



# Evans Elementary School

Parent Week at a Glance  
Jan 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021



Chilliwack  
School District

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Dear Parents,

Please find a list of various activities going on at Evans over the next week:

Jan 18<sup>th</sup> – 8:30 am Evans Assembly on Teams  
Jan 19<sup>th</sup> – MDI (Grade 5)  
Jan 20<sup>th</sup> – MDI (Grade 5)  
Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – Lockdown Drill #2  
Jan 27<sup>th</sup> – Family Literacy Day  
Jan 29<sup>th</sup> – Dress like you future self day

**Toy's & Trading Cards (eg: Pokeman) at School** – We need parents help in ensuring that toys and trading cards are left at home by students. Recently a number of student have been bringing some of these items to school leading to hurt feelings when there is disagreement between students or when these items are lost or damaged. As such, we are kindly asking parents to ensure these items are left at home.

**Lockdown Drill** – On Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup> (in the afternoon) Evans Elementary School will be conducting its second lockdown drill this school year. The purpose of this drill is to practice with staff and students the lockdown procedures in the event we need to perform a lockdown to secure the school in the future. The procedures we will use were developed by the RCMP and the school district. We will discuss this in each of the classrooms in advance of the drill, but wanted to make parents aware this was happening and was only a precautionary practice

**Inclement Weather Guidelines** - Inclement weather conditions such as freezing rain, significant snowfall or high wind can occur during the fall and winter months. In such conditions, decisions on the opening or closure of school district facilities are made by the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with management and supervisory staff, who have checked first-hand on the driving conditions, walking/sidewalk conditions, and general condition of buildings and accessibility to sites. For full information please see the school district website at: <https://sd33.bc.ca/inclement-weather-school-closure-guidelines>

**SnowPass Program** - Students in grades 4 and 5 can ski for free at over 100 ski hills across Canada with the SnowPass. Full information at: <http://www.snowpass.org/>

**(Repeat) Foundation Skills Assessment (Grade 4)** – The Ministry of Education announced an adjustment to the Administration dates of the Foundation Skills Assessment for our grade 4 students this year. The FSA's will now take place between Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> and Mar. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Family Literacy Day** – With family literacy day just around the corner (**January 27<sup>th</sup>**), I wanted to share some ways that parents can help support their children reading at home. The article "**11 Way's Parents Can Help Their Children Read**" comes from Dr. Timothy Shanahan who is an internationally recognized professor of

urban education and reading researcher. These are 11 super simple things that all parents can do at home to promote reading with children. The [original article can be found online here](#).

## 11 Ways Parents Can Help Their Children Read

Parents often ask how they can help their children learn to read; and it's no wonder that they're interested in this essential skill. Reading plays an important role in later school success. **One study** even demonstrates that how well 7-year-olds read predicts their income 35 years later! Here are 11 practical recommendations for helping preschoolers and school-age students learn to read.

### 1. Teaching reading will only help.

Sometimes, parents are told early teaching is harmful, but it isn't true. You simply can't introduce literacy too early. I started reading to my own children on the days they were each born! The "dangers of early teaching" has been a topic of study for more than 100 years, and no one has ever found any convincing evidence of harm. Moreover, there are hundreds of studies showing the benefits of reading to your children when they are young.

### 2. Teaching literacy isn't different than teaching other skills.

You don't need a Ph.D. to raise a happy, healthy, smart child. Parents have been doing it for thousands of years. Mothers and fathers successfully teach their kids to eat with a spoon, keep their fingers out of their noses, and say "please." These things can be taught pleasantly, or they can be made into a painful chore. Being unpleasant (e.g. yelling, punishing, pressuring) doesn't work, and it can be frustrating for everyone. This notion applies to teaching literacy, too. If you show your 18-month-old a book and she shows no interest, then put it away and come back to it later. If your child tries to write her name and ends up with a backwards "D," no problem. No pressure. No hassle. You should enjoy the journey, and so should your child.

### 3. Talk to your kids (a lot).

Last year, I spent lots of time with our brand new granddaughter, Emily. I drowned her in language. Although "just a baby," I talked — and sang — to her about everything. I talked about her eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and fingers. I told her all about her family — her mom, dad, and older brother. I talked to her about whatever she did (yawning, sleeping, eating, burping). I talked to her so much that her parents thought I was nuts; she couldn't possibly understand me yet. But reading is a language activity, and if you want to learn language, you'd better hear it, and eventually, speak it. Too many moms and dads feel a bit dopey talking to a baby or young child, but studies have shown that **exposing your child to a variety of words** helps in her development of literacy skills.

### 4. Read to your kids.

I know everyone says this, but it really is a good idea — at least with preschoolers. One of my colleagues refers to this advice as the "chicken soup" of reading education. We prescribe it for everything. (Does it help? It couldn't hurt.) If a parent or caregiver can't read or can't read English, there are alternatives, such as using audiobooks; but for those who can, reading a book or story to a child is a great, easy way to advance literacy skills. **Research shows benefits** for kids as young as 9-months-old, and it could be effective even earlier than that. Reading to kids exposes them to richer vocabulary than they usually hear from the adults who speak to them, and can have positive impacts on their language, intelligence, and later literacy achievement. What should you read to them? There are so many wonderful children's books. Visit your local library, and you can get an armful of adventure. You can find recommendations from kids at the **Children's Book Council website** or at the **International Literacy Association Children's Choices site**

## 5. Have them tell you a “story.”

One great way to introduce kids to literacy is to take their dictation. Have them recount an experience or make up a story. We’re not talking “Moby Dick” here. A typical first story may be something like, “I like fish. I like my sister. I like grandpa.” Write it as it is being told, and then read it aloud. Point at the words when you read them, or point at them when your child is trying to read the story. Over time, with lots of rereading, don’t be surprised if your child starts to recognize words such as “I” or “like.” (As children learn some of the words, you can write them on cards and keep them in a “word bank” for your child, using them to review later.)

## 6. Teach phonemic awareness.

Young children don’t hear the sounds within words. Thus, they hear “dog,” but not the “duh”-“aw”- “guh.” To become readers, they have to learn to hear these sounds (or phonemes). Play language games with your child. For instance, say a word, perhaps her name, and then change it by one phoneme: Jen-Pen, Jen-Hen, Jen-Men. Or, just break a word apart: chair... ch-ch-ch-air. Follow this link to learn more about [language development milestones in children](#).

## 7. Teach phonics (letter names and their sounds).

You can’t sound out words or write them without knowing the letter sounds. Most kindergartens teach the letters, and parents can teach them, too. I just checked a toy store website and found 282 products based on letter names and another 88 on letter sounds, including ABC books, charts, cards, blocks, magnet letters, floor mats, puzzles, lampshades, bed sheets, and programs for tablets and computers. You don’t need all of that (a pencil and paper are sufficient), but there is lots of support out there for parents to help kids learn these skills. Keep the lessons brief and fun, no more than 5–10 minutes for young’uns. Understanding the [different developmental stages of reading and writing skills](#) will help to guide your lessons and expectations.

## 8. Listen to your child read.

When your child starts bringing books home from school, have her read to you. If it doesn’t sound good (mistakes, choppy reading), have her read it again. Or read it to her, and then have her try to read it herself. Studies show that this kind of repeated oral reading makes students better readers, even when it is done at home.

## 9. Promote writing.

Literacy involves reading and writing. Having books and magazines available for your child is a good idea, but it’s also helpful to have pencils, crayons, markers, and paper. Encourage your child to write. One way to do this is to write notes or short letters to her. It won’t be long before she is trying to write back to you.

## 10. Ask questions.

When your child reads, get her to retell the story or information. If it’s a story, ask who it was about and what happened. If it’s an informational text, have your child explain what it was about and how it worked, or what its parts were. Reading involves not just sounding out words, but thinking about and remembering ideas and events. [Improving reading comprehension skills early](#) will prepare her for subsequent success in more difficult texts.

## 11. Make reading a regular activity in your home.

Make reading a part of your daily life, and kids will learn to love it. When I was nine years old, my mom made me stay in for a half-hour after lunch to read. She took me to the library to get books to kick off this new part of my life. It made me a lifelong reader. Set aside some time when everyone turns off the TV and the web and does nothing but read. Make it fun, too. When my children finished reading a book that had been made into a

film, we'd make popcorn and watch the movie together. The point is to make reading a regular enjoyable part of your family routine.

Happy reading!