



Family-School Partnerships: The Key to School Success

For school-age children, the challenges of school and homework are the order of the day. But kids are not the only ones who need to make an effort in order to achieve success in school; school success is a family affair. Family involvement in a child's learning is the single most important factor in predicting school success. But what exactly does that mean? Here are the most important ways parents can support their children's learning:

Tips for parents

- Make sure your child is ready to learn (rested, fed, secure)
This means being mindful of how you maintain a calm home environment, have a predictable and soothing bedtime routine so children sleep well, getting up early enough in the morning to eat a healthy breakfast without rushing, and providing support when your child is feeling concerned about social or academic challenges at school.
- Set high expectations, balanced by encouragement
Expect hard work and good behavior from your child and acknowledge in very specific terms what you admire and appreciate in the way your child is handling the demands of school.
- Ask child about their school experience every day
Show a genuine interest in what your child is learning at school, both academically and socially. Turn off your phone, stop texting and pay full attention to what your child is telling you or showing you.
- Create time and space for homework
Focus on a system for organizing assignments and marking deadlines on a personal calendar. Designate a comfortable place to do homework and make sure your own activities don't create distractions for your child. Maybe have a quiet reading time while your child works, being available to help if your child gets stuck -- but not to do the work yourself. Children vary in terms of when and how they handle homework most effectively, so work with your child to figure out the best plan for him or her. Many children do best if they have some outside free play before buckling down to do their assignments while others may work better with play time as a reward for completing their assignments carefully.
- Communicate regularly with teachers
Reach out to your child's teachers in a supportive way to see how things are going and to ask what you can do to encourage your child's learning. Don't wait until there's a problem, but build relationships proactively, using e-mail or a handwritten note, for example, to let a teacher know the things your child is enjoying or to thank the teacher for something special he or she has done.
- Attend school events and visit classrooms
Continue this throughout your child's schooling! Research shows that many parents pull back when children enter middle school, even though that often is a particularly challenging time in children's learning and social development.