

Parents, Get Involved

“What will I wear the first day?” asked my five-year-old daughter as we planned for her first day of kindergarten 15 years ago. I remember we painted her name on the front of a t-shirt and personalized a pair of white canvas shoes with paint and ribbon shoe laces to coordinate her “look.” She was excited as she carefully packed her backpack.

I can still see her standing by the front door with her little outfit, back pack and a big smile. She was excited and ready to go. That was the beginning of her academic adventure; a real milestone in the lives of our children.

Most of us are very excited when our children are ready to enter pre-school and kindergarten. And, our excitement helps them prepare in a positive way. As parents, we play an important role in our children’s education. Our involvement can mean the difference between academic success and academic problems.

School just began for the year so look at the following list and think about your involvement in your child’s school life. How many of these do you do?

1. I know how much homework my child has each night.
2. I review homework and check papers daily.
3. I attend PTO meetings.
4. I spend one-on-one time with my child.
5. I provide maps, globes, dictionaries, and other reference material at home.
6. I attend extra-curricular activities.
7. I meet with my child's teacher regularly.
8. I make sure my child has a nutritious breakfast each day.
9. I make sure my child gets enough sleep and daily exercise.
10. I frequently praise my child for effort as well as achievement.

If you answered yes to the majority of the statements above, congratulations! You are helping to give your child the A+ advantage. If you answered no to more than half, reconsider those areas and try to make improvements for your child's benefit.

The positive impact of parent involvement is well documented. Research indicates children benefit from parental involvement in the following ways:

- Better grades and test scores.
- Better attendance.
- Greater completion rate of homework.
- Higher graduation rates.
- More involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Improved attitude and better all-round behavior (Popkin, 1995).

As parents, we lead busy lives with work and family responsibilities. It's one of our jobs as a parent to be involved in our children's schooling. Whether you have a kindergartener or a junior in high school, be positive about school and get involved.

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