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Dear Parents,

Let's face it: school days can be chaotic. There's the morning hustle to get the kids awake, dressed, and off to school. After-school activities flood the afternoons: sports, language programs, and classes on computer coding (yes, that's a real thing now). Trying to tackle homework amidst cooking dinner and settling sibling arguments fill the evenings. Oh, and let's not forget the dilemmas and distractions of raising a child in the digital age—the perils of parenting in a world with YouTube are endless!

Schools desire parent involvement not because they want to add to your already hectic schedule, but because studies have shown that students are more successful when there is a strong connection between home and school. Creating a supportive and positive learning environment at home fosters knowledge, sparks curiosity, and builds self-confidence.

This parent guide will not burden you with more tasks and to-do lists; rather, it will empower you with useful tools, meaningful advice, and resourceful activities to help you create opportunities for learning in the moments that make up your everyday life.

Not every activity in this book needs to be completed. Choose what works best for you and your family. Take small steps. Live in the moment with your child. If you do that, you will naturally create a learning environment that will connect your home and school beautifully and seamlessly.



# It's Tech Time!

**Practical Uses** ➔ By now, your child can probably navigate YouTube better than you can. Trending apps, music-streaming services, and online games are nothing new to sixth graders. For them, digital entertainment is commonplace. But what about practical uses for technology? Does your child know how to use a spreadsheet program to manage allowance money? What about using word-processing software to design a résumé to apply for a summer job mowing lawns? Technology can be fun, but it can also be incredibly useful.



## Tech Tools

There may be some tech tools out there that your child has yet to hear about, or perhaps she has heard of them but has no idea how to use them or why she should use them. Here are three tech tools that are helpful and easy to use, and with which your child should become familiar.

### Adobe Acrobat Reader DC

#### What is it?

It is an online-based software that allows you to read, print, save, and share files in a safe and consistent format known as a PDF. A PDF is a file type that displays a file the way it is intended to be seen. For example, if you use a specific size, type, and color of font, those same font choices will display in an identical manner on a friend's computer as long as it is a PDF file.

#### Where is it?

Download it for free at: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

#### How can my child use it?

Your child should master creating, saving, commenting on, and sharing PDFs.

#### Try this activity!

Write a silly short story (just a paragraph will do) for your child. Deliberately include 10 spelling or grammatical errors in the story. Save it as a PDF file, and email it to her. Have her open the file and proofread it. Tell her there are 10 errors she must find. She can use proofreading marks and leave comments. Have her save the changes and send the file back to you. Then, switch roles. Have her write a silly short story, create a PDF, and share it with you to proofread.



### *Parent Pointer*

*Once your child has a handle on how to use the software, have her teach her friends. Then, have the friends take turns creating, saving, commenting, and sharing PDFs with one another.*

## Dropbox

### What is it?

It is an online-based service that allows you to store, organize, and share files. The files can then be accessed at anytime from any device.

### Where is it?

Create a free account at: [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)

### How can my child use it?

Your child should master creating an account, and storing, organizing, and sharing files.

### Try this activity!

Take a virtual vacation with your child! Pick a destination. Work together to create a travel budget using a spreadsheet software. Using pictures from the Internet and presentation software, make a slideshow to show all the places you visited together on your virtual vacation. Use word-processing software to produce a travel journal in which you record a few entries describing what you both saw on your trip. Then, have your child save all the files in his Dropbox. Next, have him share the files with friends and family via Dropbox file sharing.

## TRELLO

### What is it?

It is an Internet-based organizational tool—think of it as the ultimate to-do list complete with sticky notes, a calendar, and so much more. It is designed for everyone from Fortune 500 companies to families.

### Where is it?

Start a free account at: [www.trello.com](http://www.trello.com)

### How can my child use it?

The possibilities are endless. At this age, it is a great way for your sixth grader to get organized and have fun doing it. Have him create boards for school, home, and friends. On his “home” board, he can create a to-do list of chores or a list of games he wants to play on game night. For his “school” board, he can collaborate with classmates on a group project, assigning tasks and setting due dates. He can use his “friends” board to share lists of favorite movies or comic books.

### Try this activity!

Ask your child to pick a topic that interests him but that he doesn’t know a lot about. Have him create a KWL (What I Know, What I Wonder, What I Learned) chart using the features on Trello. Once he has completed the chart, have him share it with friends or family. Have your child challenge those with whom he shares the chart with to create KWL charts of their own.

