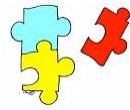




Pathways for Parents

Helping Your Child Succeed in School



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Home & School

One question that parents often ask of their child's teacher is, "What can I do to help my child at home?" It is an important question with many answers. In this issue and the next series of *Pathways for Parents* issues, we will explore some of the ways parents can help their child or children at home. The ideas are based upon strategies that teachers use in their own classrooms, but with a focus on the kinds of things you can do at home with your children.

Each issue will introduce the strategy, show how the strategy might look in the classroom, and provide suggestions for how you might make use of the strategy at home.



Identifying Similarities and Differences

Children make comparisons when they determine similarities between people, places, things, and ideas. Conversely, contrasting asks children to look at differences between these things. Classifying or sorting things into groups is one form of comparing and contrasting. Children use the features or characteristics of items to group them together or separate them from one another. The silverware in your kitchen drawer is a perfect example. Each utensil is sorted by what it has in common and by how it is different from the others. In language, metaphors and analogies are tools to identify similarities and differences. For example, you might compare the foundation of a house to the roots of a tree, or you might say the gas of a car is similar to food to the human body.

When children are asked to look for ways things are the same or different, it helps them see patterns and make connections between things they learn every day. The more students are able to do this, the better they are able to learn.



In the Classroom, It May Look Like.....

Asking questions of students: "How are these things alike?" or "How are they different?"

Completing charts, diagrams or other graphic tools that make it easier for students to see similarities and differences.

- . Venn Diagrams
- . T-Charts
- . Matrices

Participating in activities with manipulative objects in which the teacher asks students to sort items into groups according to similar features.

- . Math Patterning
- . Place Value (ones, tens, hundreds)
- . Word Sorts
- . Shape Sorts

Writing analogies using vocabulary words or ideas/concepts taught.

- . Insect is to Beetle as Arachnid is to Brown Recluse
- . 5 is to 10 as 50 is to 100
- . Mountain is to valley as longitude is to latitude

Writing metaphors using vocabulary words or ideas/concepts taught.

- . A volcano is the blender with its lid off the top.
- . Earth is a top spinning in space.
- . Democracy is the heart of America

At Home, It May Look Like....



Comparing life events like holidays and birthday parties.

Organizing kitchen cabinet and drawer objects into groups by characteristics of the items.

Shopping at the grocery store and comparing similar items for cost and/or ingredients.

Sorting personal possessions like clothing, books, or toys.

Reading a book and having your child compare himself/herself with a character from the story.

Reading two or more books with your child and discussing how characters or settings are similar or different from one book to another. This works with movies too!

Examining current events and comparing or contrasting those events with others in history. For instance, how are today's astronauts different from those of the 1950s?

Watching a movie and comparing events in the film with those in the child's life. How are the events similar or different from your child's own life?

Websites to Use at Home

[Be Quick Analogies](#)

[Awesome Analogies](#)

[Awesome Analogies II](#)

[Animal Analogies](#) (primary)

[Analogy Pop-Up I](#) (primary)

[Analogy Pop-Up II](#) (primary)