



Houghton Elementary School January 2025



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The Hard Thing Rule— Kids Who Don't Quit


KEEP CALM AND SET YOUR GOALS

Upcoming Events:

- **January 16th**— “Meet the Gremlins” Girls Varsity Basketball Team after the 7:15pm game!
- **January 23rd**—Students Dismissed at 12:20 pm
- **January 24th**—Students Dismissed at 12:20 pm
- **January 27th** — Start of the Semester 2
- **February 8th & 9th**— Wing Ding—High School Basketball and Hockey Games
- **February 13th** — Valentine’s Day Celebrations
- **February 14th**— Professional Development Day— NO SCHOOL
- **February 17th** — Mid-Winter Break—NO SCHOOL



The best indicator of success in life is not talent or test scores. The best indicator falls under a term often referred to as “grit.” Grit is resilience, stick-to-it-iveness and pushing past quitting points. Angela Duckworth’s brief definition of grit is simply: “Perseverance and passion for long term goals.”

As an educator or parent you might be thinking, “Ok, I get it. I want to help my children/ students build grit, but how do I do it?” The Hard Thing Rule is one way.

The hard thing rule is a rule that Duckworth has created for her own family. It has three parts:

- ◇ Everybody in the family, including mom and dad have to do a hard thing, something that requires practice so that you can get better, gradually over time.
- ◇ You have to finish what you begin. If you begin the hockey season, you have to finish the hockey season. If mom pays for piano classes, you have to finish the classes. After you have finished you can choose a new hard thing.
- ◇ The third part of the hard thing rule preserves the child’s autonomy. This means that nobody gets to pick your hard thing but you. Yes, you have to practice. Yes, you have to finish what you began, but the individual is in charge of picking what their hard thing is.

Duckworth says, “something that requires practice, something where you're going to get feedback telling you how you can get better, and you're going to get right back in there and try again and again.” Duckworth mentions that even when her children were 5 and 6 years old they were given some choice as to what their hard thing was. It is important for children to know that they are ultimately the captain of their own ship. It is better to learn this young than to need mom to call your college professor because of a poor grade or dad send a message to their

high school coach because they lack the ability to do it themselves.

Duckworth notes that her younger daughter went through about six hard things, until she finally settled on playing the viola. So far, she's kept at it for three years.

The point is for parents to help their kids find something they're interested in and then help grow that interest, while at the same time modeling grit and showing how far it can take you. It needs to be something that is intrinsically motivating for the child, something that they are passionate about. When a young person learns to combine their passion with perseverance over life’s ups and downs, they will have truly learned something valuable.

To make the hard thing rule work in your house you do not have to be perfect. However, there is one mistake you cannot make. You cannot do it for them. Doing it for them does not teach kids to persevere. It teaches kids to quit when things get tough, because someone will rescue them.

This year, make the hard thing rule a daily conversation in your house and help raise children who won't quit.

[Ted Talk Grit](#)

-Micah Stipech

GRIT.



Kindergarten Registration

Houghton Portage Township Schools will begin registering Kindergarten-aged children for the 2025-2026 school year in March. Children who will be five years of age by September 1st, 2025, are eligible to enter Kindergarten or Young 5's.

You can apply for a waiver if your child will be 5 by Decem-

ber 1st, 2025 to enter Kindergarten or Young 5's early. Please call Houghton Elementary School at 482-0456 ext. 3000 with questions.

Children **currently attending Young 5's** are automatically registered for Kindergarten.

Please pass on this information to any parents you know with Kindergarten age children.



Preparing for Winter Weather— Cancellations and Delays

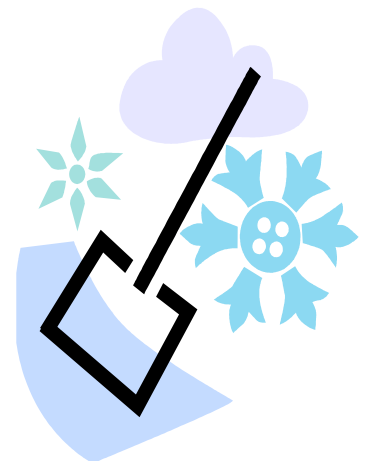
When inclement weather causes the closing of school, the following procedures will be followed:

School Closing: Announcements will be made via the Parent Listserv, the school website, text message alerts, the television station (TV 6) and local radio stations by 7:00 a.m. that school will not be in session.

Late Starts: When weather conditions warrant, the start of school may be delayed. Such an announcement will be

made as soon as possible. Buses will run two hours late.

Early Dismissal: Our office will be notified of early dismissals due to bad weather as early as possible. Dismissal time from classes and bus schedules to transport children will be determined by the Superintendent. Parents, please review your plan with your student and please contact the office ASAP if your initial plans have changed.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

**EVERY
MINUTE
IN SCHOOL
MATTERS**

Two missed days a month adds up to being a half a year behind by the time your child reaches 4th grade.

And once a child falls behind, they rarely catch up.

ATTEND TODAY
ACHIEVE TOMORROW



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December TEAM Students

Every month we are recognizing a student in each class that exemplifies our schools TEAM goals:

Take Responsibility

Earn Respect

Act Positively

Make it Safe

These students will enjoy a treat and receive a certificate. Our December honorees are:

Young 5's: Malcolm Theisen

K: Lucas Kroll, Ameya Malladi, Theo Roy, Ripley Laird.

1st : Kinsley Deyaert, Henry Hendrickson, Carson Tormala, Evvie Campaign, Kat Miller

2nd: Ethan Chong, Winnie Voldarski, Watson Geshel, Eveliina Markham, Hazel Lawrence

3rd: Sierra Kryzanek, Wes Helminen, Jaxon Erva, John Atkinson, Conor Lurn

4th: Scarlett Bier, Knox Kunnen, Iley Bustos, Brandon Jukkala, Raegan Riley

5th: Angelina Datto, Luca Niedzwiecki, Chloe Gasperich, Layne Massaway, Luke Green

Congratulations!!!



THE MAGIC OF MEALTIME



Make mealtime a safe and interactive space.

Sitting down for a nightly meal is great for the brain, body, and spirit. The most reliable way for families to connect and find out what is going on with each other is by having regular meals together.

Children who are regularly involved in family meals:

- ➡ Are more resilient
- 👑 Have higher self-esteem
- 🥦 Consume more fruits & vegetables
- 🚫 Eat fewer fried foods and soft drinks
- A+ Perform better in school and enjoy learning more

Turn off electronics!

The dinner table atmosphere is also important. Turn off electronics, and use the time to create a safe time to share. When children trust that their feelings will be responded to with sensitivity, and respect they feel safe. They will be more honest and vulnerable with you, and open to having a conversation.

5 Tips for Encouraging Dinner Conversation with Your Kids:

1. **Go beyond "How was your day?"** Asking open-ended questions results in one of two answers: fine or good. Kids usually don't elaborate, so try to ask more specific questions about their day. For example, *"What's something interesting that happened today?"*
2. **Talk about your own day.** What better way to encourage conversation than by modeling it? Sharing about your own day helps your kids understand that as adults, we also have ups and downs in our days.
3. **Share the good and bad.** We know that not every moment of each day is always good. We have moments of frustration, anger, sadness, or a variety of other emotions intertwined with the good parts of our days. It's good for your kids to share those ups and downs as well as hear your own. Try asking what the high/low of their day was.
4. **Get them to imagine.** Asking questions that get your kids' thinking is a great way to have a fun conversation at the dinner table! From silly questions like *"If you were a superhero what power would you want to have?"* To more practical questions such as, *"How would you get food if you were stranded on an island?"* They love having fun debating and discussing! Be sure to add to the conversation by giving your own thoughts to such questions; oftentimes, your answers will inspire deeper thoughts from the kids.
5. **Ask about the people in their daily life.** It's likely that your kids are with other people for the better part of their days - teachers, friends, and coaches - they all interact with our children regularly! Asking your children about those interactions or what's going on with their friends can often provide a peek into your child's daily life.

Interactive Ideas:



[The Feelings Wheel is a great way to help your kids identify with words different emotions they felt throughout the day.](#)

If you could be in any movie, what movie would you choose?	What is your favorite chore? What about your least favorite?
What makes you feel loved?	What are you most proud of?
If you could only take 3 things to a deserted island what would you take?	What is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to you?
Where would you fly if you had wings?	Describe someone else at this table in 3 words.
If you could plan a family trip, where would we go and what would we do?	If you could be any animal, what would you be?
If you had one wish what would it be?	What is your least favorite color?
If you could plan a family trip, where would we go and what would we do?	If you could be any animal, what would you be?

[Fun conversation starter ideas to pull out of a jar!](#)