

November

Bobcats of the Month

Kennedy Eggleston & Paige Feddersen

If they get done with their assignment early, they would always ask if they could help me do anything. If I had something that they could help me with they never complained about what I gave them to do. Mrs. Gaffney



Camden Gorsuch & Sklyer Dvorak

They have been great participants during character lessons and have been insightful. - Mrs. Jesspeh



Caleb Furrow

Caleb always has a smile on his face, a high five to give out, participates in class, is kind in the hallway, and his art is wonderful too. - Mrs.

Donegan



October 28, 2025

Superintendent's Corner

This month's corner is an article about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. For anyone who has taken an entry level psychology class you might remember how the end goal is self-actualization. The state where we are fully capable of reaching our ultimate potential. But, there are levels that must be met before we can reach the top of the pyramid. The first of which are the basic needs of life (warmth, food, safety, etc.) If you are hungry you cannot even think about becoming your best self. You are just worried about how to find your next meal. Next you have to have connections (friends, families, mentors, etc.). A person has to feel they matter to other people. The stage above connection is self-worth. If we have all that we need to live and feel safe and we have connections with people that we care about and who care about us we start to build our identity and we can be proud of who we are. All of this leads to the kind of an impact we can have on the world around us. So, what does this have to do with a school you might ask?

As a school we don't get measured by actualization we get an AQUESTT score from the state of Nebraska. How well are you doing as a school and I think by proxy how well is our community doing at creating competent capable young adults? The results of our 24-25 school year will be made available in the coming month. But, like Maslow's Hierarchy, we have to take care of all the lower levels of the pyramid in order to reap the benefits of the top levels. A student who is cold and hungry can't learn long division. A student who is bullied can't read and remember a good book. Students who walk through the hall feeling alone in the world and thinking that no one cares about them are not going to score well on any test.

Callaway as a community and Callaway as a school are very similar to all the communities in our area. We have students with addiction issues, we have children from broken families, we have students whose families are experiencing extreme poverty. So the challenges are there, but here is where we may differ a little from our surrounding area. Callaway has an incredible support system in place thanks to the efforts and resources of people that make our small town what it is. An active food pantry, great church families, and silent donors that step in when needed have a direct and positive impact on the education of all of our students. Especially, our students who are experiencing the kind of struggles that keep them on the lower levels of Maslow's Hierarchy.

When our AQUESTT scores come out I am confident that we are going to be very proud of our standing. I think it is important to make sure we give credit where credit is due for our success and improvements. Kids always have a greater impact on kids than any other group and we have great kids. When your peer group is made up of supportive, motivated, and successful kids you are going to succeed. At CPS we have teachers that teach much more than just their subject. I love that our teachers emphasize the life skills that go way beyond their subject area. Our teachers have done a tremendous job of establishing the standards that defines what it means to be Callaway Public Schools. But mostly YOU. Callaway, I think you are making our school a great place for kids to thrive. The secret to not letting kids slip through the cracks is to create a community with no cracks. Keep up the good work!

Helping Children Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



November 2025

Find out how your child is doing at a parent-teacher conference

A parent-teacher conference offers you something different from many other school activities for families: one-on-one time with the teacher. It is dedicated time to focus on your individual child's strengths and needs, and to discuss plans and expectations for the year ahead.

For the best results from your conference:



- **Chat with your child in advance.** Ask how school is going. Is there is anything your child would like you to ask or tell the teacher?
- **Write down a list of things to tell the teacher.** You are the expert on your child and your family. Sharing information will make it easier for the teacher to meet your child's needs.
- **Make a note of questions to ask,** such as: *Is my child meeting expectations for reading and math skills? Does my child participate in class? Does my child interact with others appropriately and have friends?*
- **Arrive on time.** Teachers usually schedule conferences back to back.
- **Discuss next steps.** Ask the teacher how you can reinforce what your child is learning. Agree on a plan to address any issues.
- **Tell your child** about your meeting. Share praise, and explain plans you and the teacher agreed on.



Independent play is worth the time

Research shows that playing independently can help children learn to solve problems and overcome fears—and ease stress at the same time. To help your child benefit from independent play:

- **Make time for it.** Balance structured activities in your child's day with unstructured play time.
- **Give your child** a variety of things to play with, such as cardboard boxes, blocks, art supplies and props for pretend play. Choose toys your child can use creatively, in many different ways. Items from nature like acorns and shells are also inspiring choices.
- **Support your child** in taking positive "risks," such as climbing a low playground rock wall, or balancing while walking on a fallen log. These experiences can boost confidence and willingness to try.
- **Let your child** decide what to play with and how.

Source: "All work, no independent play' cause of children's declining mental health," Florida Atlantic University.

Offer cooperation practice

In school and in life, your child will be expected to cooperate with others. To reinforce this skill at home, establish rules for sharing and taking turns fairly, such as "If one child chooses the game, the other gets the first turn." Have family members take turns making decisions for the whole family sometimes, such as what movie to watch or what vegetable to eat for dinner.



Support reading progress

Students read to learn. To be successful, they must continually develop and maintain their reading skills as they go through school. To encourage reading skill-building:

- **Make real-life connections.** Have your child read about historical events that happened near your home.
- **Help your child start a book club** with friends. They can meet up for book-related discussions and activities.
- **Read more advanced books aloud.** Listening lets your child enjoy more challenging stories and words.

Foster grateful feelings

Research links gratitude with increased motivation, engagement and achievement in school. To foster this feeling, take time often as a family to make and share lists of what you're thankful for. Be sure to mention school and any progress your child is making. Then, encourage your child to say "Thanks" to the people who are making school a positive experience.



Source: R.B. King and J.A.B. Datu, "Grateful students are motivated, engaged, and successful in school: Cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental evidence," *Journal of School Psychology*, Elsevier.



What can I do to find out about my child's school life?

Q: We're a few months into the school year, and I feel out of touch as far as assignments and test schedules go. How can I stay up-to-date without seeming nosy? Should I just leave these things up to my child?

A: You're not being nosy—you're being engaged! Staying aware of what is going on at school is important. To get the information you need:

- **Ask your child** for regular updates on each class. If your student doesn't want to talk about them every day, set aside 15 minutes for a weekly chat. Knowing you are going to ask may motivate your child to keep track. And if a problem is brewing, your child has a built-in time to tell you about it.
- **Read school communications** for families. In addition to letters home, check the website, family portal, social media, emails, etc. If you need help accessing them, ask the office staff.
- **Ask your middle schooler's teachers** if there is a class website or other method for learning about activities in their class.
- **Attend school events and workshops** when you can. You can connect with school staff and other families, and find out more about what is going on at school.



Are you teaching social media safety?

Social media platforms like YouTube, Tik Tok, Snapchat and Instagram are popular with many middle schoolers—and that comes with risk. Are you reinforcing safe rules for social media use? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Do you check** your child's privacy settings regularly and discuss the dangers of sharing specific personal data?
2. **Do you talk** about why your child should not post or share inappropriate photos or hurtful comments?
3. **Do you explain** that people online may not be who they say they are, and it is not OK to meet them without you?
4. **Do you insist** that your child alert you to hurtful or scary posts by others?
5. **Do you say** that you will monitor your child's online activity from time to time?

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are helping your child learn to use social media responsibly. For each no, try that idea.

"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life's all about."

—Angela Schwindt

Enrich everyday activities with a little math practice

Building your child's comfort with math is as easy as working it into activities you already do together. To work on:

- **Measurement**, have your child calculate the area of a room, double a recipe, measure books for a new shelf, etc.
- **Arithmetic**, give your child a grocery receipt. Ask, "How much did we spend today on vegetables?"
- **Statistics**, have your child read graphs in news articles and interpret them.



Foster a healthy body image

Many adolescents don't like what they see in the mirror—and that can have a negative impact on their school performance. To help your child have a positive body image:

- **Discuss the changes** puberty brings.
- **Focus on fitness**, not weight.
- **Don't criticize people's bodies** or appearance—or your own.
- **Suggest unfollowing** social media that makes your child feel unattractive.

Source: S. Gregg, "Positive Body Image: Why It Matters, How to Help Students," UA News Center, University of Alabama.

Offer support that counts

Feeling supported at home helps students do their best in school. In a survey, middle schoolers said they'd like their families to:

- **Show interest** in their schoolwork.
- **Listen to them** when they talk.
- **Offer guidance** without lecturing about mistakes.
- **Notice when they do** things right.

Source: A. Jackson and others, *Making the Most of Middle School: A Field Guide for Parents and Others*, Teachers College Press.

Helping Students Learn®

Published in English and Spanish, September through May.

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.

Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Alison McLean.

Translations Editor: Victoria Gaviola.

Copyright © 2025, The Parent Institute®,

a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.

P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525 • www.parent-institute.com