



# SMART IDEAS

## for Supporting Early Learning At Home

Learning at home is most effective when caregivers know what to expect and feel equipped to support activities that are meaningful and fun for kids.



SCHOOL  
LEADERS  
NOW 

# 1. Share classroom lingo with families.

Consistency is key for young learners, so make sure families are set up to use the same explanations used in school. Share things like:

- Phonics keywords and routines
- Letter formation cues
- Reading strategy cues

**Don't forget** to teach families when and how to use these prompts! Video clips for concepts like correct letter-sound associations and how to segment and blend sounds in words are powerful too; students can even help create them.



# 2. Give real-time learning goal updates.

Don't wait for report cards. Help caregivers keep tabs on kids' learning by regularly sending home fun, bite-sized "Ask Me" prompts. Be sure to define any potentially unfamiliar terms.

**For Caregivers:** Our learning goal this week is "Students can count syllables in spoken words." Syllables are the parts of words you can hear. At school we clap each syllable. "Boat" has one syllable, "Butterfly" has three syllables, and "Donut" has two syllables.

## Sample "Ask Me" prompt

Ask me how many syllables  
are in these words:



Boat



Butterfly



Donut

### 3. Assign PLAY!

Play supports learning, and is essential for children's healthy development. Incorporate experiential homework that gets kids and families pretending and creating together. Give assignments like:

- "Play grocery store or restaurant at home. Share your shopping list or menu."
- "Create an animal or imaginary creature out of things you find in the recycling bin. Make a nametag for it and snap a photo to share."
- "Choose 3 items from your kitchen and make up a game with them. Write down the rules to teach a friend."



### 4. Make at-home reading practice personal.

Kids are more motivated to read and re-read when they have a connection to the text. In addition to sharing diverse print and digital books and magazines with families, share classroom-specific reading material like:

- Class "Names and Faces" books or picture and word matching games
- Predictable text composed together using interactive writing
- Informational text about a class curriculum topic written together using shared writing
- Silly sentences or jokes that include target high-frequency words

**Joke Card:** Read this joke to three family members.

Where **do** cows **go**  
on the weekend?



**To the moo-vies!**



## 5. Provide engaging tech tools.

Screen time for young learners can deliver huge benefits when it's active and skill-focused. Check out the [Square Panda Literacy System](#), which combines multisensory manipulatives with fun games on a tablet. It also includes personalized instruction to meet students where they are. Plus, classroom teachers can access data from home use to help plan next steps at school.



## 6. Teach learning activities that can be used on the go.

Families are busy. Send home flexible skill-building ideas caregivers can use while driving, walking, or riding public transportation with kids, or work into their everyday routines at home. For instance:

- "Say something you see (car, bird) and think of as many real or nonsense words that rhyme with it."
- "Take photos or write down everything you see around you that starts with a certain letter or sound."
- "Pretend you are a visitor from another planet. Describe everything you see and try to guess how it works on Earth."
- "Write a sticky note each night with a reminder about the next day."

