

Parent Information Letter



Dear Parents,

Your child will be participating in a special school project called Young Inventors' Program School Invention Convention (YIP School Invention Convention) that will combine many of the skills that s/he has been learning in the areas of science, social studies, language, writing, art and math. The Inventive Thinking Project is a school activity, which promotes analytical and creative thinking and problem solving. Each student will develop an original idea for an invention and take it from an idea, to a completed project. Parents can enjoy this project at home with their children by encouraging creative ideas and letting them share ideas with the family, and by assisting them with making models of their inventive ideas.

Each student will design an invention and build a working model of it. This project is important because it gives each student an opportunity to solve a real problem. Perhaps you are always complaining about cotton balls sticking in the aspirin bottle when first opened, or your child is tired of losing sneakers, pencils, or mittens. These are all problems solved by students.

I would like to thank _____ for their sponsorship of a YIP Kit for our classroom. This kit contains everything we need to conduct a first-class YIP Invention Convention including the supplies, awards, signage and a gift card for me to purchase project display boards for your student. Please make an effort to let our sponsor know your appreciation of their investment.

There are things you can do at home to help your child:

Set Criteria – A successful invention must meet several criteria. Students often have trouble verbalizing these. Ask your child to list all of the things that have to be true for the invention to be useful. Examples might include: Can I make it work? Can I make a model of it? Is it safe? Would other people want to use and buy it?

Questioning – Instead of giving your child answers to all of his/her questions, ask him/her questions that help him/her focus on the problem s/he is having. For example, if she/he asks “What should I build it out of?” or “I don’t know what to build it out of.” You can respond with your own questions. Ask him/her, “What do you think you could use? What materials are available to you? What do you know how to use? What do other people use to make inventions that do similar things?” Using this procedure helps each child retain ownership in the inventive process.

Construction – Encourage your child to use materials that are available at home or to recycle materials. Each student should build his/her own model. At times this is not reasonable. If your child want to build a model out of wood, but cannot safely cut the wood, you can do it for him/her. You should have him/her first decide how long it should be and mark where it should be cut. Each child can decorate his/her own model.

Journal Keeping – All inventors keep a log to record their thoughts. Not only is it a wise thing to do, it will prove that they had the idea first and will help plan the invention. You will be asked to sign your child’s log as a witness to prove the work and ideas are his or her own.

The evaluation will be based on what the student does, not on how flashy the model might be. Each child will share his/her invention with the class. When your child presents his/her invention s/he will be asked to describe who has done what on his/her model. All student inventors will receive

recognition for their efforts. Several students will be invited to share their inventions, and Rube Goldberg® Machines at the Young Inventors' Program® Regional Invention Convention in the spring.

On _____[date], the school will hold a Young Inventors' Program® School Invention Convention, a special event to display the student's creative efforts. You will be surprised and delighted by the many new and creative inventions and Rube Goldberg® contraptions the students develop. **Please save the date!** We will remind you of this event, and we hope you will join us to celebrate the student's effort.

This is a timeline for the invention process:

- Week One** Identify problems that might be solved with an invention.
Pick a problem to work on.
Look for similar inventions.
- Week Two** Plan how to solve the problem.
Begin working on a model.
- Week Three** Test the model and improve as needed.
- Week Four** Complete the model and prepare a presentation.
- Week Five** Final model is due.
Present invention to classes.

I hope that you and your child enjoy the invention process. Please return the bottom portion of this letter to the school indicating you have discussed this Inventive Thinking Project with your child. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

Teacher Name

P.S. Please make an effort to let our sponsor know your appreciation of their investment. A thank you note can be sent to:

✂ _____

Please sign and return to school.

I have seen and discussed this Inventive Thinking Project and timeline with my child.

Child's Name

Parent's Signature

Date