

**Midland Park Public Schools**  
**K-6 Student Handbook**



**2014-2015**

## MIDLAND PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

*The Midland Park School District as part of a strong, dedicated community, provides students with a comprehensive, adaptive education in a positive environment by maximizing all resources and empowering them to realize their individual worth and responsibility with the expectation that all students achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels.*

### **THE K-6 CURRICULUM, THE NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS and THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards were first adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996. The standards describe what students should know and be able to do upon completion of a thirteen-year public education. Revised every five years, the standards provide local school districts with clear and specific benchmarks for student achievement in nine content areas:

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- Language Arts Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages
- Technological Literacy
- Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills

Developed by panels of teachers, administrators, parents, students and representatives from higher education, business and the community, the standards were influenced by national standards, research based practice and student need. The standards define a “thorough and efficient education” as guaranteed in 1875 by the New Jersey Constitution. Complete copies of these standards are available in the school offices and at the public library.

All of the standards can also be found on the Department of Education’s web site: [www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education). All districts in New Jersey are expected to address all of these standards through their curriculum. Each student’s progress toward achieving these standards is measured by state-wide assessment tests presently scheduled to be administered in grades 3 – 8 and grade 11.

Midland Park Public Schools are committed to ensuring that all district curriculums meet and exceed the state standards. A plan is in place to ensure that all district curricula are aligned with the Core Standards and that teachers are receiving ongoing support and

guidance in implementing the standards through the district's ambitious program of professional development. All district curricula are routinely assessed for effectiveness and relevancy and are revised to reflect the best educational practices and strategies.

The K-6 students are exposed to the different standards throughout their daily activities, both formally and informally. Midland Park's commitment to providing a well-rounded, multi-model approach to learning incorporates all of the standards to help our students become valuable contributors to society in the future.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In 2010, New Jersey adopted the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Math. Building on the excellent foundation of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, the Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. We are currently utilizing the Common Core State Standards for Language Arts and Mathematics, and will follow the state guidelines for implementation across other content areas. The Standards can be found on the Common Core State Standards Initiative's web site: [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

## **LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

The Language Arts program encompasses reading, writing, listening/speaking and language, as outlined in the Common Core Standards. The understandings and skills of each element of the Language Arts program are not isolated, but integrated, interactive and embedded in all subject areas across the curriculum.

Our elementary literacy instruction is literature based and follows wise practice in a balanced approach that includes modeled reading/ writing, shared reading/ writing, guided reading/writing and independent reading/ writing . This approach provides students with the necessary tools to use oral language successfully, to read and comprehend print, and to write with clarity, purpose, and for a variety of audiences.

In grades K-5 we have adopted *Journey's* Reading program by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, to supplement our reading curriculum. This program is completely aligned with the Common Core Standards and provides teachers with instructional, as well as assessment, tools for the classroom. We also utilize Fountas and Pinnell leveled reading books and assessment tools as part of our on-going reading assessments.

**CORE STANDARDS IN LANGUAGE LITERACY****Reading**

- Foundational Skills: Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition & Fluency
- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

**Writing**

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

**Speaking and Listening**

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

**Language**

- Conventions of Standard English
- Knowledge of Language
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

**MATHEMATICS**

The purpose of the district mathematics program is to provide young students with experiences that will allow them to develop mathematical reasoning and acquire basic mathematical concepts and skills. The primary curriculum makes widespread use of manipulatives (concrete objects) for deeper understanding. The curriculum is designed to provide students with growth in competencies essential to mathematical growth. As they learn mathematics, they will develop increasingly sophisticated problem-solving skills, a range of mathematical “habits of mind,” and increasing sophistication in mathematical reasoning. In addition, students will become increasingly proficient in oral and written mathematical expression, as they gain fluency in the language of mathematics and ability to make connections within mathematics.

Beginning in 2012, our K-6 mathematics instruction was supplemented with *Go Math*, by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. This program is fully aligned with the Common Core Standards as outlined below.

## **COMMON CORE STANDARDS IN MATHEMATICS**

The following are Standards for Mathematical Practice that all educators should seek to develop in their students. These practices are important “processes and proficiencies” which should be combined with Standards for Mathematical Content.

### **Standards for Mathematical Practice**

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- Model with mathematics.
- Use appropriate tools strategically.
- Attend to precision.
- Look for and make use of structure.
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

### **Standards for Mathematical Content**

- Counting and Cardinality
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
- Number and Operations in Base Ten
- Measurement and Data
- Geometry

## **SCIENCE**

The goal of the district science program is to stimulate and challenge the students at an early age in order to enable them to achieve scientific literacy. All students engage in science experiences that promote the ability to ask, find or determine answers to questions derived from natural curiosity about everyday things and occurrences. Through problem solving, decision-making, and critical thinking, students will gain the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes.

The program focuses on the four major strands of science: physical, life, earth, and health. These strands are vertically articulated throughout the grade levels. Further embedded in the program is the belief and practice that students must experience science and scientific processes, such as planning, predicting, observing, classifying, measuring, comparing, interpreting, analyzing, and communicating their ideas. This is done through adherence to the scientific method and the use of experiments. The

premise being that science is experienced as an active process in which inquiry is central to learning. The program is enhanced by providing a strong contextual background to the experiments, including appropriate content delivered in a multimedia fashion through the use of textbooks, equipment kits, videos, CD ROMs, interactive websites, and science center connection kits..

In keeping with a focus on context, science is presented in connection with other subject disciplines and as an authentic part of our everyday lives and our real world. Students will be led to examine the world around them and to come to understand how science is an active part of that world, including the prevalence of scientific careers. It is our belief that as students explore, discover, and come to understand science fully, it becomes for them a fun and engaging subject relevant to all areas of their lives.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES**

The social studies curriculum is an important part of each child's education. Through it, we hope to instill a sense of purpose for them in their community and in the world. In the primary and intermediate grades, the study of communities is the beginning of a child's awareness of the relationship between family and school. We hope to create within the child a consideration of their immediate physical environment and that of the larger world. The students utilize basic map and globe skills to locate places both near and far.

To broaden the students' understanding of the customs of their own culture and the cultures of other countries, the students exchange knowledge and learn about a variety of American and multi-cultural holidays. They identify some symbols of American culture and those of other countries. The students also recognize famous men and women who have had an impact on our nation and world.

Educators utilize a variety of resources, such as the Houghton Mifflin text series, to implement the social studies curriculum. Materials from the district's language arts programs are often integrated into social studies lessons. Readings from child-friendly newspapers and periodicals also reinforce important social studies topics and current events. Guest speakers are invited to share their experiences with the children. Technology is also used within the classroom to promote learning. Computer programs, streaming videos, CD ROMs, videos, audiotapes and other manipulatives bring social studies topics to life for the children.

### **THE ARTS**

We believe that an education in visual and performing arts is an essential part of the primary grade curriculum. Through art and music activities, children practice a wide range of skills significant to many aspects of life and work. Indeed, arts education has the potential to make an important contribution to a child's intellectual, social and emotional disciplines. The arts provide children with a powerful means to communicate

ideas, thoughts and feelings. Exposure to art and music enriches understanding of human experience across cultures and histories, and speaks positively about the accomplishment of men and women of different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. It also enhances students' tactile and motor skills.

The responsibility for arts education in the primary and intermediate grades is shared by the classroom teacher and subject area specialist (i.e. certified music and art teacher). Students in grades K-6 receive instruction from an art and music specialist for one period per week. In addition, 3rd Graders receive weekly music class, as well as weekly Recorder class. Students in grades 4-6 may choose to participate in band, with woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

Although teachers of the arts are responsible for addressing specific objectives and skills detailed in the district art and music curricula, children may also be exposed to art and music concepts by their classroom teachers, as an extension of their subject area curricula.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The Midland Park School District is responsible for ensuring that technology for grades K-6 reflects relevant content and instructional strategies that are consistent with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. In support of these standards, key components have been developed to integrate the use of technology in the work of schools.

1. Development of lifelong learners:
  - Assures skillful use of technology to support the development of lifelong learning skills and process skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration, which are essential to success in our rapidly changing information age.
  - Technology allows us to serve better the diverse learning styles of our students.
2. Integration of technology in the classroom
  - Expands classroom tools for teaching and learning include the interactive whiteboard in every K-6 classroom
  - Enables teachers and students to communicate with the world and the community more effectively, access and process information, and work productively.

- Links the classroom to the world-wide web with an unlimited number of educational resources.
- Creates collaborative environment for project-oriented activities.
- Encourages the use of multimedia tools and interactive websites that enable students to become active and experiential learners.
- Enables learning to involve partnerships within the school, among schools and with other organizations.
- Promotes improved professional development and support. The technology plan will enable teachers and staff to use technology to manage the classroom or office more efficiently.
- Prepares students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *K-6 Technology Initiatives*

Technology stirs the desire to learn. All K-6 classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and computers, which allow for students to be consistently engaged through technology. Our district supports age-appropriate software that enhances the ability of children to write and draw, helping them to act as thinkers, writers, readers and artists to enhance expressive learning and capacity.

Technology is woven throughout the K-6 curriculum and across all content areas, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction and better prepare our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES**

The Midland Park School District provides elementary students from Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade with a well-articulated and comprehensive World Language program. Program goals reflect the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, which indicate that students will:

- Develop the ability to communicate at a basic literacy level in at least one language other English.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture.

In Kindergarten, students are exposed to the *Salsa* program on a weekly basis. In grades one through three Spanish is introduced through thematic units. Target language is reinforced through using simple sentences and action verbs. As students progress

through the grade levels, more vocabulary is introduced. Students are also exposed to cultural representations of various Spanish-speaking countries, when applicable. Instruction is supplemented through use of Total Physical Response, songs, music and puppets.

In grades four through six, students are introduced to French, through the same thematic units they were exposed to with Spanish instruction. Instructional goals for French are the same as they were for Spanish in the lower grades. However, in the upper grades, there is an additional focus on writing and dialogue. When possible, connections are made between Spanish and French.

The goal of the World Language Program in grades Kindergarten through six is to lead the elementary child toward increased second language proficiency and enhanced cultural understanding. Exposure to both Spanish and French allows the student to make an informed decision when selecting which foreign language to study at the middle school level.

## **PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

A concern for all aspects of a child's development is an essential part of educational philosophy. The responsibility for your child's health and physical education program is shared by the classroom teacher and physical education specialist who works with your child for three periods per week. Through the physical education and health curriculum, the students develop self-esteem, positive decision-making, cooperation and the development of healthful life-styles.

In physical education, the students develop fine and gross motor skills, coordination skills and spatial relationships while exercising their bodies. Age-appropriate activities are carefully chosen to help students experience a sense of healthful competition and a sense of fair play. The children's safety is stressed at all times.

In keeping with a healthful lifestyle, students in the fifth grade participate in a 15 week DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program. This program is taught by the Midland Park Police Department and supplements our curriculum, in promoting positive self-esteem and raising awareness about the dangers of drug/alcohol abuse.

## **ASSESSING STUDENT PROGRESS**

A student's progress is assessed in various ways. Assessment includes but is not limited to the following:

- Tests, quizzes, projects, classwork, homework, participation, teacher observations

### **Homework**

Homework is a vital part of the learning process in that it allows the student, while working independently, to use the concepts taught in the classroom, thereby reinforcing classroom instruction. Parents/guardians should monitor the homework process to insure completion of all assignments.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed four times during the school year at the end of each quarter (Kindergarteners receive report cards two times a year). Parents/guardians acknowledge receipt of report cards by signing and returning the report card envelope to the school.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are used to communicate areas of strength and concern for each student. Every student receives a progress report in October and then on an as needed basis. Parents/guardians are required to sign the progress report and return it to school.

## **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

It is our belief that the highest form of communication with parents about the educational progress of their child is achieved through a parent-teacher conference. Parents should share important or influential ideas, situations, or experiences with the teacher that may affect the student's progress. The first official parent-teacher conference is scheduled in November. Additional appointments may be made with the classroom teacher on an as needed basis. Parents are encouraged to bring a list of any questions or concerns they may have about their child's program to the conference.

## Other Programs/Services

### HEALTH SERVICES

School health services contribute to the goals of the education system and the healthcare system by providing screenings and referrals, administering medications and treatments, providing first aid, providing health counseling and education, and supporting students to acquire self-management skills. The purpose of school health services is to ensure that all students are healthy and ready to learn. The school team consists of the school physician, school nurse(s), and health assistants working in partnership with the student, his/her parents, and the student's primary healthcare provider(s). (Excerpt from NJ DOE Website)

### STUDENT ASSISTANCE COUNSELOR (SAC)

The SAC serves as a resource to parents, teachers and students in the school community. The SAC is available to discuss concerns regarding the student's, social issues, self-esteem, family life, drug and alcohol problems, grief and loss, or any other personal concerns, while maintaining student confidentiality. In addition, the SAC acts as a liaison between the school district and community social agencies by suggesting resources available in the community to address personal concerns.

### HARRASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING (HIB) SPECIALIST

Current legislation requires schools to develop programs to prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying. Our HIB specialist helps to ensure there is a positive school climate through implementation of strategic classroom lessons, raising awareness, community involvement and school assemblies. The specialist also helps to create and reinforce school and classroom rules against harassment, intimidation and bullying. Staff and students are encouraged to report incidents to the HIB specialist, which will initiate an investigation. The specialist will ensure proper documentation of and communication about the incident among personnel (administrators, guidance, security, and faculty). Additionally, parents will be notified immediately upon the reporting of an incident, will be informed of their child's role as it pertains to the incident and will be given information regarding the next steps.

### ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

*Kindergarten:* Enrichment is offered through district kindergarten curriculum and is implemented by the classroom teacher. All students will be challenged in subjects as the teacher identifies throughout the school year.

*1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:* Push-in enrichment is provided by the Enrichment Specialist for one class period each week, for the entire academic year. The curriculum is mathematics

based and includes literature connections, deductive reasoning tasks, number sense exercises, problem solving strategies, and cooperative logic tasks.

*3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:* The goals and objectives of this program focus on student strengths, peer support, self-awareness, problem solving, critical thinking, and the development of lifelong learning. These skills are addressed through a variety of student and teacher driven thematic studies presented in small groups of 6-10 students.

### **INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (I & RS)**

The I & RS committee is a school-based problem solving group whose purpose is to assist the classroom teacher with strategies for working with students who are experiencing problems in learning and/or behavior. The I & RS committee consists of the principal, chairperson, regular education teachers, special education teachers and may also include one or more of the following: school social worker, school psychologist, learning disability teacher consultant, speech/language specialist, and the parents of the child under consideration.

The primary role of I & RS is to help students with learning and/or behavioral problems to receive the assistance they need within the current general education setting. These learning and/or behavioral problems may include academic difficulties, attendance, physical/health concerns, or social/emotional issues. A request for an I&RS meeting comes from the classroom teacher or other school personnel. An intervention plan is developed with parent participation and is implemented for a specified period of time, while being monitored throughout.

### **PUPIL READINESS ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (PREP)**

Children who demonstrate a need for additional help in reading, writing or math may be referred to the PREP program. Referral may be based on recommendation by the classroom teacher and performance on early literacy indicators in grades K-2 or standardized achievement tests in grades 3-6. Parental consent is required for children to participate in the PREP program. Students meet with the PREP teacher in small groups during school hours. Frequency is determined based on student needs.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)**

An ELL program is provided for those students whose first language is not English and who are identified as limited English proficient. For qualifying students, as per state guidelines, Midland Park provides instruction for English Language Learners.

The Midland Park Public Schools offer a full continuum of placements to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Educational programs are determined based on each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). All IEP placement decisions are made through a team process after the IEP program has been designed.

Any questions or concerns regarding eligibility for special education services should be referred to the Director of Special Education.

### **CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST)**

The child study team consists of a learning disabilities consultant (LDT/C), a school psychologist, and a school social worker. Speech and Language specialists are also included on a child study team depending on the age of a child and the nature of the suspected disability. The CST meets with parents and guardians of students who are referred for an evaluation. If evaluation is warranted, the child study team develops plans, in conjunction with parents and school staff, to evaluate and determine eligibility of students for special education services. If students are found eligible for special education services, based on evaluations, the CST members will meet with parents and staff to develop individualized education plans (IEP).

### **CHILD FIND**

Federal and state regulations provide for services to children from birth to age 21. The state of New Jersey, through a variety of programs provides services for children from birth to three years of age. Services for children from ages 3-21 are generally provided by local school districts. In New Jersey, districts are required each year to engage in activities to alert parents of the availability of these services. This handbook announcement is one of the activities Midland Park engages in to reach out to parents.

Children are generally eligible for services on the date of their third birthday. It is important to note that not all needs of young children are served through this program. Related services (see below) are only provided if the child is determined to require a special education program. Parents of children who will be three anytime during the school year should contact Student Services as early as possible, if they are concerned about their child's intellectual, physical, or emotional development. Professional guidance and an educational program (if needed) are available.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 504**

According to federal anti-discrimination law, there exists reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In order to be eligible for Section 504 protection, the student must meet three criteria. The three criteria are (1) **A mental or physical impairment**, (2) which **substantially limits**, (3) **one or more major life activities**. The condition must present a barrier to the student's ability to access the same educational opportunities as that afforded to a non-disabled

student. Simply having the condition or disability does not automatically qualify a student for Section 504 protection.

Each school has a 504 Review Committee, which reviews material provided by parents or school staff related to a physical and or mental impairment. An evaluation is conducted based on information gathered from a variety of sources, including parents, teachers and physicians. If eligibility is determined, a 504 accommodation plan is designed. The 504 plan indicates the modifications and accommodations that are required in order for the student to have an opportunity to function equally as his/her peers.

## **RELATED SERVICES**

The Midland Park Public Schools offer related services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities, when eligible. Related services include but are not limited to:

- **Speech and Language Services**

Students may receive Speech and Language therapy as a related service to target articulation and/or language difficulties. To determine eligibility, students who exhibit possible speech and/or language disorders, are evaluated by specialists and evaluation results are shared with parents. If eligible, an individualized education plan is developed for the students. Depending on the needs of the child, therapy may be provided individually, in a small group, or inclusively in the classroom. Additionally, the speech language specialist provides intervention and consultation with the classroom teacher and parents, as necessary.

### **Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy**

The Occupational and Physical Therapists assess the student's functional skills that enable the child to learn and access his/her learning environment. Targeted areas include self-care skills, fine motor skills, visual/perceptual skills, gross motor planning, motor planning, balance and coordination, negotiation of school environment and sensory integrative functions. Students who receive these services must be classified by the Child Study Team and have these programs outlined in their Individual Educational Plan. Informal consultation and collaboration with teachers is provided if concerns are noted.

- **Counseling**

Counseling services are provided by school social workers, psychologists and guidance counselors, for students in grades K-6. Staff are available during crisis and for students and/or parents on an on-going basis to provide short-term in school counseling with students and/or referral to outside practitioners.

## **HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED HELPFUL TIPS FOR PARENTS**

### **General Information**

- See that your child is well-rested and prepared for school.
- Provide your child with a healthful breakfast and nutritious lunch each day.
- Ask your child about his/her day and look at the school folder and homework together.
- Provide a quiet place and adequate time for homework to be completed.
- Allow a time in your child's day for relaxation and quiet time.
- Afford your child the opportunity to participate in one or two extracurricular activities.
- Monitor the amount of time your child spends watching TV, playing video games, and using the computer.
- Continually nurture and reinforce a positive attitude toward school.
- As soon as you have a question or concern, be sure to seek out the classroom teacher immediately. This can prevent small problems from growing and allow parents and teachers to work together in the best interests of your child.
- Keep your child's classroom teacher informed. Alert the teacher to any changes in your family that might effect your child, both emotionally or academically.
- Enjoy spending time together.

### **Reading and Literacy**

- Read to or with your child daily. Bedtime is a great time to read to your child, even after your child has learned to read independently.
- Visit the library regularly. Give your child the opportunity to see you select books for a variety of purposes. Make sure your child has his/ her own library card.
- There are several strategies from which you can choose to foster independent reading skills. These include, but are not limited to:
  - As you read, move your finger under the words to reinforce left to right orientation.
  - Pause at different parts of a story to encourage your child to predict what could happen next, express feelings, or express opinions about the story.
  - At the end of the story, ask your child to retell the story in sequence.
  - Discuss unfamiliar words.
  - There is no need to employ all of these strategies at the same time, but rather frequently include and vary them in the time you spend reading with your child.
- To encourage writing at home:
  - Always have lots of paper, both lined and unlined, and various writing utensils on hand for your child to experiment with writing.
  - Accept all forms of writing your child produces, including imperfections in formation, spelling, spacing and size. The writing mechanics will improve

- as the frequency of writing increases.
- Encourage writing for fun and emphasize that it has many purposes. Identify the writing process in the following ways: story writing, poetry, illustrations, posters, note, songs, lists, labels, invitations, greeting cards and letters.
- Keep a family or personal journal or diary.
- Encourage letter writing to family members who live far away.
- To encourage effective speaking:
  - Model and remind your child to look at the speaker (make eye contact).
  - Speak clearly.
  - Speak in complete sentences using proper grammar.
  - Practice taking turns speaking without interrupting others.
  - Respond appropriately to the topic.
- To encourage effective listening:
  - Model and remind your child to look at the speaker (make eye contact).
  - Listen without interrupting the speaker.
  - Give your child simple, sequential tasks to practice following multi-step directions.

### **Mathematics**

Remember that we as adults live math every day in many ways, and it is a simple matter of bringing math to the attention of youngsters that prepares them to learn formal mathematics.

- Children are naturally curious about everyday problems. Invite your child to figure out solutions to everyday problems: talk about the problem, ask your child for ways to solve it, then ask how he/she came up with the solution
- Count everything! Children love to count and learn correspondence of number and object if they have opportunities. Point to the object as you recite the number name, and use fingers and toes to count. If they help set the table, children can count dishes, tableware, etc. In the car, lead a count of red cars, road signs, traffic lights, etc.
- Make simple patterns (red-blue-red-blue) with blocks, stringing beads, or pasta. Help children find patterns in designs and pictures.
- Sort objects by different attributes, i.e. color, shape, use. Gather the family's gloves or hats and sort them by size, then sort again by color. Do the same with drinking glasses or any household objects. Use math words (i.e., bigger, smaller) to describe the order if sorting by size.
- Identify simple geometric shapes (circle, square, rectangle, and triangle), and if possible prove them with blocks, shape sorters, boxes or puzzles so children can manipulate shapes. The best way to learn is to use all of one's senses, and if children can climb in, on, around, over and under shapes they will develop spatial and directional sense. Look at shapes at the playground, where children

- have the opportunity to use their whole body to experience geometric shapes.
- Measurement—of time, money, and length—takes much time and experience to learn. Start by comparing how much time one activity requires compared to another. Talk time (after breakfast, before dinner, set time limits); i.e., “five more minutes,” and try to keep track of five real minutes. Use setting your kitchen clock or watch to count seconds. You can use boxes to measure your child or maintain a growth chart where your child can see height and growth.
  - Practice estimating skills, use words such as “about,” “near,” “approximately,” “between,” “around,” “more than,” “less than”. Help by asking to estimate how much, how long, or how many, then compare the actual answer with the original estimate. This will help your child make reasonable estimates.
  - Chart and graph foods, visitors, phone calls, etc. using stickers or color forms. Graphs provide visual representation and allow greater understanding. Make a sun chart and discuss how many days the sun shone, or days it rained during the week.
  - Promote problem-solving strategies rather than giving the answer to your child. Use language like, “How can we figure this out?” and help your child solve the problem.

### **Succeeding with Homework**

- Make sure your child has a well lit place to work, basic supplies and a regular time each day for doing homework.
- Ask your child what he/ she has for homework. Determine if he/ she understands the assignment and if assistance is necessary.
- Look over the assignment, give guidelines if needed, but don’t do the work.
- Ask the classroom teacher early in the year about the homework policy.
- Review teacher comments on the homework with your child regularly.
- Contact your child’s teacher if there is a homework problem you can’t solve.
- Congratulate your child on a job well done.