

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK

Research shows clearly that children are more likely to succeed in learning when their families actively support them. When family members read with their children, talk with their teachers, participate in school or other learning activities and help them with homework, they give children a tremendous advantage.

Homework has been part of students' lives since the beginning of formal schooling in the United States. It is important because it can improve children's thinking and memory. It can help them to develop positive study skills and habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. It can encourage them to use time well, to learn independently and to take responsibility for their work.

Helping children with their homework benefits families as well. It can, for example, be a way for families to learn more

about what their children are learning in school and an opportunity for them to communicate both with their children and with teachers and principals. Your interest in your children's education can spark their enthusiasm and lead them to understand that learning can be rewarding and is well worth the effort.

Before discussing ways that you can help your child with homework, it is important to discuss why teachers assign homework and how it benefits your child. Teachers assign homework for many reasons. Homework can help their students:

- review and practice what they've covered in class
- get ready for the next day's class
- learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials and computer web sites to find information about a subject

- explore subjects more fully than classroom time permits
- extend learning by applying skills they already have to new situations
- integrate their learning by applying many different skills to a single task, such as book reports or science projects.

Homework also can help students to develop good study habits and positive attitudes. It can:

- teach them to work independently
- encourage self-discipline and responsibility (assignments provide some children with their first chance to manage time and to meet deadlines).

How to Help: Show That You Think Education and Homework Are Important

Children need to know that their family

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LEGISLATORS GET CLOSE LOOK AT LIFE SPAN RESEARCH

By David McKinney/University Relations

A key group of Kansas legislators toured the Life Span Institute Jan. 22 to see first-hand how groundbreaking research is tackling critical issues related to child development, disability and aging.

Senior scientists in gerontology, communication disorders and assistive technology were among those who presented their research to 16 members of the House and Senate at the Dole Center for Human Development on the KU campus. The tour was organized by the Life Span Institute and the Provost's office to show how research in the neurosciences and related areas at

KU directly benefits the lives of Kansans.

Specific research projects presented included a demonstration of a non-invasive method of measuring brain activity when an individual hears a spoken sentence; a demonstration of the Actifier and NTrainer, developed at KU, which diagnoses and trains premature infants with no or poor sucking ability to suck normally; a test to determine how aging affects the ability to do two things at once; a presentation on accelerated weight loss as a marker of Alzheimer's disease and a presentation of a model statewide system in Kansas to deliver assistive technol-

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HELPING WITH HOMEWORK

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members think homework is important. If they know their families care, children have a good reason to complete assignments and to turn them in on time. You can do many things to show that your child that you value education and homework.

Set a Regular Time for Homework

Having a regular time to do homework helps children to finish assignments. The best schedule is one that works for your child and your family. What works well in one household may not work in another. Of course, a good schedule depends in part on your child's age as well as her specific needs. For instance, one child may do homework best in the afternoon, completing homework first or after an hour of play and another may do it best after dinner. However, don't let your child leave homework to do just before bedtime.

Pick a Place

Your child's homework area doesn't have to be fancy. A desk in the bedroom is nice, but for many children, the kitchen table or a corner of the living room works just fine. The area should have good lighting and it should be fairly quiet.

Remove Distractions

Turn off the TV and discourage your child from making and receiving social telephone

calls during homework time. (A call to a classmate about an assignment, however, may be helpful.) If you live in a small or noisy household, try having all family members take part in a quiet activity during homework time.

Set a Good Example

Show your child that the skills he is learning are an important part of the things he will do as an adult. Let him see you reading books, newspapers and computer screens; writing reports, letters, e-mails and lists; using math to balance your checkbook or to measure for new carpeting; doing other things that require thought and effort. Tell your child about what you do at work.

Be Interested and Interesting

Make time to take your child to the library to check out materials needed for homework (and for enjoyment) and read with your child as often as you can. Talk about school and learning activities in family conversations. Ask your child what was discussed in class that day. If she doesn't have much to say, try another approach. For example, ask her to read aloud a story she wrote or to talk about what she found out from a science experiment.

Taken from *Helping Your Child with Homework*. For the full text of this article, please visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/homework.pdf>

BNCD INVESTIGATOR PROFILE

Nancy Brady, Ph.D., BNCD Investigator as well as associate professor for the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies. Dr. Brady studies the development of communication and language in young children and in individuals with developmental disabilities. Her research has focused on describing development of gestures and prespeech vocalizations, beginning augmentative communication use, and negotiations of conversational breakdowns. Her research interests include the development of prelinguistic communication in children with develop-

mental disabilities, communication interventions for children with developmental disabilities, how children with developmental disabilities use gestures, augmentative communication, and communication in children with fragile X syndrome. In addition, Dr. Brady holds the associate editor position for the *American Journal of Speech, Language, Hearing*.



BNCD Notables

- **Steve Warren; BNCD** Investigator, director of the Life Span Institute, and director of the Kansas Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Center; was recently named the vice provost for research and graduate studies at KU. Warren has been the interim vice provost for research and graduate studies since August. Warren was selected for the research and graduate studies position after a KU committee conducted a nationwide search.
- **Holly Storkel, BNCD** Investigator and associate professor of speech-language-hearing, was a recipient of the W.T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence award. The Kemper Fellowship was established in 1989 and recognizes outstanding teachers and advisors at KU.
- **John Colombo; BNCD** Investigator, professor of psychology and associate director for cognitive neuroscience of the Life Span Institute; and **Steve Warren** are members of the new Work Group Executive Committee. The Life Span Institute has recently formed a Work Group on Autism Research and Training aimed at getting a permanent center dedicated to autism research and training. A permanent autism center would help expand KU's externally funded autism research to assist the state with providing effective services for individuals with Autism spectrum disorders and their families.

Upcoming Events for Parents and Kids!



St. Patrick's Day Parade:

Annual parade, March 17th, featuring floats, bands, bagpipers and the St. Patrick's Day Queen and her court. Parade begins at 1 p.m. in Lawrence at 11th & Massachusetts - travels north across the Kansas River Bridge. There is no charge for this event.

Call: (785) 749-6677

The Sound of Science:

The KU Natural History Museum is offering the opportunity to make some noise as we explore the world of sound through hands-on activities and live demonstrations. Discover what sound waves look like, how they travel, how animals use sound and much more. Happening March 18th - March 22nd, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Suggested contribution: \$3 adults, \$2 children. Parking is available in the garage north of the Kansas Union.

Call: (785) 864-4173 or

See: www.nhm.ku.edu

Earth Day Parade:

April 18th is Earth Day! The parade will start in Lawrence in Watson Park and travel down Mass St. ending in South Park. There, the celebration will begin! Parade begins at 11 a.m. - South Park Celebration at 11:30 a.m. No charge for this event.

Call: (785) 832-3026

"What Do You Want to Hear?":

Come to Crown Center to hear stories about a race car driver, a fireman, a zoo trainer, an astronaut, and more! Happening multiple days through March. For dates and times:

Call: (816) 274-8444 or

See: www.crowncenter.com

Easter Bunny Visits Crown Center:

On March 15-16th and 21st-22nd, from 12-4 p.m. the Easter Bunny will be at Crown Center. For more information:

Call: (816) 274-8444 or

See: www.crowncenter.com

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie:

April 22nd-May 17th, Union Station is presenting a play based on the popular book by Laura Joffe Numberoff, following a tiny mouse through his hilarious mishaps and mayhems through his attempt to get a cookie. For times and prices:

Call: (816) 460-2020 or

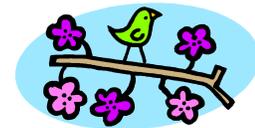
See: www.unionstation.org

The Dangerous and Daring Exhibit for Kids:

May 1st-Aug. 31st visit the Toy & Miniature Museum in Kansas City, MO to experience the exhibit based on "The Dangerous Book for Boys" and soon to be released "The Daring Book for Girls," this exhibit is sure to provide thrills and adventures for its visitors. For times and prices:

Call: (816) 333-9328 or

See: www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org



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ogy throughout the state, including remote areas.

Steven Warren, [BNCD Investigator], director of the Life Span Institute and vice chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, presented an overview of several research projects underway that address serious health issues in Kansas, including autism, obesity and Alzheimer's disease.

Scientists affiliated with Life Span who demonstrated their research included Steven M. Barlow, [BNCD Investigator] professor and director, Communication Neuroscience Laboratories; David K. Johnson, assistant professor of psychology and gerontology; Susan Kemper, [BNCD Investigator and] Roberts Distinguished Professor of Psychology; Mabel Rice,

Distinguished Professor and Director, Merrill Center for Advanced Studies [and BNCD Center] and Sara Sack, senior scientist and director of Assistive Technology for Kansans.

Legislators who attended were Rep. Bob Bethell, Alden; Rep. Tom Burroughs, Kansas City; Rep. David Crum, Augusta; Sen. Marci Francisco, Lawrence; Rep. Tom Hawk, Manhattan; Rep. Jerry Henry, Cummings; Rep. Peggy Mast, Emporia; Rep. Jo Ann Pottorff, Wichita; Rep. Marc Rhoades, Newton; Sen. Vicki Schmidt, Topeka; Sen. Dwayne Umbarger, Thayer; Rep. Kay Wolf, Prairie Village, and Rep. Kevin Yoder, Olathe. Also attending was Nikki Feuerborn, chief of staff to the chairman of the House Ap-

ropriations Committee.

University officials included Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Richard Lariviere.

The Life Span Institute is one of the largest research and development programs in the nation for the prevention and treatment of developmental disabilities. The Institute includes 12 centers [including the BNCD] and more than 120 programs and projects located on the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses and in Kansas City, Kansas and Parsons.

This article can also be viewed online at <http://www.oread.ku.edu/2008/february/4/close-look.shtml>

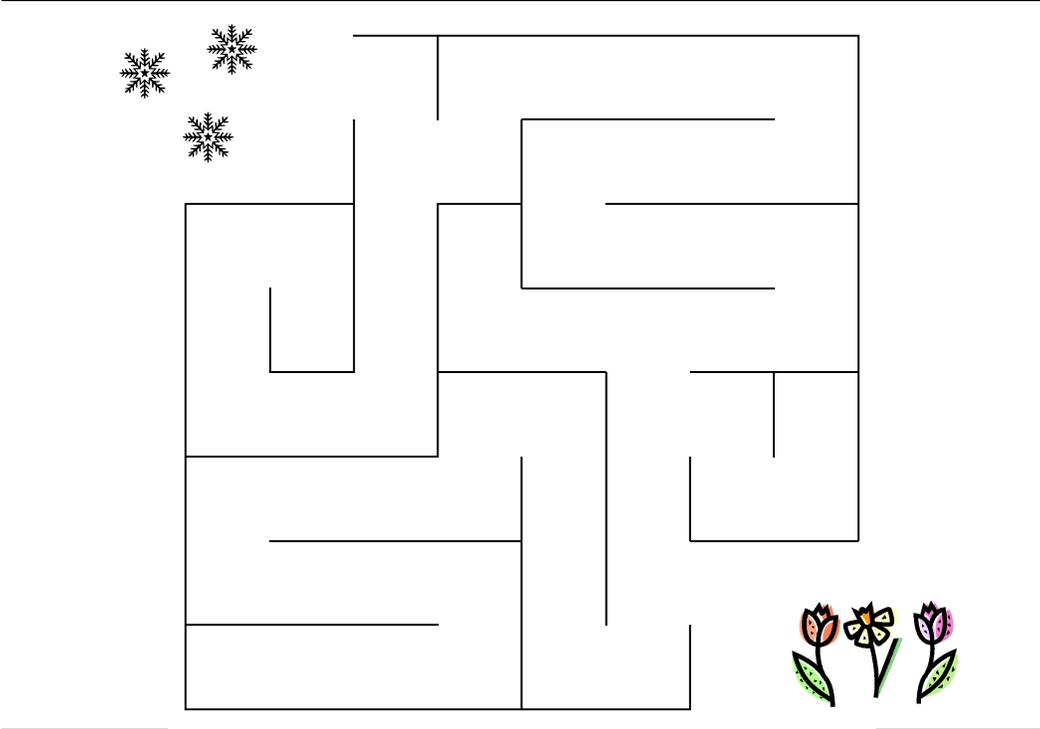
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About this Newsletter:

The BNCD newsletter is designed to keep you informed about the ongoing research projects that are being conducted by BNCD researchers at the University of Kansas. Participants who have been part of recent research projects conducted by BNCD researchers, parents who have expressed interest in participating in future research, and individuals from organizations such as schools and daycare centers that have an interest in BNCD studies will receive this newsletter from time to time to keep them up-to-date about the research activities at the BNCD. If you do not wish to receive future newsletters, please call or e-mail the BNCD to have your name removed from our list. Research at the BNCD is supported in part by grant number 5 P30 DC05803 from the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) at the University of Kansas.

Find the path from Winter to Spring!



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