



# SOUTHMORELAND PRIMARY CENTER



September 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians and Friends of SPC:

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration for the Southmoreland School District, I welcome you to the 2014-2015 school year. It is a pleasure to represent the district and to work with you as we pursue our mission of high quality learning for all of our students.

Our Kindergarten Orientation was a great success and we thank the parents who were in attendance for joining us and being a part of our program. We recognize how important it is for our students to begin their educational careers in a positive way and our teachers and staff all know the value of making school a warm, safe and inviting environment. This year, we are introducing the Daily 5 program for reading and literacy and the BASE (Be At School Every Day) program to increase student attendance. You can learn more about these programs in this month's issue.

Each month, I will be communicating our activities, events and other reminders to you by newsletter. I will also post this on our website, which I encourage you to visit frequently. Our address is: [www. Southmoreland.net](http://www.Southmoreland.net). Please click on the "schools" tab and choose Southmoreland Primary Center.

I look forward to serving as your principal and to being a part of your child's education. For me, there is no greater honor. I thank you in advance for your support and involvement in this process.

Respectfully,

Mr. Clara  
**Principal, SPC**



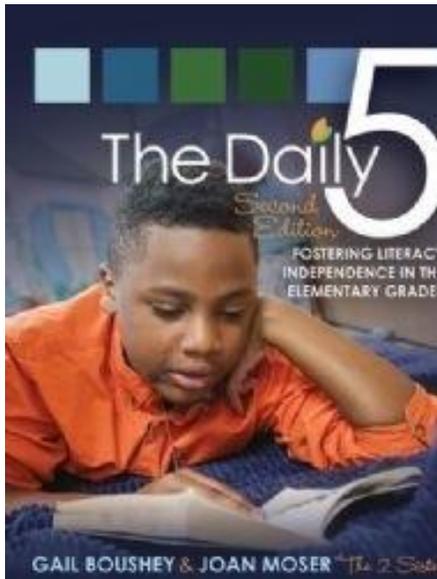


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## Daily 5 Framework

The Daily 5™ is a framework for structuring literacy time so students develop lifelong habits of reading, writing, and working independently.



The second edition was released in spring 2014.

### How does it work?

Students select from five authentic reading and writing choices, working independently toward personalized goals, while the teacher meets individual needs through whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as one-on-one conferring. These choices include

- Read to Self,
- Work on Writing,
- Read to Someone,
- Listen to Reading, and
- Word Work.

Teachers tell us their Daily 5 classrooms produce productive, highly engaged students who are developing a true love of literacy.

**The benefits** of The Daily 5 for teachers and schools include the following:

- students develop independence, stamina, and accountability;
- less time consumed by classroom management leaves more for instruction;
- the framework adapts flawlessly to district-adopted curriculums and state mandates;
- improves schoolwide literacy achievement; and
- behaviors of independence transfer to other content areas.

The [CAFE System](#) is how The Sisters, and teachers all over the world, deliver instruction within The Daily 5 framework. It is what enables teachers to choose individualized goals, assign strategies, monitor progress, and provide just-in-time instruction to meet the needs of every student.



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## ABOUT BASE!



**Attendance Works**

Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

As educators and as parents, we must do our best to promote good attendance. There is a great deal of research that points to student attendance and the effect of missing school on student learning. In 2014, 11% of our students were chronically absent, meaning that the students missed 10% of the year, or more than 18 days out of the school year.

We recognize this as a concern and together, we have developed an attendance reward program to assist parents in promoting good attendance in school that we are calling BASE, or BE AT SCHOOL EVERY DAY. It is based upon the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's standard for exemplary attendance, which is 95% or 12 or fewer days absent in the school year.

### **Our criteria is simple:**

### **Three or fewer absences in a nine week period FOR ANY REASON.**

Students can participate in our reward activity at school if they qualify by attending school and not missing more than three days in a nine week period. We have baseball cards and a baseball display for the students to track themselves as they try to make it home with 95% attendance for our end of year waffle ball game and celebration.

**Please know that there are no exceptions to our attendance rules for the BASE Program.** More than three absences in a nine weeks for any reason means you cannot earn that nine week reward, but you are eligible for the next one, so keep trying!

### **Did you know?**

- One in 10 kindergarten and first-grade students nationally are chronically absent, missing nearly a month of school. Emerging research shows even higher rates among preschoolers.
- These early absences correlate with reading difficulties and poor attendance patterns in later years. One California study found that only 17 percent of students who were chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade were reading proficiently in third grade, compared to 64 percent of those with good attendance.
- The effects of poor attendance are particularly pronounced among low-income children, who need more time in the classroom to master reading and are less likely to have access to resources outside of school to help them catch up. Unfortunately, low-income children are four times more likely to be chronically absent.
- Students can begin to reverse their academic difficulties if they improve their attendance.
- Parents are often unaware of the corrosive effects of absenteeism and how quickly absences add up to academic trouble in the early grades. Some face challenges with health, transportation or housing that contribute to absences.
- Attendance rates are better in schools where parents feel welcomed and engaged and where they trust their children are safe.



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## 10 Simple Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in School

### 1. Model a Love for Learning

Show that you believe that education is important by reading at home, supporting your child at school activities such as open houses and parent/teacher conferences.

### 2. Build Good Relationships

Initiate a positive relationship with your child's teacher and principal before conflicts occur. It's better to take one day off work to create a good relationship than two days off repairing damage from a bad one.

### 3. Know What He/She Likes About School

Identify your child's favorite subject and find a way to use that subject to encourage his/her interest in the other subjects.

### 4. Give the Teacher Information

Share information about your child's favorite subject and special interests with his/her teacher.

### 5. Encourage Participation

Find out if your child is getting behind or needs more challenging work before problems occur. Some students can be more easily distracted or distract other students when they are not properly challenged.

### 6. Listen to the Lesson

Encourage your child to discuss school lessons with you every day and ask questions like 'what did you learn today?'. Children are encouraged to learn when they believe that their parents are interested in what they know. If they don't think you're interested in what they learn in school they may not be either.

### 7. Make it Fun

Help your child associate learning with rewards and fun. Think of fun ways to help him/her see the value of getting a good education.

### 8. Create a Learning Environment

Identify the type of environment your child performs best in (lighting, location, time of day etc.) and create a spot in your home, whenever possible, that supports his/her preferred environment during homework time.

### 9. Promote Great Expectations

Give your child access to academically challenging information and supervised learning experiences. Increase the number of books available to your child and encourage your child to read daily. Research shows that the number of books and words a child has exposure to can positively influence and improve his/her experiences in school.

### 10. Affirm & Support

Remind your child that they do not have to be great at everything and encourage and praise them when they do their best.



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## Today's kindergarten

Kindergarten classrooms of today hardly resemble those of your childhood memories. Today's kindergarten classrooms have high expectations for children's academic achievement, social skills, and independence. Parents should also have high expectations for their child's kindergarten program.

Good kindergarten programs:

- Support and encourage all children, regardless of prior preschool experience, culture, language, ability, or disability.
- Use teaching practices that are challenging but appropriate for kindergarten-aged children.
- Encourage children's enthusiasm about learning.
- Provide a balanced curriculum with activities in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, and physical education.
- Invite parents to participate in their child's education.

## What can I do to prepare?

Having a child entering kindergarten can be a time of excitement and stress for parents. Planning ahead will make this time less stressful for you and your child. To get ready for your child to enter kindergarten you should:

- Decide which kindergarten program your child will attend.
- Request an enrollment packet from the school—notice the important dates and deadlines.
- Schedule an appointment with your child's pediatrician to make sure that his or her immunizations and health screenings are up-to-date.
- Give your child's current preschool program permission to share documents and information with the new school.
- Attend an open house or schedule a tour of your child's new school before school starts.
- Meet your child's new teacher and share your ideas about your child's interests, strengths and any areas of concern.



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- Find out how you can become involved in your child's classroom, school committees, and the PTA.

## What can I do to prepare my child?

Kindergarten will be a time of many changes for your child. He or she will have to adjust to new teachers, new children, new schedules, and routines. Having a successful entry into kindergarten will help your child have a positive attitude about school and learning. To get your child ready for kindergarten, you should:

- Read books about starting kindergarten.
- Talk enthusiastically with your child about starting kindergarten.
- Reassure your child's feelings of anxiety or fear.
- Plan for your child to visit his or her new school.
- Tell your child about the kinds of work he or she will be doing in kindergarten.
- Talk about and practice new routines.
- Spend extra time on the first day of school but do not "drag out" saying good-bye.

## What should I know about transitioning a preschooler with special needs?

If your child has special needs, you may have additional decisions to make about the length of your child's school day, different school sites, or program types. It is important to begin working with the school team as early as possible so that everyone, especially your child, feels comfortable with all the changes that will occur. For incoming kindergartners with special needs, the federal special education law (i.e., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) allows the school team to develop either an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). However, no matter which plan your child has, it should be appropriate for a kindergarten-aged child rather than for a preschooler.

## Resources

### Books

*Mrs. Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*, Joseph Slate, Ashley Wolff.

*The Night Before Kindergarten*, Natasha Wing, Julie Durrell.

*Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* Nancy Carlson.

*What Do We Say? What Do We Do? Vital Solutions for Children's Educational Success and Creating Positive Home School Connections*, Dorothy Rich.



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## Back-to-School Buses

Back to School means that the buses will be out on the roads again. Since most of the students that attend Southmoreland Elementary and Southmoreland Primary Center arrive and depart on buses, we would like to remind you of the road safety rules regarding buses and child safety. A bus safety program for kindergarten will be held on September 5<sup>th</sup>. This will be presented by Grooms Transit and Quest Coach, our teachers and our principal. FACTS

- 1.5 million students are transported on Pennsylvania roads each day.
- These students are transported more than 320 million miles to school each year.
- Every year children are needlessly injured or killed by drivers **passing stopped school buses**. Please take moment to review the Pennsylvania school bus stopping law and please help us keep our kids safe!
- When you meet or overtake a stopped school bus with red signal lights flashing and stop arm extended, you MUST STOP.
- When you approach an intersection where a stopped school bus with red signal lights flashing and stop arm extended, you MUST STOP.
- You MUST STOP at least ten (10) feet away from the school bus.
- You MUST WAIT until the red lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm has been withdrawn before moving.
- DO NOT MOVE until all the children have reached a place of safety.
- You MUST STOP on roadways with painted dividing lines.
- You MUST STOP on roadways with the dividing lines cut into the road.
- The only time you do not have to stop is on a highway with a clearly defined dividing section or barrier providing separate roadways (concrete wall, metal railing, or wide grassy area. This applies ONLY when the bus is on the opposite side of the road.

**IF IN DOUBT, STOP!!**

If you are convicted of violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law you could receive all of the following penalties:

- 60-day driver's license suspension
- Five points on your driving record
- \$100.00 fine, plus court costs!

Along with the usual list of bus safety rules, tell your children to watch all of the cars around their bus when they come to a stop. They need to be cautious when they enter and exit the bus, looking out for a vehicle that may not be following the law. **HELP US KEEP THEM ALL SAFE!!**