

# It's Never Too Late to Get Involved



**T**he research is in—and it's very clear. Anne Henderson, who has spent more than 30 years studying family engagement in education, puts it this way: "When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life."

If you've never taken a very active role in your child's education, you may wonder if you're too late. You're not. It's never too late for you to become more involved with your child's education. And any time you get involved, you start helping your child—immediately!

**QuickTips**

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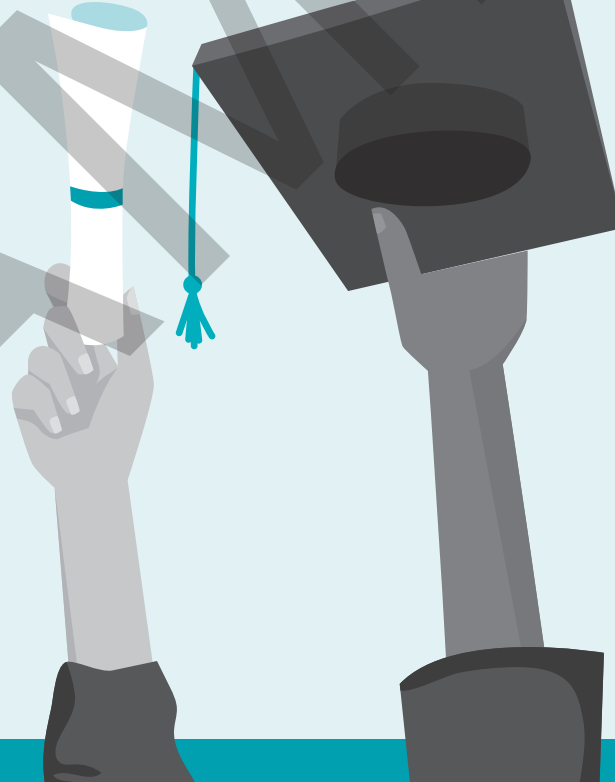
## Family Engagement Produces ...

- Higher grades and test scores.
- Better attendance.
- More positive attitudes toward school.
- More positive behavior.
- Higher graduation rates.
- Increased enrollment in education after high school.

## Change Your Definition of 'Volunteer'

**S**o you don't have time to be a room parent. Does that mean you can't be a school volunteer? Not according to Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University. She says a volunteer is "anybody, anytime, anyplace, who supports school goals or children's learning." That means you can consider yourself a "school volunteer" if you:

- **Read aloud with your child every day.** Think your child is too old? Try it—you may be surprised. Or listen to audiobooks when you're in the car together.
- **Set aside a regular time** and place for completing assignments—and enforce it by turning off the television and not allowing video games.
- **Let your child know** that effort—not intelligence—is the real key to success in school.
- **Visit the library together regularly.** It's just as important now as it was when your child was a toddler. It's also the least expensive way to promote reading.
- **Keep close track** of how your child is doing in school. Look over graded work that comes home. Talk to teachers if you have concerns about your child's progress.



## Talk About School

As you sit around the dinner table, talk about how important education is. Explain ways you use the things you learned in school on the job and in everyday life. Point out that just as you do your best at work, you expect your child's best effort in school.

But how can you avoid those "What did you do in school today?" "Nothing" conversations? Try asking more specific questions:

What was the most important thing you learned today?

What new assignments did you get?

What do you think your history teacher will ask on the test?

Pay attention to what comes home in your child's schoolbag. If you know there's been a school assembly, you can ask questions related to it. Share information about your own day. Sometimes just hearing about Mom or Dad's day will give a child "permission" to talk about the day at school.

## There's No Such Thing as 'No Work'

*"I don't have any assignments tonight."*

Sound familiar? Many older students say this to their parents in hopes of spending the night watching TV or playing video games.

Some families have made a rule: There's no such thing as a "no work" night. If there truly is no school assignment, make one up. Ask your child to choose an interesting topic and do a little research.

Your child can use articles to find out more about a topic that's in the news or interview friends and relatives. When the "assignment" is finished, have your child read it aloud to you.

But don't be surprised—when you show that you mean business, your child may suddenly "remember" that there's a little studying to do after all!



## A Quote to Remember

*"One hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child."*

—Author Unknown



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