

# Ways to Spend Time With Your Student

## *Talking and Listening*

- Take turns describing yourselves and your interests.
- Talk about likes, dislikes, career options, friendship/friends, TV shows, family pets, travels, hobbies, school, sports, heroes, games, pets, favorite movies, and special occasions.
- Make up stories; record them in a journal.
- Set goals together.
- Practice problem solving together.
- Suggest small steps in new, more difficult tasks.
- Plan to watch a television show (independently) and plan to discuss the characters, the values, and the story at your next meeting.
- Discuss reality versus fiction—use examples from books, TV and movies.
- Remember special occasions (cards). Emphasize how much you value the student.
- Discuss future plans. Imagine your future.

## *Reading*

- Visit the school library together.
- Read: a book, each reading a paragraph or page  
the same book and share your thoughts about it  
books on job seeking, interviewing, self-confidence  
poetry and talk about why you like different kinds  
newspapers and look for special features – comics, sports, current events  
magazines (bring one from home, if you like) and discuss  
magazines and focus on the pictures, how they differ, why
- Find out the child's special interest and check out books on that subject.
- Open a dictionary to any page and read new words. Make up new word games.

## *Writing*

- Write a journal together and add to it every time you visit throughout the year.
- Write short stories or your autobiographies.
- Compile a wish list; a “Things To Do” list.
- Describe “What I want to be when I grow up...”
- Write letters to each other – being a pen pal gives the child practice in writing. If asking the child to mail anything to you, provide envelopes and stamps.

## ***Improving Academic Skills***

- Play Memory, Sequence, Chess, and other games to enhance concentration skills.
- Play Hangman and other word games to improve your vocabulary.
- Make up your own crossword puzzles with spelling words.
- Play math games with flash cards.
- Use globes, atlases and maps to learn more about Texas, the United States, the World and the Universe.
- Use the computer lab, if available.
- Problem solve together.
- Give students assistance with academics when asked.
- You may help organize schoolwork – check materials, check for adequate and handy school supplies.
- Help keep track of homework and offer to check when it is completed. Practice taking notes together.
- Review calendars (days and months) and time in which to complete work.

## ***Just For Fun***

- Do arts and crafts (draw, color, cut and paste, use clay).
- Take a tour inside the school, act out a story.
- Sing a song or play an instrument.
- Play word games, e.g., “I’m going on a trip and I’m going to take a…” or “I spy…”
- Play board games – for fun, not just to win.
- Draw and play mazes. Put puzzles together.
- Collect and share stamps, postcards or pictures.
- Take photos and keep an album.
- Attend special school functions with student, e.g., be aware of assemblies and field trips.
- Design and do a project together. Give recognition for effort or improvement.

## ***Fun Outdoors***

- Take a nature walk around the campus.
- Eat lunch at a picnic table in an area of the school where tables are available; plan a special brown bag day and **bring a picnic lunch** for both of you.
- Play catch on the playground with a softball or baseball; toss a football; shoot baskets; kick a soccer ball.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from materials submitted by Allison Elementary. Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas.