

# Calendar for School Success

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*Highland View and College Park Elementary Schools  
Greendale, Wisconsin*

For their joint Time 4 Learning Charter School kindergarten program, Highland View and College Park elementary schools designed a calendar with parenting tips, resources, and activities to ensure early school success, as well as social and behavioral development. This calendar helped parents of pre-kindergarten students get involved with their children's education from the beginning.

Each subgroup within the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) researched and designed a monthly topic in an engaging format. The school then distributed one calendar to each family. The \$1,000 cost of creating and distributing this calendar was supported by a charter school implementation grant and fundraising events.

The hanging calendar included a full page of parenting information above each month's date grid. Some of the pages related to activities that would take place that month. For instance, September's page had a guide to preparing children for the first day of school. Parents also received tips for asking good questions. "What did you do in school today?" will not yield the same answers that specific questions would. It suggests that parents find out actual activities from the day's instruction and frame questions around them. "Did you learn about alligators and make a mask in school today?" allows a child to extend learning from the classroom to the home.

February's page had a guide to expressions of parental love, which included ways to support interests and hobbies, express love and

limits at the same time, and notice when your children do something correctly, among the many suggestions. Additional pages had tips for discipline, a guide to preschool developmental stages, and ideas for exploring reading, writing, and math with young children. For example, one suggested ways parents can point out math-related concepts every day by, for example, using number words in conversations, estimating time, and measuring in cooking. The calendar always provided contact information.

This timely resource proved helpful to parents as they guided their children through the first year of school. One parent said, "I learned some things about what to expect from my child at this age that I was not aware of before." Just by using a calendar, parents honed their parenting skills and increased participation in school, which is directly linked to improved academic and developmental success.

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