



National Association for the Education of Young Children

1509 16th St. N.W. Washington DC 20036-1426

202-232-8777 800-424-2460

Fax 202-328-1826

www.naeyc.org

Your child's first report card

When a child starts elementary school, parents may feel anxious and excited about how their child is doing in school and how to support his learning. If your child attended preschool, a report card is similar to a progress report your child may have received. For children who did not attend preschool, this might be the first time parents will receive a report on your child's progress. Progress reports and report cards are great opportunities to learn about your child's strengths and identify any areas he may need help with. They can serve as a way to continue communicating with your child's teacher and to share your own observations about your child's skills and interests. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) offers suggestions for parents to prepare for this benchmark in school.

Take time for ongoing discussions with both your child and his teacher about what is going on in class. Ideally, you know how your child is doing in school, and report cards serve as a periodic review of progress.

- Talk with your child each day about class assignments, what she did, and what she learned.
- Communicate with your child's teacher on a regular basis. This might be done through a phone call or email. Some teachers provide informal feedback between report cards, such as a portfolio of a child's schoolwork.
- Share with your child the information you receive from the teacher throughout the year. Talk about the things she does well and those skills she's just beginning to develop.
- Offer specific praise and encouragement on your child's work. This will help your child recognize the skills that he has, build a sense of confidence, and motivate him to continue focusing on his school work

Know when report cards come out and prepare with your child. Remember your child may not know what report cards are or why she is getting one.

- Discuss the purpose of the report card and what the grades or comments mean.

- Encourage your child to tell you how he thinks he's doing in school at all times, and especially before the report card comes.
- Talk with your child about her skills. Point out what she can do already and things she is just learning.
- Use the information to acknowledge strengths and areas you and her teacher will help her to improve.

Take an active role in your child's school all year around.

- Get to know your child's teacher; attend parent-teacher conferences and other school sponsored parent activities.
- Ask the teacher what criteria are used to determine children's progress—class participation, tests, homework assignments, portfolios, or other methods. Ask to see this information between report cards.
- Check the school calendar for report card dates and other school events.
- Contact the teacher whenever you don't understand grades or policies.

Invest time in your child's education outside school.

- Foster her interest in learning through educational experiences that allow your child to gain hands-on learning about in topics that interest her.
- Read to and with your child every day.
- Limit time spent watching television or playing video and computer games.
- Establish a family routine. This includes time for homework and studying, as well as eating meals, doing chores, playing with friends, and going to bed at a set time.

Use these tips at report card times and throughout the year to track your child's progress and seek help as needed. Stay involved in your child's education and help her succeed in school! Early Years Are Learning Years is a regular series from NAEYC (www.naeyc.org) providing families with tips for giving their young children a great start on learning.