

7 Tips to Help Your Child Succeed at School

As a parent, you are your child's most important and influential teacher. Some of the latest studies confirm that parental involvement in their children's school experience is more important to students' academic success and enjoyment of learning than how much money parents make or how much education they have. So, how can you help support your child's learning at home and during the school year?

1. Meet your child's teacher.

- If the school doesn't have an open house or "Meet the Teacher" night, make the time to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year. Get acquainted and show your interest right away. Then, during the year, stay in touch. Ask the teacher how he/she prefers to be contacted.
- Share with the teacher your child's likes and dislikes, needs, and any problems. Keep them in the loop, and make them aware of any significant changes in your child's behavior or attitude during the year. They can often help when they understand the situation.
- It's important for children to see their parents and teachers working together. It sends the message that education is a top priority at home and at school.

2. Attend parent-teacher conferences, and stay in touch throughout the year.

- Most schools have several parent-teacher conferences each year. It is important to attend them (and if you can't attend, schedule another meeting with your child's teacher). Your child's teachers want to meet with you because they know how important a strong partnership between home and school is in helping your child succeed. Teachers welcome your insight and are happy to work with you for your child's benefit.
 - Parent-teacher conferences allow for the perfect opportunity to ask questions about your child's progress as well as learn more about your child's friends and what students are studying in class. It is your chance to learn more about any challenges your child might be having as well as his/her strengths. Example questions to ask are:
 - What are some of my child's strengths and weaknesses?
 - Is my child participating in class?
 - How are my child's social skills?
 - Do you think my child is reaching his/her potential?
 - What can I do at home to support your efforts at school?
- If you have a concern about your child during the school year, you can always send your child's teachers a short note, e-mail, or make a phone call.

3. Make sure your child does his/her homework.

- You'll want to be sure your children know how important you believe their education is and that homework is a part of the learning process. Set aside a special place for them to work on homework that is free from distractions like television, phone calls, texting, etc. Help them get organized; provide them with the necessary materials they need; check with them to be sure they completed their assignments;

and then most importantly, praise them for their efforts. When they haven't done their best work, provide constructive criticism by making suggestions that will improve their efforts so they will know how to improve next time.

4. Volunteer at your child's school (get involved).

- There are many ways to get involved with your child's school. Start by asking office personnel or your child's teacher how you can help. Maybe you can volunteer in the classroom or on a field trip. Or perhaps you can provide food for a school event or just attend evening events like parent-teacher conferences or the meet the teacher night. Check to see if there is a PTA or PTO you can join.

5. Demonstrate a positive attitude about education to your children.

- Parents can encourage a positive attitude by having a positive attitude in their daily lives. Showing your child that you value education and use it every day in your own life will be a powerful model for them. Share something you learn with your child each day—with enthusiasm. It can be contagious.

6. Monitor your child's TV and Internet usage.

- Most children in the USA spend far too much time watching television and playing video games. Don't let these activities push out homework and other school-related activities. Set limits on how much time your child spends watching TV and playing games. Recommendations are to limit your child to no more than two hours a day. Better yet, teaching your child to select educational shows can be an important key to lifelong learning.

7. Encourage reading.

- One of the most important things you can do to help your child succeed in school is to help him become a better reader. Becoming a proficient reader will help your child succeed in all his or her school subjects and throughout life.
 - **1–3 year olds:** [Read to your child](#) for at least 15 minutes each day. Sit them on your lap, and let them hold the book and help turn the pages. Make reading fun—use your face and voice for different characters. As you read the words, run your finger along the bottom of the words. Talk about the pictures in the book
 - **Preschoolers:** Let them know that “story time” is a favorite part of your day. Keep lots of books on hand (check second-hand bookstores, garage sales, use the library). Ask your child questions about the story like “What do you think might happen next?” and point out things on the page. Let your child ask questions and tell familiar stories back to you.
 - **Elementary age:** If your child can read, have him or her read aloud to you every day. You can take turns. Compare what they read with real life, and discuss similarities and differences. Encourage reading by making it an incentive to stay up later for a few minutes. Try different types of books and magazines. Turn on closed captioning on your television.

Enjoy these exciting years and get engaged, and you and your child will create wonderful memories together!