

Example letter enlisting parental help with observing at night.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child's homework is very special tonight and he/she will need your help. We have been learning about star patterns and the children are now sufficiently familiar with the shapes to go out in the dark and look for the real thing. Please help by dressing up very warmly and taking your child to a safe place in the garden or down the road or to a nearby park. You will need to be away from any tall buildings that obstruct your view of the sky. Make sure you are not next to a street light or under a tree. If it is at all cloudy then wait until it is clearer or wait for a better night.

First of all face north. If you do not know which direction this is then try to remember where the Sun set and keep that to your left. Each child has a star pattern called the "Plough". You should now be facing the stars which form this pattern. Now turn a quarter-turn to your right to spot the other pattern "Orion".

The observations we are making may require the children to look again an hour or so later. Please help again by taking your child back to the same place. The project can be completed by 9pm. This may be a little later than bed time but please try to be lenient. We have not given your child any excuse to stay up much later than this.

Thank you and good observing!

Yours sincerely,

Earth and Beyond (ASE: 1997)

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