

Building Respect

Insist your child show respect to teachers, staff

Being respectful is just as important at school as it is at home. Encourage your child to show respect to her teacher by:

- Being courteous. She should say “please” and “thank you” to her teacher.
- Doing what’s expected. Everyone in school has a job to do. If the teacher didn’t plan any lessons, no one could learn anything. If students don’t do their jobs—homework, listening to the teacher—it makes it more difficult to learn.
- Addressing the teacher by name. Just saying “Good morning, Mrs. Jones” is an easy way to show respect.
- Listening to the teacher’s comments. Teachers want students to learn more. That means they have to point out mistakes. Your child will do much better in school if she can hear the teacher’s concern as she’s pointing out ways she can improve.

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Spending Time Together

Commit to finding & spending time with your child this year

There’s some good news about parents these days. They’re spending more time with their kids. That’s good for parents and kids.

But with parents also spending more time at work—and getting to and from work—it isn’t always easy. How can you find the time to spend with your child?

Here are some ideas:

- Include your child in your exercise routine. Sadly, too many kids and parents struggle with weight. Set aside time to take a brisk walk with your child. Or put on a video and work out at home together.

- Schedule it. Many families have plans for a family night once a week. Make this a habit and protect the time.
- Remember that sometimes “good enough” really is. Not everything in life has to be perfect. So feed your child a sandwich—and then take a walk to look at the stars. The truth is that your child wants you to be less stressed and tired.
- Do chores with your child. Use the time to teach important life skills.
- Watch your child’s favorite TV show together. You’ll learn more about what your child is viewing and you can talk more about it.

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Create routines for homework at the beginning of the year

Children who spend more time on homework, on average, do better in school. So ensuring your child has what she needs to do her homework is one of the best ways you can support learning at home.

Make sure your child has:

- A well-lit study area. This can be at a desk or table top. If at the kitchen table, make the kitchen off limits to others during study time. Turn off the television, too.
- A homework “Survival Kit.” Include pencils, pens, paper, tape, pencil sharpener, erasers, crayons, markers, glue stick, scissors, dictionary, ruler.
- Standby support. Get phone numbers of classmates your child can call with homework questions.
- A set study time. Which would your child prefer? Right after school, leaving the evening free to play? Or after an hour of play or after dinner?

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Working With Your School

Find out how to get involved to support your child and school

Research shows children of involved parents have higher grades and attendance rates. They're more motivated to learn and have higher self-esteem. They also can have fewer discipline problems.

Being involved is a way to tell your child you believe school is important. It helps you stay informed about your child's learning. Plus it can give teachers much needed support.

Make a commitment to:

- Be present. Check the school calendar and plan to attend all parent events—Open House, Back-to-School Night, conferences, PTA meetings.
- Keep in touch. Introduce yourself to your child's teacher. Ask for the best way to communicate with her. Read everything the school sends home.
- Offer to help. Ask the teacher, the librarian and other school staff for ways you can support your child's learning and the school.
- Monitor schoolwork. Being involved goes beyond helping in the classroom. Supporting learning at home is essential, too.

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