

Work with Your School

Working with your child's teachers is the best way to help your child succeed in school.

A parent-teacher conference is a great opportunity for you to give and receive information. Focusing on the following questions will help ensure that your conferences are positive and productive.

- ▶ Does my child pay attention in class?
- ▶ Is my child working up to his/her potential?
- ▶ Does my child use class time wisely?
- ▶ Is my child organized?
- ▶ Does my child ask questions and participate in discussions?
- ▶ Does my child complete his/her homework accurately and on time?
- ▶ What are my child's strengths? Which skills need work?
- ▶ Does my child seem to get along well with the other students?
- ▶ What is the best way for me to contact you if I have a question or concern?

"There are two great things that you can give your children: one is roots, the other is wings."

Hodding Carter, Author



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School Success

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School Success



You Make the Difference!

Help Your Child Get Organized

Take the time to help your child develop good organization skills. Being organized will make your child a better student!

- ▶ Encourage your child to regularly use a student planner. Check it periodically to make sure your child is using it correctly.
- ▶ To discourage loose papers being put in books and backpacks, provide your child with a folder for each class.
- ▶ Help your child set up a home filing system for the papers you want to keep.
- ▶ Have your child clean out his/her backpack at least once a week.
- ▶ Before going to bed each night, have your child get everything ready for the next day.
- ▶ Help your child develop routines. Having a good morning and nighttime routine helps students be more organized, and it makes the day run smoother.





Provide Support and Guidance

Be Informed and Involved

Be a Great Parent! School Success

As a parent, you are the most important and influential person in your child's life, and your child needs you to be interested and involved in his/her education!

To help your child succeed in school, make school and homework a top priority, talk about the importance of getting a good education, and do the following:

- ▶ provide support and guidance
- ▶ be informed and involved
- ▶ help your child get organized
- ▶ work with your school

Your support and involvement are the key to your child's success!

Elementary students need their parents to monitor their academic progress and provide encouragement and support.

Insist on daily attendance

- ▶ Attendance is the number one school success factor. Unless your child is ill, he/she needs to be in school.



Provide tools for success

- ▶ Make sure your child has all the necessary school supplies, including a student planner or agenda to record class assignments.
- ▶ Have a comfortable, quiet, well-lit place at home for your child to study.

Monitor homework

- ▶ Help your child create a schedule that makes homework a part of the daily routine.
- ▶ Be available to help with difficult assignments, organize homework, and prepare for tests.
- ▶ Be positive and encouraging. Celebrate achievements and praise your child for extra effort.

Studies show that parental involvement significantly improves a student's school performance.

Be informed

- ▶ Know how your child is doing in school. Look over returned papers and see every report card. If you have a question, contact your child's teacher.
- ▶ Read school newsletters and bulletins, and regularly visit your school's website.
- ▶ Talk to your child about what's happening at school, and show consistent interest in your child's academic progress.

Be involved

- ▶ Attend open houses, parent programs, and parent-teacher conferences.
- ▶ Participate in parent-teacher groups and consider volunteering at your child's school.
- ▶ Be sure to let your child's teacher, counselor, or principal know about anything that might affect your child's attitude or performance.





Guidance and Discipline Tips

21. Use rewards and consequences to encourage change. Consequences are most effective when they are reasonable and logical. For example, a logical consequence for not being ready for school on time is an earlier bedtime.
22. Know the TV shows and videos your child watches. Provide guidelines and set limits.
23. If you believe that your child is involved in an activity that's wrong or harmful, listen to your instincts and take appropriate action.
24. Give your child a little more freedom each year.
25. Never use physical punishment, and never take away a positive activity (e.g., sports, scouts) as a punishment.
26. If your child has done something wrong, focus on the behavior, not the child. Good kids sometimes make bad choices.
27. Remember that smiles and hugs can do wonders. Use them often!

More Parenting Tips

28. Keep your sense of humor.
29. Take family trips to libraries, museums, parks, and zoos. It's important for children to discover that learning can take place anywhere.
30. Teach your child basic social behaviors, such as phone etiquette, writing thank you notes, and having a firm handshake.
31. Make sure that your child gets enough sleep. Elementary students should get 10–11 hours of sleep each night.
32. Give your child age-appropriate chores (e.g., set the table, feed a pet). Helping around the house will teach your child responsibility.
33. Encourage independent problem solving. When children learn how to solve their own problems, they become more confident.
34. Teach financial responsibility. Give your child an allowance and set up a savings account.
35. Be a good role model. Children learn their behaviors and attitudes from their parents more than from anyone else.

"It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings."

Ann Landers



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Parenting Tips

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Parenting Tips



You Make the Difference!



Parenting Tips

Be a Great Parent! Parenting Tips

Being a good parent doesn't involve doing extraordinary things. It's the little things you do every day that are the most important.

Use these tips to help your child thrive and grow!

Parent Involvement Tips

1. Regularly spend one-on-one time with your child doing something you both enjoy.
2. Make education a top priority. Get to know your child's teachers and monitor your child's academic progress.
3. Set aside 20–30 minutes each day for reading. Read to your child, have your child read to you, or have family reading time.
4. Get to know your child's friends and their parents. Have your child invite friends over.

5. Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Have nutritious food at home and make sure that your child gets plenty of exercise.
6. Look for teachable moments. For example, if there's a storm, talk about what causes thunder and lightning. If you don't know, try to find the answer together.
7. Encourage your child to dream about the future. Talk about the variety of careers people have, and choose a few careers to explore together.
8. Spend time together outside. Go for nature walks, hikes, and explore the natural world.
9. Help your child develop his/her interests and talents. Celebrate the things that make your child unique!
10. Pay attention to your child's moods, sleeping patterns, and eating habits. These can be good indicators of how things are going at school and with friends.
11. If your child plays a sport, support the players and coaches, go to every game, and cheer.
12. Understand the technology your child uses and know where your child goes online.



13. Spend time every day discussing what went on in school. Ask questions that require more than one word answers. Instead of "How was school?" say "Tell me about your day."
14. When you talk to your child, turn off the TV and the radio, and put your phone away. Give your child your full attention.
15. Talk about what's happening in your community and the world. Listen to your child's thoughts and ideas.
16. Discuss the importance of kindness. Encourage your child to respect others and to help those in need.
17. Talk to your child about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and smoking. Make sure your child knows where you stand on these issues.
18. Eat dinner as a family as often as possible. Turn off the TV and talk about your day.
19. Tell family stories. Hearing stories about their relatives gives children a sense of belonging.
20. Discuss bullying. Encourage your child to tell you if a student ever bothers him/her at school.

Put Your Child on the Path to College

- ▶ Make education a top priority in your home. While many factors will determine the kinds of opportunities your child will have in life, the most important factor is education.
- ▶ Help your child develop good study habits, and encourage him/her to do as well as possible in school.
- ▶ So that your child can get an idea of what college is like, go to a college sporting event or take a walk on a college campus.
- ▶ Find “teachable moments” to discuss the relationship between education and a specific career. For example, when you’re at a doctor’s office, discuss the education that’s needed to be a nurse or a doctor.
- ▶ Start a college savings account.
- ▶ Show consistent interest in your child’s academic progress, provide a stable home environment, and let your child know that you are there to help in any way possible.

Education is an investment in the future!



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Career and College



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Educational Options

Students today have a number of ways they can prepare for a great career.

Career and Technology Education – Most high schools offer a variety of career and technology programs. These programs are generally available to juniors and seniors.

Community College – Community colleges provide affordable one- and two-year programs. Students can also start at a community college and then transfer to a four-year college.

Four-Year College – A four-year college education (bachelor’s degree) can provide students with a wide range of career opportunities.

Career and Trade Schools – Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a variety of career fields. Some programs last only a few weeks; others take up to two years to complete.

Apprenticeship – Apprentices learn a skilled trade through classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

Military – The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties. The military also has a number of programs to help students pay for college.





Be a Great Parent! Career and College

It is never too early for children to learn about different careers and explore their career interests.

As you help your child explore various career and education options, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Which school subjects does my child like and do well in?
- ▶ Does my child have any specific interests or talents?
- ▶ Does my child enjoy helping people?
- ▶ Is my child creative?
- ▶ Does my child like to figure out how things work?
- ▶ Is my child quiet or outgoing?
- ▶ Will my child want to go to college?

Explore Careers Together



Expand your child's horizons

Children like to imagine what life will be like as an adult. They often enjoy thinking of themselves in a glamorous or exciting career, such as professional athlete or rock star. By exploring and investigating a variety of careers, you can help your child understand that there are lots of interesting and rewarding careers to choose from.

Identify your child's abilities and interests

Talk to your child about how his/her talents and/or personality traits can be a valuable asset in the right career field.

Provide opportunities to learn about careers

- ▶ There are a number of excellent books, and there's a wealth of career information online at sites such as www.bls.gov/ooh.
- ▶ Find some after-school activities to support and expand your child's interests.
- ▶ Arrange for your child to talk to someone who works in a career field he/she finds interesting.
- ▶ Talk about the jobs and careers you have had, and provide opportunities for your child to learn about the careers of other family members.

Relate Subjects to Careers

If your child likes a particular school subject, explore the careers related to that subject. Below are a few examples of popular careers by subject area.

- ▶ **Language Arts** – author, court reporter, lawyer, librarian, reporter, secretary, teacher, TV or radio broadcaster, writer
- ▶ **Math** – accountant, carpenter, computer programmer, electrician, engineer, stockbroker, surveyor, teacher
- ▶ **Science** – athletic trainer, biologist, chemist, dental hygienist, engineer, meteorologist, nurse, pharmacist, physician, teacher, veterinarian
- ▶ **Social Studies** – lawyer, newscaster, police officer, politician, psychologist, social worker, teacher
- ▶ **Art and Music** – architect, artist, composer, fashion or floral designer, musician, photographer, teacher
- ▶ **Foreign Language** – flight attendant, hotel manager, international business consultant, interpreter, teacher, tour guide, translator, travel agent





Technology Tips

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is using technology to harass or taunt another person online.

Children often don't tell their parents they're being harassed or bullied because they are embarrassed, afraid, worried their parents will overreact, or that the bully will retaliate.

If you see any of the following signs, ask your child if someone is causing problems for him/her online or at school:

- ▶ more anxious, quiet, insecure
- ▶ drop in grades / not wanting to go to school

If your child is the target of cyberbullying, support your child, and work with the school until the problem is addressed and resolved.

Be a good role model

We adults give up the right to lecture if we don't exhibit the self-discipline we're expecting of our children. If our faces are buried in our devices rather than interacting with our friends and family, then we have no credibility.

As much as possible, reserve your online use to when you're not with your children.

Technology Tips

- ▶ Know what videos and TV shows your child is watching. Also be aware of what kinds of music your child is listening to.
- ▶ Make sure your child understands that using technology is a privilege, not a right. When children use technology inappropriately, there should be consequences.
- ▶ During dinner, turn off the TV and require that all phones be put away. Use this time to talk about your day.
- ▶ To help your child get a good night's sleep, have your child "power down" (turn off the music, TV, computer) an hour before bedtime.
- ▶ Require that all phones be plugged in for recharging in a central location (e.g., your bedroom) at a certain time every night.
- ▶ Be on guard for excessive computer use and secretive behavior. Also watch for any emotional upset after spending time on a computer.
- ▶ Praise your child for positive online activities, just as you would for other positive activities.

For information on Internet safety, go to

www.common SenseMedia.org

www.netSmartz.org

www.onGuardOnline.gov



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Today's Technology

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Today's Technology



You Make the Difference!



Be a Great Parent! Today's Technology

Most young people are very tech savvy. Children, however, need their parents to provide guidelines to help ensure that they use technology safely and responsibly.

By doing the following, you can help your child enjoy the benefits of technology, while minimizing the risks.

- ▶ Educate yourself about the technology young people are using today.
- ▶ Have an open dialogue with your child about technology.
- ▶ Be aware of how, and for what purposes, your child is using technology.
- ▶ Have rules and set limits.

Teach Internet Safety

Use these tips to teach your child how to use the internet safely.



- ▶ Spend time with your child online. Navigate websites, perform searches, and bookmark web pages. If your child is good at using the internet, let your child do the navigating.
- ▶ Find some appropriate sites to visit, and go through these sites together. Help your child find sites that relate to his/her interests and hobbies.
- ▶ Have your child show you a favorite website. Ask your child, "Why do you like this site?" This is a good way to keep the lines of communication open, and to see where your child is going online.
- ▶ Remind your child that anything that's sent or posted online is permanent. You can't get it back.
- ▶ Discuss the benefits and dangers of the internet. Make sure your child knows that people online may not be who they say they are. Remind your child to never give out personal information, such as name, address, phone number, or school.

Monitor Internet Use

The internet is a powerful tool and parents need to closely monitor their child's internet use.

- ▶ Monitor your child's online activities, limit the amount of time your child spends online, and encourage your child to engage in a variety of "offline" activities.
- ▶ Take advantage of parental controls, but know that they're not completely effective. Supervision and monitoring are the best deterrents to inappropriate behavior.
- ▶ Keep your family computer in a common area of your home (kitchen or family room). Children should not have internet access in their bedroom or in areas that may be difficult to supervise.
- ▶ Monitor your child's online game playing. Some games contain explicit violence, mature language, and/or sexual content. For information on video games, go to commonsensemedia.org.
- ▶ Discuss what information is appropriate to share online. Access to any personal profile should be limited to those on your child's "friends list."



Drug and Alcohol Facts

- ▶ Binge drinking is consuming five or more drinks for males and four or more for females during one drinking session. Binge drinking often begins in early adolescence.
- ▶ Marijuana is the drug most often used by teens. Common street names for marijuana include *pot*, *grass*, *weed*, *ganja*, *Mary Jane*, and *dope*.
- ▶ While the teen use of cocaine, inhalants, and ecstasy has decreased, there has been an increase in the use of marijuana, prescription drugs, and over the counter drugs.
- ▶ Opioids include a number of commonly prescribed painkillers. They are highly addictive, and their use is on the rise. Prescription opioids include hydrocodone (vicodin), oxycodone, and fentanyl. Heroin is also an opioid.
- ▶ The use of electronic cigarettes or “vapes” is on the rise. Like regular cigarettes, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and are addictive.
- ▶ Research suggests that experience with alcohol triples from 4th to 6th grade.

For additional information, visit drugfree.org



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Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

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Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco



Substance Information

While these substances are seldom used by elementary students, parents must stay informed in order to keep their children safe.

Alcohol – Underage drinking is widespread. Alcohol affects brain development, and there is a danger of alcohol poisoning.

Cocaine – This stimulant speeds up all body processes. Cocaine is addictive and can be snorted or injected.

Ecstasy – A popular “club drug,” this stimulant produces psychedelic effects for several hours.

Inhalants – Aerosol cans, gasoline, freon, and paint are all used as inhalants.

Marijuana – The leaves can be rolled into a “joint,” smoked in a pipe, smoked from a tube (bong), or consumed in food products (edibles).

Prescription and Over the Counter (OTC) Drugs Prescription and OTC drugs (e.g., cough syrup) are often the “drugs of choice” because they can be easily obtained from homes and stores.

Tobacco – Smoking cigarettes and vaping (e-cigarettes) are both harmful and addictive.

You Make the Difference!



Be a Great Parent! Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

At some point, most parents have concerns about their children using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. There is, however, a great deal that parents can do to keep their children safe and on the right track.

To keep your child healthy and safe:

- ▶ be involved in your child's life
- ▶ set guidelines and limits
- ▶ be informed
- ▶ know the warning signs
- ▶ take action if needed

Parents are the #1 deterrent to young people becoming involved with tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.

Keep Your Child Safe

- ▶ Promote healthy activities. Encourage involvement in school, family, and community activities.



- ▶ Get to know your child's friends and their parents. Before giving permission for your child to attend a sleepover, birthday party, or play date, talk with the host parents. Find out who will be there and what kinds of activities are planned.
- ▶ Keep tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, and over the counter drugs (e.g., cold medicines) out of sight and inaccessible. Preteens are more likely to experiment with items found at home.
- ▶ Find "teachable moments" to talk to your child about the consequences of drug and alcohol use. *One discussion about drugs and alcohol isn't enough.*
- ▶ Be aware that preteens who are looking for a "high" sometimes inhale fumes from aerosol cans, paint, etc. This is called "huffing," and it can be very dangerous.
- ▶ Let your child know that there will be consequences for tobacco, alcohol, or drug use. *Knowing there will be consequences gives your child a reason to "say no."*

Be aware of Warning Signs

When students are using alcohol or drugs, there are often warning signs. These are some of the most common warning signs.

- ▶ Drop in grades
- ▶ Change in friends
- ▶ Change in behavior
- ▶ More defiant attitude
- ▶ Getting in trouble at school
- ▶ Talking about alcohol or drugs
- ▶ Change in sleeping and eating patterns
- ▶ Lack of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- ▶ Physical evidence of use (e.g., beer cans, odors on clothing, extra cold medicines, drawings of alcohol/drug related items, extra aerosol cans)



As a parent, your number one responsibility is to keep your child safe. If you believe that your child is involved in risky behavior, talk to your child about your concerns.

For help or advice, talk to your child's teacher, counselor, or physician.

Homework Tips

- ▶ Have your own project to work on while your child is doing homework. If you're doing the dishes or reading nearby, you will be available if your child needs help.
- ▶ If your child is absent for more than a day or two, try to get some work he/she can do at home.
- ▶ To be aware of what your child is studying, attend all open houses, parent programs, and parent-teacher conferences.
- ▶ Homework can sometimes be challenging, and your child may at times become frustrated. Stay calm, and help your child work through difficult assignments.
- ▶ Make it a rule that, after dinner, all homework must be completed before your child is allowed to watch TV, play video games, use their phone, or go online.
- ▶ Be positive and encouraging, and praise your child for work well done. When giving praise, try to be specific. For example, instead of *"This is a great paper,"* you might say, *"I really like your description of the house and the yard."*

It's very important for students to feel competent and capable. Work with your school to make sure that your child is successful.



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Homework Success



Monitor Homework

Parents need to monitor homework; however, students must learn to keep track of their own assignments and be responsible for completing their own homework.

- ▶ Be available to help your child organize his/her homework. Also be available to help your child study for quizzes and tests.
- ▶ Periodically look over your child's homework to see if there are areas that need more work.
- ▶ If homework seems excessive, or if your child often seems to struggle with homework, contact the teacher and express your concerns. Work with the teacher to ensure that homework doesn't become a problem.
- ▶ If your child gets stuck or needs help, go over the assignment and try to explain anything that seems confusing.
- ▶ Check your school's website. Teachers often put homework assignments and grades online.
- ▶ If your child has a tendency to rush through homework in order to get it done, insist that you look over all completed homework.

You Make the Difference!



Be a Great Parent! Homework Success

How you approach the subject of homework says a great deal about the value you place on education.

Your child needs to know that you consider homework to be very important.

Teachers assign homework for a number of reasons.

- ▶ Homework gives students the opportunity to practice the skills they've learned.
- ▶ Having schoolwork to do at home helps students develop good study habits, time management, and organization skills.
- ▶ Homework keeps parents informed as to what their child is studying.

Success Tips

Provide a quiet study area

- ▶ Have a quiet, well-lit, comfortable place for your child to do homework. This area should have a sturdy chair and a surface for writing. Equip the area with paper, pencils, pens, markers, calculator, ruler, and crayons.
- ▶ When your child is working on homework, try to limit the distractions. Turn off the television, music, and video games. Make homework time a quiet time in your household.



Set a time for homework

- ▶ Some students want to get their homework done right after school. Others like to take a break and do their homework later. The important thing is that you and your child create a schedule that makes homework a part of your daily routine.
- ▶ Some of the best times to do homework are right after school, before dinner, or right after dinner.
- ▶ Ask your child's teacher how much time your child should be spending on homework each night. As a general rule, plan on 10 minutes per grade (e.g., 2nd grade–20 minutes, 3rd grade–30 minutes).



Develop organization skills

Take the time to help your child develop good organization skills.

- ▶ Help your child learn how to organize and prioritize homework. Have your child explain what needs to be done, and then help your child develop a plan.
- ▶ Encourage your child to regularly use a student planner. Check it periodically to make sure your child is using it correctly.
- ▶ Provide your child with a folder for each subject. Remind your child to put handouts, assignments, and returned tests in the appropriate folders.
- ▶ Have your child clean out his/her backpack at least once a week. Keep the papers you want to save or display, and throw the rest away.
- ▶ Large assignments can seem overwhelming and students sometimes need help figuring out where to begin. Show your child how to break large assignments and projects down into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- ▶ Each night, have your child put everything that's needed for the next day in his/her backpack.