

Ten Things You Can Do with Your School

1. **Focus on the value of learning.** Take some time each day to ask what your child learned in school. Don't focus just on math, English, and social studies. Ask how your child gets along with other students and how he or she feels about school. Learning is for life, not just school. Talk about what you yourself may have learned in the course of a day.
2. **Focus on creating a positive learning environment at home.** Make regular times and provide a quiet, well-lit place for homework. Limit the amount of TV. Decide with your child about rules for dealing with interruptions such as phone calls or visitors. Make sure your home has plenty of books, magazines, and newspapers.
3. **Set up a school bulletin board at home.** Display the school calendar and other flyers from the school. Decide as a family which school events you will attend. Help your child get involved in interesting and worthwhile school activities.
4. **Listen when your child talks about school.** Pay attention to what your child says about school. If your child is happy with his or her classroom and school activities, write or call the teacher to say thank you. If your child seems frustrated, bored, or lonely at school, call a teacher or counselor to see what can be done.
5. **Help your child with homework.** Don't ever do homework for your child. But do help. Assist your child in setting priorities for schoolwork. For example, you can encourage your child to tackle the difficult assignments first while he or she has the most energy.
6. **Take advantage of school meetings.** Finding the time to attend school meetings can be a challenge. Many schools offer alternative times and places for parents to ask questions and discuss solutions to common problems. Often these meetings provide child care. Make these kinds of meetings a priority.
7. **Volunteer at school.** By volunteering in the classroom, you can better understand how to support your child's learning at home. Try being a room parent, a chaperone at school functions, or a tutor. Even parents who work full-time can visit their child's school at night or on weekends. Create opportunities if they do not exist.
8. **Attend school activities.** Whenever possible, attend your child's plays, sports events, or science fairs. Your presence shows that your child's interests and work are important to you. It can also give you a chance to meet other parents and school staff.
9. **Join or create a "Social and Emotional Learning Book Club."** In some communities parents have created book clubs to learn how they can encourage their children's social and emotional development. This could be part of the PTA or PTO. It could also be something you do informally with friends or parents of your child's classmates. (See the brief reading list included with this packet.)
10. **Encourage good communication with the school.** Good communication is basic to supporting your child's education. Ask your child's teacher to provide suggested home activities to support skills the children are learning at school. Ask for homework assignments that directly involve parents. An example might be students asking parents about their cultural background or work experiences.