

**St. Kateri Tekakwitha
Catholic Elementary School
Parent & Student
Handbook**

2021-2022

**560 Pioneer Drive
Kitchener, Ontario
Phone: 519-895-1716**

***Learning, growing and transforming the world together as Faithful
Disciples of the Risen Lord.***

Important Dates for 2021-2022

	School Year
September 7	First Day of School
September 21	Catholic School Advisory Council
October 4	Smile! School Picture Day
October 8	PA Day
October 11	Thanksgiving (no school)
November 18	Progress Report Card Distribution
November 19	PA Day
November 25	Parent-Teacher Conferences
December 20-31	Christmas Break
January 21	PA Day
February 17	Term 1 Report Card Distribution
February 21	Family Day
March 14-18	March Break
April 8	PA Day
April 15	Good Friday (no school)
April 18	Easter Monday (no school)
May 2-6	Catholic Education Week
May 23	Victoria Day (no school)

June 3	PA Day
June 27	Term 2 Report Card Distribution
June 29	Last Day of School for Students

School Hours

8:35 a.m. – Start of School Day
9:45 – 10:00 a.m. – a.m. Recess
11:20-12:20 – Lunch and Middle Recess
1:40-1:55 p.m. – p.m. Recess
3:05 p.m. – Dismissal

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

Learning in Catholic schools...is not merely an intellectual quest, but a spiritual one as well. In Catholic education, all of life is viewed as an affair not only of the mind, but also, of the spirit. The expectations of graduates, therefore, are described not only in terms of skills and content, but in terms of values and attitudes as well. (*Educating the Soul*)

Catholic Curriculum in all program areas and at all grade levels must directly contribute to our Catholic students' achievement of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Educators in Catholic schools will use these expectations to make curriculum decisions concerning program planning, instructional strategies and authentic assessment and evaluation.

1. **A discerning believer** formed in the Catholic faith community who celebrates the signs and mystery of God's presence through liturgy, sacrament, prayer, reflection and moral living.
2. **An effective communicator** who communicates honestly and sensitively and responds critically in light of gospel values as reflected in church teachings.
3. **A reflective, creative and holistic thinker** who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience.
4. **A self-directed responsible lifelong learner**, who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential, influences change in a discerning manner for the service of the whole community, the church and society.
5. **A collaborative contributor** who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work, which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.
6. **A caring family member** who ministers to family, school, parish, and community.
7. **A responsible citizen** who witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

Statement of Philosophy

As Catholics, we believe that Creation is ongoing and that each of us, like our model Christ, is a steward in our Father's kingdom. As stewards, we have a responsibility to care for what God has made. We must care for our community, our environment and ourselves.

As stewards, we have a mission, based upon responsibility, respect and love.

The faith environment of our school provides a necessary foundation for the development of Gospel-based values in all of us, especially our young people who attend Catholic schools for formation. Schools are part of our youths' preparation for life. As Catholic educators, we have a responsibility to help our students become loving Christians and good Canadian citizens. Parents are the primary educators of their children and it is the duty of the school community to carry out this responsibility during the time in which students are in their care. It is necessary, then, that parents, students and the school community work together in the best interest of each student and for the good of our community.

Community Expectations and Responsibilities for Young Learners

Students are expected to follow these Community Expectations and Responsibilities for Young Learners whenever they are in school or on any school-sponsored activity, trip or sporting event.

Respect For Self and Others – Students demonstrate this by:

- Respecting the dignity of oneself and all people
- Being courteous, considerate and compassionate to everyone
- Never harassing (verbally or physically) one another
- Never intimidating anyone, or being involved in malicious ridicule of an individual
- Never demonstrating any form of prejudice, discrimination or stereotyping

Reason:

As Christians we believe we are all made in the image and likeness of God and as such we are summoned to care for human life with ultimate respect. Before students can respect other people or other people's authority or property, they must have respect for themselves. The way to build community is to exhibit esteem for others through cooperation and respect, so that each person can flourish in a safe and caring environment.

Respect for Rules: Students demonstrate this by:

- Being involved in setting classroom rules
- Knowing the school and classroom rules
- Obeying the school and classroom rules

Reason:

Community living requires rules and procedures as a means of developing respect and self-discipline so that all members can live their lives to the fullest potential. The school staff is expected to apply the rules in a fair, consistent and respectful manner in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the students and the staff.

Respect for the Environment:

Students can demonstrate this by:

- Treating the school grounds, buildings, school belongings (furniture, books, learning materials) and their personal belongings responsibly

Reason:

The school and its surrounding environment are gifts of God. It is our responsibility to protect and care for this learning environment. Buildings, grounds, and materials belong to everyone in the community and are to be used to benefit the community.

Respect For Academic Achievement:

Students demonstrate this by:

- Recognizing their own uniqueness
- Carrying out their academic responsibilities with perseverance and pride
- Completing all work to the best of their ability

Reason:

Students and adult learners have a responsibility to God, themselves, their parents and their community to develop their abilities and to do well in school. Hopefully by using their talents in school, they will be able to bring the best of themselves to their community and society at large.

The Consequences of Misbehaviour

Consequences for misbehaviour exist to protect the rights and freedoms of all people in a school community. The consequences for misbehaviour should be reasonable, appropriate, natural, logical, and applied consistently. Any misbehaviour should be dealt with promptly and directly.

Personal Property

The following items are not allowed at school without permission of the principal: hockey sticks, hard balls, and baseball bats. Students are not permitted to bring these items to school because of the safety issues that may result from accidental or intentional misuse. These items should remain at home. Students who use spirit of impartiality and fairness. Students who demonstrate inappropriate behaviour, such as failure to meet student expectations outlined above as well as being in violation of the Safe School Act, will be assisted by one or more of the following supportive interventions:

- Immediate conflict resolution supported by the staff involved
- Corrective dialogue between the staff and student
- Written and verbal apologies
- Restitution of materials
- Parental involvement
- Implementation of homework/behavioural contract
- Restorative Justice Initiative
- Loss of privileges
- Detentions
- Involvement of student services staff and/or outside support agencies
- Discretionary suspension by the principal
- Expulsion
- Possible involvement of the police

The following behaviours will not be tolerated by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board either on school property or at school sponsored or school-related activities:

- The use, possession, distribution or sale of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Possession or use of weapons
- Any physical assault or threat of assault
- Any gang or youth group displaying a pattern of delinquent or disruptive behaviour
- Any sexual, religious, ethno-cultural and or racial abuse, discrimination or harassment

In serious or emergency situations, the principal, or principal designate will take immediate and appropriate action deemed necessary to maintain the safety and welfare of others in the school. This may include involvement of the police. All forms of discrimination and harassment are subject to the consequences outlined in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board Equity Policy.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board upholds the position that no form of violent behaviour is acceptable on school property or in school-sponsored or related activities. This position supports the Safe Schools Act 2000 and is aligned with Board policies APC 018 dealing with Code of Conduct, APC012 dealing with suspension and APC019 dealing with expulsions.

These items should remain at home. Students who use a bike, scooter or skateboard must not use them while on school property and are solely responsible for them. They must be stored in the designated areas.

Appropriate and safe equipment will be issued to each class for outside use.

At times, students bring personal belongings to the school (toys, footballs, hats, ball gloves, knapsacks, special clothing). **They are responsible for these possessions.** Student names should be clearly labelled on these articles. Please note that the school is not responsible for the loss of personal items. If a child has lost or misplaced an article of clothing, please have them check the Lost and Found area. We also ask that the children **NOT** bring anything to school that has monetary or sentimental value.

Students are responsible for their own bicycles. Bicycles cannot be ridden through the schoolyard because it is a safety risk to other students. All bikes must be locked in the bike racks. The school is not responsible for damages incurred. All students are reminded that the Province of Ontario has adopted a helmet law for all children under the age of eighteen. All children **MUST** wear a helmet while bicycling.

Privacy and Information Management

Our students and staff enjoy opportunities to share some of their activities with parents and the school community through teams, clubs, and special events. Many of these are 'memory making' for families and as such photographs are often taken. We ask that families exercise their discretion when taking photographs or videos at school events and consider the privacy of other students who may also be present in those pictures. We would appreciate if families do not upload images of students other than their own to the Internet (e.g., YouTube or Facebook). Your cooperation is appreciated.

As part of the 21st century learning students will be participating in a variety of social media tools via the Internet in the classroom. Some of the social media tools that may be used in the classroom include the following: Wikis, blogs, Podcasts, video conferencing, surveys, YouTube, Twitter, Google classroom and other sites deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher in accordance with Ministry of Education curriculum.

Cell/Smart Phones

If a student brings a phone to school with parental permission, the phone must remain turned off and in the student's backpack or in a safe place within the classroom during the school day, unless it is being used specifically for a learning purpose under the direction of the teacher. Students must use the phone in the main office if they need to speak to a parent during school hours. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged phones or electronic devices. Parents will be contacted should a student have difficulty following the school's phone policy.

Dress Code

Attention to outward appearance is an important part of a student's social development. Students and staff are expected to dress appropriately.

The dress code is in effect at all times at school, including excursions. Parents are expected to be vigilant regarding changing weather conditions and to dress children accordingly.

Guidelines for choosing clothes that promote a positive educational environment:

- All clothing will be free of derogatory or inappropriate print or graphics
- Hats and caps are to be removed when inside the school
- Hemmed shorts or walking shorts
- All tops should cover the shoulders (i.e., no tube tops) and will cover the top of pants
- Outdoor wear (boots, hats and jackets) will be removed prior to entering the classroom
- An indoor pair of shoes should be at school at all times

The consequences for students who are inappropriately dressed will be as follows:

- Students will be reminded of the school dress code initially
- Students will be asked to modify their appearance

- Parents will be called to bring clothing to the school that meets the school dress code. Students may be suspended if the situation becomes a chronic disregard for the school dress code

Parents are also reminded to apply the appropriate level of sunscreen protection to suit the weather conditions; recognizing that students will be outdoors for approximately one hour during the day for lunch and recess periods.

Safe Arrival Process

The Education Act states that students must attend school regularly and be punctual. It is imperative for the safety of the students that parents/guardians call the school each day their child is absent. Students are not allowed to contact the school regarding their absence.

The purpose of this program is to provide a service for parents to check that their children have arrived at school safely. The program recognizes that the **ultimate responsibility** for children rests with the parents.

If a child has not arrived at school and a phone call or note has not been received, the secretary will attempt to alert parents by telephone at home or at your place of employment if necessary. If parents cannot be contacted, we will contact the emergency number provided by the parents. Failing to reach parents or emergency contacts, the police will be notified and sent to the home.

Extended periods of absence, for reasons other than health, require permission of the principal. More than 3 days of absence requires a special form to be completed, entitled "Intent To Be Absent". Parents who remove their child from school are responsible for their child's education.

In cases of chronic truancy, the principal will involve the school board's social worker to assist the student. Persistent truancy is a serious matter and could result in court appearances and charges being laid.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be on time for classes. All students entering class late must present a late slip obtained from the office. Lates are noted in the daily attendance register and on report cards by teachers.

Chronic lateness will result in parents being contacted to help the student learn the habit of punctuality. Loss of school privileges may be the result for chronic lateness, and the school board social worker/attendance counsellor may be contacted. **Chronic lates and absences greatly affect academic performance.**

General Rules for School Playground Behaviour

1. Be courteous and show respect for the rights of others. A "hands off" policy is in effect.
2. Play in designated areas of the school property. Students must remain on the blacktop or soccer field.
3. Rough games are prohibited.
4. Equipment judged by the school to be dangerous or hazardous to student safety is not permitted.
5. Report any injuries or incidents of harassment to the staff member on supervision.
6. The throwing of snow, ice, stones or other objects is not allowed.
7. Use of inappropriate language will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Communication Guidelines for

Parents/Guardians

Parents, students and staff have a right to receive affirmation for what they are doing and the right to know when concerns arise. Communication must recognize the dignity of the individual. All people deserve respect, dignity, fair treatment and inclusion. As part of respecting the dignity of the individual, the individual has a right to know firsthand of a concern from the individual who has the concern, not second-hand from someone else who has not been involved in the issue. Please note the process to follow:

STEP 1

- Speak to the individual;
- Issue resolved.

STEP 2

- Speak to the principal;
- If you have not spoken to the individual, the principal will ask you to do so;
- The principal will involve the individual in the discussions;
- The principal may request, at any time in the process, that you put your concerns in writing;
- The principal may involve, at any time in the process, others who may be helpful in resolving the concern; support staff from the school board, employee group representatives, the local parish or community agencies.

The Role of the Trustee:

- You may contact your trustee at any time. The trustee will direct you to follow the process outlined above.

Parent Teacher Conferences

If you request a conference or meeting with a teacher, please contact the school to collaborate on an appropriate time for the meeting. Please do not appear at the school or classroom door and expect an immediate meeting; this would compromise the teacher's ability to supervise the class properly.

Library and Textbooks

Throughout the years a significant percentage of our budget has been spent on library materials and classroom textbooks. Given the rising cost of books and our expectations that the children be responsible for them, we will continue to require the students to pay for any lost or destroyed items. Parents are responsible for paying for materials lost or damaged by their child. Our library has an automated circulation system. This will help us to track the circulation and usage of materials and target our resources to the areas of most value to our students and staff. The catalogue of materials in St. Kateri Tekakwitha library will be accessible from home on the Internet. The St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic School address is <http://library.wcdsb.ca/>. Click on School Catalogues, then click on St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Elementary. The address of the central database is <http://watrc.library.net/>.

Healthy Active Living (Physical Education)

All students are expected to participate in Healthy Active Living classes, except in the case of illness or injury in which case a note to the teacher from the parent is required. A positive attitude about Healthy Active Living will benefit your child since Physical Education affects fitness and has a marked

influence on health, attitudes and habits. All students are expected to wear proper gym clothes and footwear. All students in grades 6 – 8 are expected to change for Physical Education class. This is done for Hygienic reasons, as well as permitting greater freedom of movement.

Co-Curricular Activities

Many activities in athletics and the arts are scheduled throughout the year. Naturally, we want every student to become involved in many of these activities. These activities help to build self-confidence in students, as well as help students to build relationships with adults outside of the classroom. Students who get involved tend to enjoy school more than students who do not. Students will get the opportunity to make their school life more enjoyable. Academic success is still our prime concern. Participation on school teams and clubs is a privilege. *Participating on school teams and clubs is restricted to those students who are exhibiting proper learning skills in the classroom and proper respect and behaviour on the playground.* Activities may be offered before school starts in the morning, at recess and lunch, and after school. It is important that once a team is selected that the student makes a commitment to attend all practices and functions of that team or club for the remainder of the year.

Visitors

Unless you are a registered student or board employee, you are considered to be a visitor to the school.

When visiting the school, please report to the office before proceeding to any classes or other areas of the building. For your children's safety, we need to know who is in the building at all times. All visitors must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor or volunteer badge from the secretary.

Where specific custodial arrangements exist, court orders are required by the school principal to ensure only custodial parents have access to their children. We cannot deny access to children without **legal documentation**.

Every effort should be made to schedule appointments outside of school hours.

Parents/guardians must notify the school in writing if a student is required to leave during the school day. If parents/guardians pick up their child for an appointment during school hours, they must sign out the student at the office. . In the event of illness or injury, the school will contact parents/guardians before permission is given for a student to leave school.

It is extremely important that parents provide us with accurate phone numbers on health information forms and notify us of any changes to enable us to contact them in emergency cases.

Due to congestion and safety concerns, we ask that all parents and guardians pick up their children at the office, not outside the classroom doors. Students can make their way to/from the office or, depending on need, have a staff member assist them. Parents and caregivers must pick up and drop off their junior kindergarten and/or kindergarten child outside the fence.

Volunteers

Throughout the school year, we need volunteers to assist in the classrooms, on trips, and with our Strong Start Reading Program and various other important endeavors that support learning. Many of these activities do not require much of a time commitment and would not be possible without parental assistance. A handbook for volunteers has been assembled and will be made available to all volunteers. Please try your best to get involved in your child's education; it's worth the effort. In order to ensure the safety of our students, the WCDSB has asked that anyone volunteering with our children needs to have an Offence Declaration form completed before they can begin their school placement. In addition, we ask that all volunteers complete an Acknowledgement of Confidentiality form prior to their school placement. **Please notify the office of your arrival by signing in and wearing a volunteer badge.** Many of the programs, clubs and teams that we offer to the students are only possible with the assistance of parent volunteers. These individuals are an important part of our effort to provide a quality Catholic education for our students. Education involves a unique partnership between students, parents, school, church and the community. If you are able to reinforce this partnership by volunteering at the school, please contact your child's teacher to offer your services.

Volunteer Drivers

Parents and caregivers who transport students for school related activities, such as athletic events and excursions, **must** complete the Volunteer Driver Form each year. Please be aware of restrictions involving children sitting in passenger seats equipped with an air bag and all children 40-80 lbs. must be in a booster seat.

Lunch Room Expectations

Students will eat in their classrooms or a neighbouring classroom from 11:20 – 11:40. They will then go outside from 11:40 – 12:20. If students eat at school the following rules apply:

- Students are expected to act in a polite, friendly and cooperative manner while using the lunchroom.
- Students must remain in their seats while eating their lunch.
- Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their own eating area.
- Students are asked to take home food that has not been eaten.
- We request that students do **not** bring bottled drinks for safety reasons. Instead, it is recommended that students drink juice or milk in boxes or plastic containers or from a thermos.
- We do not have the facilities to “warm up” students' lunches.
- We have some students who are allergic to peanuts and nut products. In this interest of safety, **we promote a Nut-Free School Environment.** We ask that students and staff refrain from bringing these products and any related nut products, including nut oils, to school. We ask for your cooperation in this manner. Your child's teacher will inform you of any food allergies in that particular classroom.
- Students must remain on school property during the lunch hour. **In order to leave school property during the lunch hour, students must have signed permission from parents** (Gr. 6-8 only).

Anaphylaxis

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment for all students and staff. In particular, this includes all those who may be susceptible to Anaphylaxis – the term used to describe acute, severe life-threatening allergic reactions to a substance. Epinephrine (EPIPEN) is the only drug that should be used in the emergency management of a child having a life-threatening allergic reaction.

We ask that parents or guardians notify the school (principal and classroom teacher) of the condition. Then, complete the appropriate medical forms (available from the school secretary) and present them to the principal.

- **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**
- **EPIPEN INJECTION FORM**
- **MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM**

You then must provide the school with the medication and renew the medication before the expiry date. An EpiPen will be stored in a safe place in the school for each child identified anaphylactic.

Please ensure your child wears their **Medic-Alert** bracelet, which identifies specific allergens.

Please remind your child to eat only the food that is prepared at home and **not** to trade or share food.

Allergies

Your child's teacher will inform you of any precautions that must be taken within the school setting (i.e., treat days). **It is imperative that you notify the school if your child has an allergy.** We ask that parents support us in keeping the school **"nut free"** as we have students with a severe peanut allergy.

Medication

For safety reasons, no child should bring any form of medication to school without prior approval from the office. If oral medication is necessary, there is a form that must be obtained from the school office and completed before oral medication will be given out at school. The medication must be in the original container and clearly labelled with names (child, parent/guardian, doctor), phone numbers, and directions. Please contact the school to address individual student needs in this regard.

Student Illness

We do not have facilities at school to accommodate children who are ill. Whenever a child becomes ill, we will telephone home to request that a caregiver pick him/her up. To prevent the spread of germs we ask that you provide your child with tissue and also encourage the frequent washing of hands.

Supervision

Students will be supervised from 8:20 a.m. until 3:20 p.m. We will supervise each student in our care during these hours. It is imperative that once students arrive on the schoolyard they do not leave (to go to the store, meet friends, etc.) unless they have your **written permission** and the permission of the principal.

In the case of a crisis or an emergency in the yard, students **must** report to one of the adults on supervision. **All students must receive permission from the staff member on supervision before entering the school.** This is important to ensure the safety and security of all students. Staff members on supervision may be identified by the orange vest they wear.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Dismissal

In case of inclement weather, please check the Waterloo Catholic District School Board website @ www.wcdsb.ca or listen to the radio for information concerning the **Waterloo Catholic District School Board** school closings (570 CKGL- AM or 96.7 CHYM-FM). It is important to make an emergency plan with your children in case the school has to close prior to regular dismissal (i.e., leave a house key with a neighbour; child goes to neighbours and calls you from where they are; older brother or sister could be given the responsibility).

For those students who eat lunch regularly at school, the appropriate form must be completed instructing the school where to send your child in case of an emergency closure.

Students who do not remain for lunch will be dismissed at 11:20 a.m. or 3:05 p.m. If the school is closed for that day, announcements will be made on 570 CKGL-AM or 96.7 CHYM-FM. If your child is transported to school by taxi, transportation will be cancelled on days when school buses are cancelled. However, the school will remain open.

The safety of the children is always our priority. When the weather is bitterly cold (wind chill -20 or below) or pouring rain, we will keep the children inside during recess.

Excursions

We are very fortunate to live in an area which has an interesting history and varied places of interest in our immediate surroundings. We ask for your cooperation and support in returning required permission forms for excursions promptly. **Please notify the principal or your child's teacher should you require financial assistance for a field trip. Every student will be provided with the same opportunities and no one will be left behind due to financial reasons.**

Parking Lot Safety

For the safety of our students, we ask that parents who are dropping children off in the morning either:

A) Drive to 5 (Best Option for older students) - drop your children off so they have a 5-minute walk to school. This will help alleviate congestion in front of the school

B) Drop you child off at school - drive at an extremely slow rate, and drop off on the school side of the drop off zone. If parents are picking their child(ren) up at the end of the day, please walk with them if in need of crossing the street.

Our drop off zone doubles as our bus zone, so please do not park in this area. At the end of the school day, parent drivers must park on one of the side streets to allow for our seven busses to use this zone.

Please do not leave your car idling. If you are not in the driver's seat, please do not leave the engine running. If a child is jumping into the car, across the driver's seat, it is possible for the car to be put into gear.

Please respect all of the traffic signs on school property and on the street. Stopping or parking illegally may cause a situation that leads to a child to be injured. Please also respect our neighbours and do not block their driveways or use them to turn around.

Some of these expectations may cause you minor inconvenience. However, we're sure that you understand that the safety of the students is the responsibility of all of us. If you have arrangements with grandparents or other caregivers to drive your children to school, we would ask that you make them aware of these expectations. Please drive with caution at all times, especially near the school.

Homework Policy

We believe that assigning a reasonable amount of homework is an important part of a student's education.

We believe homework should:

- Be a shared commitment among teachers, students and parents
- Provide parents with insight into what their child is learning
- Provide parents with an opportunity to be actively involved in their child's education
- Teach students responsibility and self-discipline
- Instill the kind of work habits and organizational skills which students need to be successful in school and later in the workplace
- Encourage lifelong learning and extend learning beyond the school
- Extend and support in-school experiences through related out-of-school activities

Responsibilities:

Students will be responsible for their learning by:

- Writing down homework in agenda book
- Asking for assistance as necessary
- Completing the assigned work
- Meeting timelines for homework completion
- Developing a homework routine and study habits
- Locating appropriate resources and materials
- Organizing - ensuring they have the right books at home to do the homework
- Returning the completed assignments on time

Parents will assist students by:

- Asking each day about homework
- Ensuring students read every night
- Having the necessary materials and resources available
- Providing support and supervising if necessary
- Encouraging effort, achievement and a positive attitude
- Helping students organize homework routines; a time and a quiet place to do the work
- Discussing the homework assignments with their child

Teachers will support students and parents by:

- Establishing a place in the classroom where homework is written
- Providing time for students to copy homework into their agendas
- Checking the completion of homework
- Following up with students and contacting parents when necessary
- Providing a consequence when homework is incomplete
- Monitoring the amount of homework, they assign

Reading with Your Child

How can I help my child learn to read?

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When you help your child learn to read, you are opening the door to a world of books and learning.

Tip 1 – Talk to Your Child

Oral language is the foundation for reading. Listening and speaking are a child's first introduction to language. Talking and singing teaches your child the sounds of language, making it easier for him or her to learn how to read.

Here are some things you can do to help your child build an appreciation for words and language.

- Tell family stories about yourself, your child's grandparents and other relatives.
- Talk to your child as much as possible about things you are doing and thinking.
- Encourage your child to tell you what he or she thinks or feels.

Tip 2 – Make Reading Fun

Reading aloud can be a lot of fun, not just for parents but also for all family members. Here are some ways to get the most out of reading to your young child:

- Read with drama and excitement! Use different voices for different characters in the story. Use your child's name instead of a character's name. Make puppets and use them to act out a story.
- Re-read your child's favourite stories as many times as your child wants to hear them, and choose books and authors that your child enjoys.
- Point to words as you read them. This will help your child make a connection between the words he or she hears you say and the words on the page.

Tip 3 – Read Every Day

Children love routine, and reading is something that you and your child can look forward to every day. By taking the time to read with your child, you show him or her that reading is important and fun to do.

- Try to read with your child as often as possible. It's the best thing you can do to help him or her learn at school! It also allows you to spend time together in an enjoyable way and to build a strong and healthy relationship.
- Set aside a special time each day when you can give your full attention to reading with your child.
- Vary the length of reading time according to your child's age and interests. For young children, several short sessions (of 10 minutes each) may be better than one long session (of 30 minutes).
- When you and your child are away from home, take along books, magazines and 'books-on-disk' for your child to read and listen to.
- Keep reading to your child even after he or she has learned to read. By reading stories that will interest your child, but that are above his or her reading level, you can stretch your child's understanding and keep alive the magic of shared reading.

Tip 4 – Set an Example

As a parent, you are your child's most important role model. If your child sees you reading, especially for pleasure or information, he or she will understand that reading is a worthwhile activity.

You can also share many daily reading activities with your child. Here are some ideas:

- Read recipes, food labels, schedules, maps, instructions, and brochures.
- Read traffic signs and signs in stores and restaurants.
- Look up information in cookbooks, manuals, phone books, atlases, and dictionaries.

Tip 5 – Talk About Books

Talking about the books you read is just as important as reading them. Discussing a story or a book with your child helps your child understand it and connect it to his or her own experience of life.

- Here are some ways to help your child acquire skills in comprehension, reasoning and critical thinking.
- Ask your child about the kinds of books he or she would like to read.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and to comment on the story and pictures in a book – before, during and after reading it.
- Look at the cover and the title of a book with your child, and ask your child what he or she thinks might happen in the story.
- Think out loud about the story as you read, and
- encourage your child to do the same. For example,
- ask, "Does this make sense? Why or why not?"

Tip 6 – Listen to your child read

As your child learns to read, listen to him or her read aloud. Reading to you gives your child a chance to practice and to improve his or her reading skills.

- As you listen to your child, remember that your reactions are important. Above all, listen without interrupting. Be enthusiastic and praise your child as often as you can. If possible, be specific with your praise so that your child knows what he or she is doing well.
- Give your child time to figure out tricky words and show your child how he or she can learn from mistakes.
- Try to have your child read aloud to you at times when there will be no interruptions.
- Make sure that your child selects books that aren't too difficult. Don't worry if the books your child chooses are a little easier than the ones he or she reads at school.

What tips can I use to help my child?

Be positive about MATH!

- Let your child know that **everyone** can learn math.
- Let your child know that **you** think math is important and fun.
- Point out to your child the many ways in which math is used in everyday activities.
- Include your child in everyday activities that involve math such as making purchases, measuring ingredients, counting out plates and utensils for dinner.
- Play games and do puzzles with your child that involve math.

What math activities can I do with my child?

1. Understanding

Social-Emotional Learning

We use social-emotional learning to help your child learn the sources of their stress and how to cope with challenges. We encourage perseverance and offer positive motivation through mathematical challenges. Your child will learn to develop self-awareness and think creatively to solve inquiry problems.

- **Operation perseverance.** Find a challenge around the house for your child to work on with you. Working with and teaching your child to ride a bike and not give up.
- **Family game night.** Play games like Monopoly where they are challenged to work with money, strategy and cooperation with others.
- **Create a feelings chart.** Help your child learn words to express their feelings. Add in pictures to coincide with their feelings for a visual.

2. Understanding Numbers

Numbers are used to describe quantities, to count, and to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Understanding numbers and knowing how to combine them to solve problems helps us in all areas of math.

- **Count everything!** Count toys, kitchen utensils, and items of clothing as they come out of the dryer.
- **Sing counting songs and read counting books.**

- **Discover the many ways in which numbers are used inside and outside your home.** Take your child on a "number hunt" in your home or neighbourhood.
- **Ask your child to help you solve everyday number problems.** "We need six tomatoes to make our sauce for dinner, and we have only two. How many more do we need to buy?"
- **Practice "skip counting".** Together, count by 2's and 5's.
- **Make up games using dice and playing cards.**

3. Understanding Algebra

We find patterns in nature, art, music, and literature. We also find them in numbers. Patterns are at the very heart of math. Understanding patterns helps prepare children for the study of algebra in later grades. Understanding that movements on a grid to solve problems and make predictions helps progress coding skills.

- **Look for patterns in storybooks and songs.** Many children's books and songs repeat lines or passages in predictable ways, allowing children to recognize and predict the patterns.
- **Create patterns using your body.** Clap and stomp your foot in a particular sequence (clap, clap, stomp), have your child repeat the same sequence.
- **Hunt for patterns around your house and your neighbourhood.** Your child will find patterns in clothing, in wallpaper, in tiles, on toys, and among trees and flowers in the park.
- **Use household items to create and extend patterns.** Lay down a row of spoons pointing in different directions in a particular pattern (up, up, down, up, up, down) and ask your child to extend the pattern.
- **Engage your child in technology-based coding games.** Minecraft education and scratch are great resources and make coding fun activities for all.

4. Understanding Data & Probability

Everyday we are presented with a vast amount of information, much of it involving numbers. Learning to collect, organize, and interpret data at an early age will help children develop the ability to manage information and make sound decisions in the future. Your child will begin to understand the relationship between probability and data, and how data is used to make predictions about populations.

- **Sort household items.** As your child tidies up toys or clothing, discuss which items should go together and why.
- **Make a weather graph.** Have your child draw pictures on a calendar to record each day's weather. Have them make predictions each day about the weather (will it rain, be sunny, or snow today).
- **Make a food chart.** Create a chart to record the number of apples, oranges, bananas, and other fruit your family eats each day.

5. Understanding Spatial Sense

We use measurement to determine the height, length, and width of objects, as well as the area they cover, the volume they hold, and other characteristics. We measure time, angles and money. We use spatial reasoning to identify and describe shapes, sizes, positions, directions, and movement is important in many work situations, such as construction and design, as well as, in creating and understanding art.

- **Measure items found around the house.** Have your child find objects that are longer or shorter than a shoe or a string or a ruler.
- **Estimate everything!** Estimate the number of steps from your front door to the edge of your yard.
- **Talk about time.** Ask your child to check the time on the clock when he or she goes to school, eats meals, and goes to bed.
- **Keep a record of the daily temperature outside.**
- **Include your child in activities that involve measurements.** Have your child measure the ingredients in a recipe or the length of a bookshelf you plan to build.
- **Identify shapes and sizes.** "Take the largest cereal box out of the cupboard."
- **Ask your child to draw a picture of your street, neighbourhood or town.** Talk about where your home is in relation to a neighbour's home.
- **Go on a "shape hunt".** Have your child look for as many circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles as he or she can find in the home or outside.

6. Understanding Financial Literacy

We use financial literacy to understand the value of money by recognising Canadian coins and bills, representing various amounts, and calculating change transactions. Your child will begin to learn to make informed financial decisions, plan simple sample budgets and develop consumer awareness.

- **Create a piggy bank.** Have an item for your child to store money in. Have them practice counting and sorting the coins in their piggy bank.
- **Grocery shopping trips.** Have your child join you on your shopping trips. Have them help you to shop for the better deal (is it better to buy one or more of an item).
- **Create allowance opportunities.** Have your child help out around the house to earn and practice budgeting money for the special item they want to purchase.

BE A ST KATERI CATHOLIC SCHOOL 'STAR'!

S Stop

T Think

A Act

R Responsibly