches and then join the rest of the children in the lunch area.

How does the milk program work? Is it for lunch or snack?

The milk program allows children to get a carton of regular or chocolate milk at lunch. Pre-payment is required and is paid either for the whole year or for half a year at a time. Order forms are available in the school office.

What is Stallion Sprinters? How does it work?

Stallion Sprinters is a running program held Tuesday and Thursday during lunchtime recess. Children run laps on the upper-grade field. Laps are recorded by parent volunteers and water is provided. For every 25 laps (5 miles) a child runs, they receive a "Toe Token". We also track how many miles the whole school runs. This program depends on volunteers to work. Contact Marie LeRose at marielerose@gmail.com for more information.

What are Villages?

At Sycamore Ridge we believe "it takes a village to raise a child" and we have created our own school Village program. A Village is a group of students grades K-6 and a credentialed teacher who meet together in a group for 30-45 minutes every other Wednesday. Students remain in the same village the entire time they attend Sycamore Ridge. In Villages, students discuss PeaceBuilders topics and participate in different activities. Upper grade students are responsible for helping the younger children and serve as good role models. The goal of the Villages program is for students to bond, connect, make new friends and form friendships across grade levels.

What is PeaceBuilders?

PeaceBuilders is a character education program which focuses on teaching students responsibility and good judgment through friendship, praise, good modeling, and peace. Children recite the PeaceBuilders pledge during morning announcements. The Pledge is: "We pledge to: Praise people, Give up put-down, Seek Wise People, Notice and speak up about hurts we have cause, Right wrong, and Help others."

How do I keep up to date on school events?

Please check the Sycamore Ridge website regularly. The calendar continues to be updated as programs, field trips, etc. are scheduled. Additionally, please read the materials that come in the Wed. folder. The PTA also publishes a school-wide newsletter five times a year.

How does the school library work?

At the beginning of the year, a form will be sent home for you to sign which will allow your child to check out books from the school library. Each class goes to the library once a week with their teacher.

Dad's Club

The first Dad's Club lunch will be held Tuesday, Oct 6th. For those new to Sycamore Ridge, this is an opportunity to enjoy lunch with the students and then play on the playground. We will meet in the MUR at 11:15 am and then eat lunch with the students at 11:30am. If Dad cannot make it, you are welcome to invite Grandpa, Mom or another family member.

Dads and Doughnuts returns during Book Fair Week. More information will be provided through your child's Wednesday folder.

Attention all Sycamore Ridge Stallions!

We are getting ready to kick off our running club during lunchtime recess and we want *YOU* to join us! There is no experience necessary, just a positive attitude, and your athletic shoes, and we will be off to run or walk laps around the athletic fields. Along with getting a good work out and running around with your friends, you can earn fabulous prizes!

Last year you ran over 3900 miles and ran from the San Diego to the Statue of Liberty and then down to the White House in Washington, D.C! Quite an accomplishment for all of our runners!

The fun starts on Tuesday September 29th, so mark your calendars, get your most comfortable shoes ready, grab a friend and come join us!

And maybe, just maybe, we'll see a certain principal out there once in a while....

Parents - we can use your help! If you can volunteer your time on a Tuesday or Thursday from 11:30-12:15, please email Marie LeRose at marielerose@gmail.com. This is a great program for Kindergarten parents to help with as it finishes right before Kindergarten dismissal at 12:40.



Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

Sycamore Ridge Elementary School
Ms. Emily Disney, Principal

SHORT NOTES



Tasty math

For some hands-on geometry practice, invite your youngster into the kitchen. Together, cut sandwiches into triangles, try to slice a pan of brownies into equal squares, or discuss how to divide a pizza among an odd number of people.

Listen up!

Having trouble getting your child's attention? Here's an idea teachers often use in the classroom. Rather than yelling, talk softly or even whisper. Chances are, your youngster will quiet down to hear what you're saying.

Where in the world?

Instead of throwing away opened mail, save it for geography practice. Give your child the envelope and ask her to look at the postmark. Can she locate the city on a map or tell you two facts about the state? *Examples:* It has lots of mountains; it's close to the ocean.

Worth quoting

"Be the change that you want to see in the world." *Mahatma Gandhi*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: What gets wetter the more it dries?

A: A towel!

Ready to learn

Setting up routines

Bruce and John are close friends with similar abilities. Bruce does well in school, but John struggles. He often seems tired and misses assignments.

Why the difference? One reason is that Bruce's family establishes daily routines to help him do his best. Consider the routines below to make your child feel more...

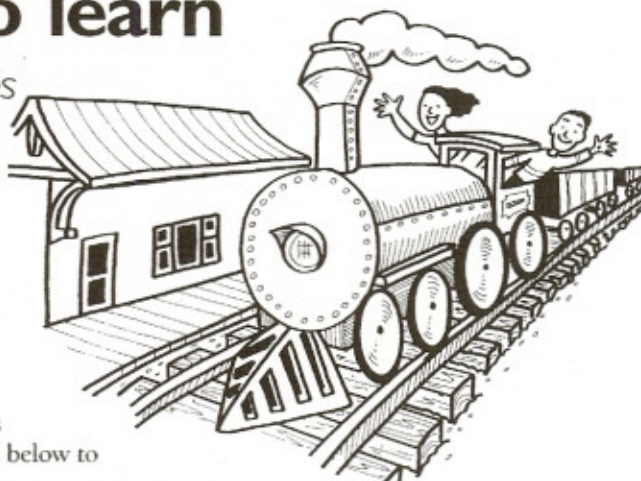
Relaxed. Music can help your child avoid the morning rush. Play a soothing tape and ask him to be dressed and ready by the time it's over. *Tip:* On Sundays, have him put each day's outfit for the coming week on hangers labeled Monday through Friday.

Energized. A good breakfast increases concentration. Offer your youngster healthy choices. *Examples:* a whole-wheat bagel with peanut butter; orange juice blended with fruit and yogurt; instant oatmeal.

Connected. Talking about the school day lets your child know you care. Ask him to share two good things that happened during the day. Prompt him with specific questions, such as "Which multiplication tables did you practice?"

Prepared. Studying a little every day is the best way to learn new material. Help your youngster choose a time for homework when he is most alert—and try not to change it.

Rested. A set bedtime helps kids fall asleep more quickly. Suggest that your child get in bed 15 minutes



early to read, make up stories, or talk quietly with you. ♥

For the love of reading

What's the best way to create a lifelong reader? Reading together! Reading is free, fun, and will bring you and your child closer. Find a time each day when you and your youngster can get cozy and enjoy a good book.

Here are three tips to help you choose stories:

1. Ask librarians, friends, and teachers for recommendations. *Tip:* If your child doesn't already have a library card, sign her up!
2. Find books that expand your youngster's interests (insects, outer space), deal with an event (a new baby, a visit to the dentist), and build character (friendship, truthfulness).
3. Pick stories for both information and enjoyment. Try real and make-believe stories and poems, as well as children's magazines. ♥



**PARENT
TO
PARENT**

Handling angry feelings

One morning, my daughter couldn't find her wallet. When she came to me for help, I yelled at her for losing the wallet—and the birthday money inside it. Tonya burst into tears. Realizing I had overreacted, I apologized for yelling and helped her find the wallet.

That night at dinner, we talked about anger. We started by sharing how we know when we're getting angry. Tonya said her face gets hot. My wife said her muscles tense up. I said I raise my voice.

Then, we brainstormed ways to handle angry feelings. Our list included taking several deep breaths, going for a five-minute walk, petting the dog, and thinking about the beach.

We also came up with a signal (snapping our fingers twice) to let other family members know we're angry. We agreed that when someone uses the signal, we'll give him or her a few minutes to calm down.

Tonya's missing wallet certainly taught us an important lesson about managing anger. ♥


**ACTIVITY
CORNER**

Sentences on a string

Help your child get the hang of sentence structure with this mixed-up activity.

Materials: books, pencil, paper, string, two chairs, clothespins or large paper clips



Start by picking a sentence from one of your youngster's favorite books. Write each word of the sentence on its own sheet of paper. Mix them up.

Next, tie a long piece of string between the backs of two chairs. Then, pin or clip the words to the string. Challenge your youngster to unscramble the sentence and hang the words in the right order.

Variation: For older readers, copy each sentence of a paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Mix the papers up and clip them to the string. How quickly can your child put the paragraph in order? ♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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**Q
&
A**

You can do it!

Q: My best friend's kids seem ready and able to do anything. How can I help my children develop more confidence?

A: Build a can-do attitude in your youngsters by expecting that they can do things. Kids can do more than you think! Doing everything for them sends the message that they're helpless. Asking them to pitch in shows you believe in their abilities.



When your children try a task, like helping with laundry, resist the urge to take over at the first sign of trouble. Instead, show them how to do it themselves. Then, let them try it on their own, with your guidance.

If your youngsters are unsure about how to do something, encourage them to figure it out by asking, "What do you think the next step should be?" They'll realize they can think through problems by themselves. ♥

Note-taking tips

Taking notes in class can help kids listen and learn. It's a skill they will need in elementary school and beyond. Here are some suggestions you can pass along to your youngster.

Nice and neat. Try to write neatly. You want to be able to read and understand your notes later.

Short and sweet. It's not necessary to write down everything the teacher says. She may provide clues to

what's most important by repeating certain items or writing them on the board. To save time, you can use abbreviations or symbols. *Examples:* "b/n" for between, "#" for number.

Thorough and complete. Going back over your notes at study time can boost comprehension. Fill in any missing details, and make sure everything is clear. ♥



Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

Sycamore Ridge School

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *The Magic School Bus Lost in the Solar System*

Ms. Frizzle blasts her class into the solar system for some out-of-this-world science lessons. One of the Magic School Bus series by Joanna Cole. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Doctor De Soto Goes to Africa*

In this tale by William Steig, the famous mouse dentist travels to Africa. But before he can repair the tooth of Mudambo the elephant, an unhappy monkey kidnaps him!



■ *The Whingdingdilly*

Scamp is bored with his life as a dog. Then Zildy the witch changes him into a Whingdingdilly. Life is anything but boring now—but is Scamp happy? Read this story by Bill Peet to find out.

■ *Babushka's Doll*

"It wasn't that Natasha was a truly naughty child." So begins the story of a little girl who needs some practice learning patience. The lesson begins when Natasha picks up her grandmother's doll. A magical story by Patricia Polacco.



Reading aloud

"I always stumble because I read too fast." "I'm afraid my child won't listen to me." "I was laughed at when I read aloud at school."

Do you have worries like these when you read aloud? You're not alone. Many parents avoid reading aloud to their kids. However, reading aloud is one of the best ways to help your youngster succeed in school. Keep these tips in mind:

- ★ Everybody makes mistakes. If you make mistakes when reading aloud, your child will learn that it's okay for her to do so, too.
- ★ Practice makes perfect. Find a book that you like and read it aloud by yourself until you feel comfortable.
- ★ Involve your youngster in the story. Have her turn the pages. Or, read one line and let her read the next.



★ Take your time and don't rush the story. Your child can tell if you're in a hurry. Reading slowly will help you read clearly.

★ As you feel more comfortable, try changing your voice to show the characters' feelings—joy, sadness, fear. These variations can make the story more exciting for both of you!

★ Remember that you are helping your child learn to enjoy reading. Try different types of reading materials, such as comic strips and poetry.

★ Above all, try to relax and enjoy the time you're spending with your youngster. ♥

UNDERSTANDING STORIES

Does your youngster listen actively when you read aloud? It's a key to understanding what's happening in the story. Try these simple tips to build listening skills:

- ▲ Ask your child to retell small parts of the story to you. Or ask him questions while you read. *Examples:* "What will happen next?" "Why do you think she did that?" Find the answers to the questions together.
- ▲ After you've read a story together two or three times, skip a word or two. Ask your youngster to fill in the missing word or words. *Hint:* This works especially well with rhyming stories. ♥



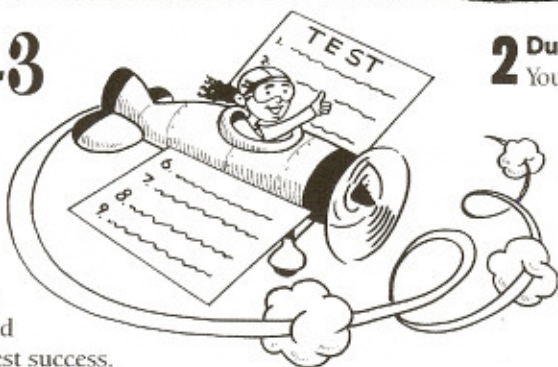
Testing 1-2-3

Even if your youngster is a good reader and writer, she may still have trouble when it comes to taking tests.

Preparing for tests, taking tests, and reviewing tests go hand in hand. Follow the tips below, and your child will be on her way to test success.

1 Before the test

Ask if your youngster's school offers sample tests. They are a great way to practice for both standardized and regular classroom tests. Sample tests help children become familiar with directions and what the test will look like.



2 During the test

Your child should always read the material carefully before she begins. Directions are important. If your child doesn't understand what to do, encourage her to ask the teacher to explain further.

3 After the test

Review the test results with your youngster. Discuss what went right and wrong. For example, did she run out of time? Next time, she might try answering the easier ones first, such as multiple choice.

Note: If you're concerned about your child's test results, talk with the teacher. She may suggest additional ways to help your youngster prepare for tests. ♥

Fun with Words

The category game

Here is a fun activity that will help develop your child's vocabulary.

Think of five categories, such as sports, machines, cars, flowers, and books. Write the categories on a piece of paper. Then, draw five blank lines under each one.



Next, ask your youngster to write down five words that are related to each category. *Example:* For sports, she could list baseball, basketball, hockey, rollerblading, and football. If she struggles to come up with a word, give her hints. For flowers, you might ask her, "What's the name of the flower Grandma showed you in her yard last week?"

What is your youngster studying in school? The planets, types of rocks, or famous people in Jamestown? Play the game using categories like these, and your child won't realize she's studying for her next quiz! ♥

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Q&A

Real writing

Q My son doesn't enjoy writing. He will write a few words, such as his spelling lists. But when it's time to write a paragraph or a story, he complains. Any ideas?

A Have your son try a few "real" writing tasks. It's often easier for kids to write about things that have meaning for them. This practice may encourage him to give those longer writing assignments a try. For example, he could:

- Write a thank-you note for a wonderful new gift.
- Pull out a favorite photograph and write a description of what is happening in the picture. Or he could write what he remembers about the day.
- Write lists of favorite songs, favorite characters in a movie, or ideas for his birthday. ♥



Parent to Parent

Simple reading practice

I've found a way to give my children reading practice—and improve their behavior at the same time. I write short notes to my kids and leave them around the house.

Sometimes I'll mention my youngsters' good behavior ("Thanks for helping with the dishes!") or write reminders ("Please hang me up. Signed, Your towel"). Sometimes the notes are about



not-so-good behavior. ("I was disappointed when you yelled at me. Can we talk about it?") I make sure to leave notes for treats, too ("Let's go fly your kite this afternoon!").

I look for unique places to put the notes, such as on their pillows, in front of the dog's water bowl, or pinned to the shower curtain. The kids enjoy discovering the notes and reading them aloud. ♥

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Sycamore Ridge School

Guiding Students for School Success

Build character & respect with everyday activities

Teaching children character requires more than sitting down and discussing it. It involves *living* with character. Although this is serious business, you can make it fun, too! Here's how:

- **Respect differences.** Show your interest in other cultures and ways of life. Try new kinds of food and music with your child.
- **Be generous.** Find ways to donate time or items to charity. Discuss how it feels to give. Consider why people say, "It's better to give than to receive."
- **Choose honesty.** When you are honest, it's easier for your child to be trustworthy, too: Tell the story of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." Talk about its meaning.
- **Role-play.** Ask your child to act out a sticky situation. For example, "Your friend asks if you like her new haircut. You're not sure. What can you say? Could you avoid lying?"
- **Work hard.** When you and your child face an unappealing task, set a timer. Agree to make progress during that time. See how much you can accomplish!
- **Make decisions.** Weigh options as a family, such as where to go out for dinner. List pros and cons. Help your child practice thinking things through. Ask for his opinion.



Source: "Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen," U.S. Department of Education, Office of Communications and Outreach, www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/citizen.pdf.

Request advice about homework

Homework time can be a discipline challenge. Parents are often confused about how involved to be.



If that's how you feel, ask the teacher for guidelines. "Should I help my child with homework?" "How much?" "Do you want me to correct mistakes with her?"

You will find that different teachers may have different approaches.

Your child is screaming for another cookie after you've already said *no*. You hand him one to keep the peace. No harm done, right? Wrong!

You may have bought five minutes of quiet, but you've set yourself up for future battles. You've just shown him that fussing works—if he screams long enough, he'll get what he wants. A better strategy? Make *no* mean *no*.



Form a parent-teacher discipline team

If your child acts up at school, let him face the music at home, too. That is, show him that you and his teacher are on the same team. For example, if he disrupts the class, the penalties shouldn't stop when he steps off the bus.

Try taking away some TV time or tonight's dessert. He may just get the message that you take his misbehavior seriously—*wherever* it occurs!



"A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started."

—Abraham Lincoln

You like me! You really like me!

Of course you want your child to like you, but that's no reason to cave in to her every whim. The reality is that there will be times when she's not crazy about you.

Think of how she balks when you make her do her homework or go to bed before midnight. Accept this reality and you'll be better able to discipline her firmly and fairly.

Source: Maggie Mamen, *The Pampered Child Syndrome*, ISBN: 1-84310-407-5 (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1-866-416-1078, www.jkpp.com).

Firm, Fair & Consistent®

October 2007

Use TV time wisely

According to experts, television is a major influence on today's kids. To monitor TV's effects, set limits on:

- **Time.** Choose reading, playing and family activities over TV. They are better ways to use your time.
- **Ads.** Many commercials are for unhealthy products. While kids sit around and watch TV, they may see confusing messages about food and other subjects.
- **Violence.** Children should not watch violent shows. This applies even if "good" characters use violence.

Keep in mind that all TV isn't bad. Many shows teach helpful lessons. So limit TV to one or two *educational* hours a day.

Source: "Television and the Family," American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org/family/tv1.htm.



Discipline is a long, long road

When it comes to disciplining your child, it's easy to lapse into a "Do this, don't do that" mode.



But remember: Discipline is a long, important process. It's not about quick fixes and it's not about punishing your child.

Discipline is about molding her into a responsible person with self-control. So be patient. Like any process, it takes time!

Source: Dr. Sal Severe, "Dr. Sal's Top 12 Parenting Tips," HowtoBehave.com, www.howtobehave.com/top12en.html.

Questions & Answers?

Q: I try to pick my battles when it comes to disciplining my child, but all of her misbehavior seems battle-worthy! How can I decide what's worth arguing over and what isn't?

A: With misbehavior, it can be tough to separate the truly bad from the annoying but harmless. When gauging your child's behavior, try using the five D's. Ask yourself whether what she's doing is:

1. **Dangerous.** Could her actions hurt her or someone else? For example, is she hitting her little brother?
 2. **Destructive.** Will something get broken if she keeps it up? Is she tossing a ball right next to the spinning ceiling fan?
 3. **Disruptive.** Are her actions interrupting those around her? Is she acting up while in a restaurant?
 4. **Disgusting.** Is she doing something disrespectful? Does she pick her nose or use foul language?
 5. **Developmentally inappropriate.** Is she behaving like a child half her age? Does she throw tantrums when things don't go her way?
- Now that you've rated your child's behavior, it's time to figure out what to do about it. Clearly, if she's doing something dangerous or destructive, you need to step in.



But for the other types of behavior—disruptive, disgusting or developmentally inappropriate—you should weigh the benefits of "going into battle."

If her actions are truly bothersome (if the teacher says she's disruptive in the classroom), she must be disciplined. But if she's just being mildly annoying, it may be worth ignoring the behavior—at least at first. If it continues, step in with appropriate discipline.

Source: Meme Hieneman, Karen Childs and Jane Sergay, *Parenting with Positive Behavior Support*, ISBN: 1-53766-865-5 (Paul H. Brookes, 1-800-638-3775, www.brookespublishing.com).

Simmering down can mean slimming down

Need one more reason not to come down too hard on your child? It could be bad for his waistline.

Research shows that too-strict parents are much more likely than more sensitive moms and dads to have overweight children. In other words, being reasonable with your child may not just improve his behavior—it may improve his health!

Source: "Yelling Makes Your Kids Fat," *The Washington Post*, June 6, 2006, The Washington Post Company, 202-334-6000, www.washingtonpost.com.

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THE SYCAMORE RIDGE PTA, DEL MAR UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A MEMBER OF THE NORTH COUNTY COASTAL COUNCIL AND NINTH DISTRICT OF THE CALIFORNIA CONGRESS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS (CCPTS).



Want an easy way to raise money for our school simply by purchasing the products you already buy? All you need to do is clip the pink and blue BoxTops from products such as: Avery office products, Kleenex, Ziploc, Nature Valley granola bars, General Mills cereal, Huggies diapers, Pillsbury, and so many more (see the BoxTops website for a complete list)! For every 10 BoxTops our school receives \$1.00! This year's goal is \$1,000 and I'm sure we will meet it if everyone clips their BoxTops! Look for collection sheets in your Wed. folder or collect them in a baggie to turn them in to the front office.

Are you an online shopper? Sycamore Ridge can now earn cashback from your online purchases through the BoxTops online marketplace. Barnes & Noble, Limited Too!, Target, Gap, Old Navy, Best Buy, Office Depot, PetSmart, and Nordstrom are just a few of the vendors who offer the cashback donation. All you need to do is register at BoxTops and shop through the BoxTops site. Our school will automatically receive a percentage of your purchase. To register for the BoxTops marketplace go to: www.BoxTops4Education.com.

Questions? Please contact Maia Starling: maia_starling@yahoo.com or 858-354-1183.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Red Ribbon Week- Volunteers are needed to put up ribbons and posters around the classrooms and school. Please contact Carrie Nydal for more information: cnydahl@san.rr.com.

Office Assistants -Volunteers are needed to do copying and other misc. tasks in school office. Training to be provided. If you are interested, please contact Shannon Cary: shancary@gmail.com.

Book Fair- Volunteers are needed to help set up & cashier during the Book Fair - Oct. 19-23. Please contact Julie Anderson at: janderso@san.rr.com.

Valet Program- Our children's safety is very important! Volunteers are needed to assist students getting out of cars in the front and back of the school in the morning between 7:40-8:00am. For more information, contact Shannon Cary: shancary@gmail.com

Reflections- Volunteers are needed to help collect submissions on October 15 from 7:45 -8:00am. Additional volunteers are needed to help mat and prepare submissions for judging. Please contact Eileen Lundquist: laiwing8@gmail.com

Phone-A-Thon- Del Mar Schools Education Foundation will be holding Phone-A-Thon on Nov. 16th. We are looking for volunteers to help take phone pledges. Please contact Branden Belford at: bbelford@san.rr.com

Stallion Sprinters- Parent volunteers are needed to assist with our running club which meets Tuesdays and Thursday 11:30am-12:15pm. Duties include tallying laps, filling water cups for runners, and encouraging the runners. Please contact Marie LeRose: marielerose@gmail.com

Sycamore Ridge Yearbook Photographers needed! -Are you one of those parents who love to snap away at school events? If so, we need you! Please contact Lisa Blazer, Sycamore Ridge PTA Historian, at ldblazer@san.rr.com to learn how to submit photos for our school yearbook.

eScrip

Do you want to give FREE money to Sycamore Ridge? It is so easy! Just register for eScrip! eScrip is a free program where VONS and other participating merchants contribute a percentage of your purchases directly to the school. eScrip can contribute thousands of dollars through parents just shopping as usual! If you don't know your VONS card number, please call 1-877-723-3929, and VONS will supply you with the number. When you know your VONS club Number, please go online to www.escrip.com and register!! Our group name is "Sycamore Ridge PTA" and our Group ID # is 500002133.

If you have any questions or if you don't yet have a VONS card, feel free to contact the Sycamore Ridge eScrip coordinator, Branden Belford, at bbelford@san.rr.com

Stallion Q & A: Answers for parents about the Stallion way of life.

Do you have a question about how things work at Sycamore Ridge? Confused about fundraisers, programs, academics? In an effort to better serve parents (new and old), the PTA offers a question & answer column. Simply email your question to Maia Starling at: maia_starling@yahoo.com and she will respond to you in a timely manner. Questions may then be published in the next newsletter (names omitted) to help better inform other parents