

Best Practices for Learning Support Resources

1) Specific to each individual child. It's fine to send home general tip sheets, but sometimes parents have trouble choosing what activities and strategies are relevant for their individual child. If you send home only one activity, but link it to how it will help a child reach his or her individual goal, parents are more likely to do it.

2) Tie the learning support tips to student goals and data. Learning support tips will be more effective if they aren't shared in a vacuum. Tying them to student goals and data helps families see the reason why these skills are important and how practicing them serves a larger purpose. This means sending these tips and tools home with a data report, or sharing at conferences or during personal conversations on student performance to help parents make the connection between these strategies and students reaching their goals.

3) Modeling matters. If you can show parents how to do a certain activity, through YouTube videos, mini-lessons, or in-person modeling, then they are more likely to be able to perform the activity with confidence. If you do this in person, you can check for parent understanding rather than wondering if parents know how to do what you're sending home.

4) Provide resources and tools. The easier you make it for kids and families to do activities at home, the more likely that they will do them. Creating a "learning supply bag" takes a little bit of extra time, but you can be assured that parents will really spend the extra time you're asking them to spend on helping their kids practice skills. And tools don't have to be expensive or time-consuming. See our list of resources and tools below.

Online Resources

1) Books. Download free books and comprehension activities at Readinga-z.com. Go to the site and click on "Free Samples" in the upper right corner. The books and activities are leveled on the Reading A-Z scale, but you can check the compatibility guide for the Fountas & Pinnell scale.

2) Math websites. There are many, many websites out there that allow kids and families to practice math for free. These are some of the best. And remember, don't just send out links to websites—tell families which activities and games to use each day or week to support what their child is working on in class or to reinforce skills he or she is struggling with. In many of the schools we work with, our families may not have internet at home. You can still print or download resources from these sites to send home to these families.

- [APlusmath](http://www.aplusmath.com/) - <http://www.aplusmath.com/>

This site has flashcards you can print for families and kids to practice math facts at home. It also has great games that kids can use to practice the basic operations. The interface is a little cluttered, so make sure you send home clear directions or model for your parents what you want them to do and how to get to the games and flashcards part of the site.

- [HonorPoint](http://www.honorpoint.com) - www.honorpoint.com

This site is focused entirely on multiplication but has tables, review and timed online drills. It's very user-friendly.

- [Coolmath](http://www.coolmath4kids.com/) - <http://www.coolmath4kids.com/> or <http://www.coolmath4kids.com/math-for-little-kids.html> for kids ages 3-5.

This site has great, user-friendly explanations of mathematical concepts. You can ask parents and students to click through them together. The site has lots of content, including really distracting games, so be very specific and provide links and rationale for what you want families to look at.

3) Listening to books and words. If parents have trouble with written materials, show them how to use <http://www.starfall.com/>. If they click on "I'm reading" on the home page, the computer can read them several stories and they can follow along. It's a great way for kids and families to practice comprehension questions together.

4) Modeling videos. Try <http://www.khanacademy.org/#browse>. Right now, this website is geared mostly toward older students and the videos focus on math, science, and economics. However, the site will be building its video library over the next couple of years to include more literacy materials and materials for younger students. If you are looking for a video of what a particular skill looks like and how to do it, see if you can find it in this library and share it with parents before you create a video yourself.