Oregon Department of Education
Office of Teaching, Learning & Assessment
https://www.oregon.gov/ode

How do I support learning at home?

Introduction:
Welcome to the Oregon Department of Education's learning session on *How do I support learning at home*? In this session Timoti and Sam will discuss:

- Working with teachers and online resources to understand academic standards and children's learning needs, including where extra support might be needed, and
- Finding and using evidence-based strategies to provide the learning supports at home that are consistent with those used in schools.

Timoti and Sam are ready, so let's join their conversation!

Timoti: Hi, Sam! It is good to see you. How's it going?

Sam: Oh, hey Timoti. Today I'm motivated.

Timoti: You know, that's not something that I've ever heard from a parent. What exactly do you mean?

Sam: Well, I've been thinking a lot about how important education is for Zack's success in school and life. I'm starting to worry about how my son is performing in class and on assessments and I really want to help him.

Timoti: Thank you for sharing that. I'm glad you came in, Sam. Parents can make a big difference in their children's success, and I'm happy to talk to you about your concerns.

Sam: Based on the interim assessment results shared at the conference last week, I'm thinking Zack needs extra support at home. He did okay on last year's statewide assessments in Language Arts, Math, and Science, but barely met grade-level proficiency on all three.

Timoti: Talking with Zack's teachers is an important first step, Sam.

Sam: Whatever we do at home, we want to match with what's going on at school!

Timoti: If you want to match, or align, with what's going on in school, you'll need to know what teachers are teaching. One of the best ways to do that is to look at academic standards that guide classroom instruction and most assessments. In Oregon, that means the Common Core State Standards (or CCSS for short) in Language Arts and Math, and Next Generation Science Standards (or NGSS) in Science.

Sam: Academic standards are like a list of what students are expected to know and be able to do in each grade and content area, right?

Timoti: Absolutely! That's what people mean when they talk about standards-based instruction and assessment. The standards are available online, and there are some great resources designed specifically for parents—to help them understand what the standards are asking students to know and be able to do.

Sam: Where can I find these parent resources?

Timoti: For starters, an internet search using terms like "CCSS for Parents" (for Language Arts and Math) or "NGSS for Parents" (for Science) will give you lots to choose from.

For example, the *Council of Great City Schools* created a series of "roadmaps" with parent-friendly information about the CCSS in Language Arts and Math. They're organized by content area and grade level, and are available in both English and Spanish!

As for Science, NGSS member states, including Oregon, have developed online *Parent Guides*, also available in both English and Spanish. Just search for "NGSS Parent Guides"!

Sam: I'm looking at the CCSS roadmaps on my phone right now, and at a glance they look like they'll be really helpful. I'm sure the NGSS parent guides will be the same!

Timoti: Having a solid understanding of the academic content standards will help you know what's being taught and assessed at school. Keeping in regular contact with Zack's teachers will help your know his strengths and areas for improvement. If you'd like to help strengthen those, you need some strategies to help him at home.

Sam: Okay. Which strategies are best to use?

Timoti: Lots of parents have asked me that question. If you do an internet search for "parent resources to help students at home," you'll see that there are many websites with advice and strategies for you to use. If you don't know where to start, then try *NBC and Pearson's Parent Toolkit*. It has an easy search tool to help you quickly find the resources you need.

Sam: Will I have to sign up or pay a fee?

Timoti: No, these websites are free to everyone. And, there are many more! Great websites like *parents.nea.org* and *Edutopia* offer parents research-based advice and support in lots areas.

Many quality websites are offered in multiple languages—for example, visit *Colorín Colorado*, and look in the "*Ideas for Families*" column—this is a bilingual website dedicated to helping families support their English Language Learners in schools.

Sam: Sounds like there's a lot out there, Timoti! Ok, so what kind of strategies am I going to find on these sites? Can you give me an example?

Timoti: Sure. Let's go over some things you can do with Zack—tonight!

Sam: Sounds like a great idea!

Timoti: OK. Let's take math as an example. When you're working with Zack, it's important to do more than just talk about problems and write down numbers. Give him physical objects he can move around with his hands. Ask him to draw a picture that represents the problem. You'll be able to help him at home and reinforce the strategies we're using in class!

Sam: What a great idea! Zack has always been a "hands-on" learner and he loves to draw.

Timoti: As Zack investigates math problems in different ways, he'll be able to solve equations with less and less outside help. And remember, it's less about "getting the right answer" and more about helping Zack develop a strong process for learning, where he can explain his reasoning and build skills for solving all kinds of problems, including real-world context problems.

Sam: We could use objects around the house—marbles, paper clips, or checkers—and Zack can draw the illustrations.

Timoti: Nice, Sam! You're already thinking ahead! In class, we use stacked Legos to represent fractions and decimals.

Sam: We have buckets of Legos, enough for practice at home and to donate to the classroom!

Timoti: Great! I think you'll see working through the problems together with Zack makes a big difference. Modeling that you care is important.

Sam: Well, it will take some time to look over the websites you mentioned, and find others, but if it will reinforce what's going on at school and help Zack, I'm game.

Timoti: Perfect, Sam! Now, for Language Arts, it's a good idea to make reading part of everyday activities and discussions at home.

Sam: Yikes. That could be hard. When I get home from school and work, we're tired and often we just like to watch a show or catch up on my phone. It's hard to encourage my kid to read if I'm not reading myself.

Timoti: Well, you don't have to read for hours and hours. Even 15 minutes of reading each day is proven to help increase vocabulary, improve fluency, and deepen comprehension—skills that boost learning in all content areas!

And, regular reading also improves writing skills. Reading and writing are partners—practicing one improves the other.

Sam: That makes sense, but what should I have my son read?

Timoti: As long as he's interested, it can be fiction or non-fiction, magazines, graphic novels or comic books…just about anything, as long as he's reading.

Sam: So, I should just encourage him to read?

Timoti: Exactly, Sam! Giving your child access to lots of different kinds of texts will support learning from elementary through high school, and beyond.

You can bring home books or subscribe to magazines based on Zack's interests. Your family can play reading-related games, like Scrabble. You can reinforce positive reading experiences by streaming movies on the topics he reads about, visiting museums, or taking part in community-related events.

Sam: We can do those things!

Timoti: Of course, you can! And show him that reading is important by doing it yourself. Let him see you reading each day!

You can even start a family book club where everyone reads something of Zack's choice. Write about what was read, and then talk about it together. Again, helping strengthening that connection between reading and writing, and in a way that's fun for the family.

Sam: Hmm…sounds like you're saying variety is important. What if Zack just wants to read the same thing over and over? I mean, when he was in middle school the only thing he cared about was Harry Potter!

Timoti: Actually, re-reading builds vocabulary knowledge and increases fluency. Don't worry, his interests will broaden with time.

Sam: Timoti, to hear you talk, reading sounds like it can work wonders!

Timoti: That's true. For example, when it comes to students who are classified as English Language Learners, regular reading is critical in building vocabulary and fluency—whether that reading is in English or another language.

In fact, for students who are lucky enough to speak another language, reading in that language also improves their English skills. Parents of students who speak a language other than English should encourage their children to practice and improve that language. That doesn't slow their child's English learning down—it actually speeds it up!

Sam: OK, have a plan! Thanks for explaining what evidence-based strategies are and where we can find them. You can count on me keeping in touch with you and Zack's other teachers.

Timoti: Excellent! With even just a couple of strategies to try, parents can make a big difference in their child's success in school. I'm so glad you're on board, Sam!

Sam: Me too! Thanks again, Timoti!

Conclusion:
This concludes Oregon Department of Education's lesson on *How do I support learning at home*? During this conversation, Timoti and Sam discussed the importance of understanding children's assessment results in order to identify learning needs, as well as resources that help parents and teachers choose research- and evidence-based strategies to help support those needs. We hope this information will help parents partner with teachers to support children. Please check out the other video learning sessions on assessment-related topics and ODE's website for more helpful information. And, thanks for joining!