FAMILY SUPPORT: FIRST GRADEREADER

◆ Read aloud daily. Your child might be ready for you to read a chapter book aloud, a chapter or two each night. Children also enjoy picture books, nonfiction, and joke books.

◆ Begin to read series books. If you read a few, children will often read the rest of the series on their own as they become more capable readers.

◆ Read poems, magazines, cartoons, recipes, maps, and nonfiction, as well as fiction.

◆ Provide time each night for your child to read on his or her own (10–15 minutes).

◆ Help your child find books at the right reading level, since at this stage children need lots of practice to become fluent readers. Ask your child’s teacher for suggestions.

◆ Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.

◆ Talk about books you enjoyed when you were little.

◆ Give books as gifts.

◆ Watch television shows together (such as Reading Rainbow) or movies based on children’s books.

◆ Be supportive as your child reads his or her first I Can Read books. Help with difficult words so your child can keep the flow of the story.

◆ Ask your child to make predictions as you read a story. (“What do you think this story will be about?” “What do you think will happen next?”)

◆ Encourage your child to re-read a sentence when it doesn't make sense.

◆ Ask your child to retell a story you have read together.

◆ Point out ways to figure out words in addition to "sounding it out" (such as looking at the picture, breaking the word into smaller words, reading on, or thinking what would make sense).

◆ Point out punctuation as you read aloud. (“Oops, an exclamation mark! I'd better read that a little louder.”)

◆ Talk about the strategies you use as a reader when you're looking for a book, when you come across a word you don't know, or want to learn more about something.
FAMILY SUPPORT: FIRST GRADE WRITER

◆ Read chapter books aloud to your child. Anticipating the next installment each night is motivating!

◆ Keep materials for writing available (old checks, music paper, telephone message pads, paper, chalk and chalkboard, markers, pens, and pencils).

◆ Encourage letter writing (pick a friend or relative who will answer!).

◆ If you have a computer, encourage your child to email friends and relatives.

◆ Keep a family journal of trips, favorite restaurants, funny stories, visitors, movies, etc. Ask your child to add comments and reactions.

◆ Make a family joke book. Check out joke books from the library and add your favorites.

◆ Have your child read you what he/she has written. Respond first to the content and ideas. At this stage, a child's confidence and attitude about writing are very important.

◆ Praise the "good ideas" evident in your child's writing and use of invented spelling ("That was a great guess. You got the first and last letters.").

◆ Share your thinking as you write.

◆ Encourage the use of your child's own spelling (invented spelling) so he or she can become an independent writer. When asked, "How do you spell that?", encourage your child to write the sound he or she hears.

◆ Correct your child's spelling or punctuation only if asked. Focus on only one skill so your child doesn't become overwhelmed.

◆ Save your child's quality school work and art and keep it in a book or folder. Be sure to date the work and call attention to changes and growth.