



Supporting Your Children's School Success: Family-school Partnerships Are the Key

For school-age children, the challenges of school, homework and busy schedules are in full swing. But kids are not the only ones who need to work hard to meet these challenges and succeed 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 and school success:

I. Underlying issues

- Parents set the tone for how children view school, teachers and learning in general. What we say and do has a huge impact.
- Parents need to be intentional about creating a home environment that helps children be ready and eager to learn and that supports them in staying on top of the work demands of school, whether they are in kindergarten or high school.

II. Tips for parents

- 1) Make sure your child is physically ready to learn
Children need to be well-rested, well-fed and emotionally calm and secure (which affects physical readiness!).
- 2) Set high expectations, balanced by encouragement
This is not about expecting perfection, but setting achievable goals with your child. It also is not about false praise, but acknowledging good effort and figuring out solutions when things are slipping.
- 3) Ask child about their school experience every day
Ask open-ended questions, watch and listen carefully, go beyond "everything's fine". 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.
- 4) Create an organized homework plan with your child
Decide together where and when homework will be done, create a system for tracking daily homework and longterm projects; tune into what works best for this particular child, knowing not everyone is the same.
- 5) Communicate regularly with teachers and participate in school events
Check in with the teacher not only when there's a problem, but also to acknowledge the things that are working well. Research shows that many parents pull back when children enter middle school, but these parent-teacher partnerships are important throughout a child's school experience, even as you realize it is not your job to do your child's work or solve his or her problems, but to monitor and support your child in moving toward responsible adulthood.