

Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS

Building parent-school partnerships

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Help your child ACHIEVE!

One way to help your child achieve at school is to work together with your child's teacher. The parent-teacher partnership takes work from both sides to become a reality. Here are some ideas that will help.

There's no doubt that the best outcomes for kids happen when teachers and parents work together to support children's learning. Here are 10 ways you can work with your child's teacher to maximise your child's chances of school success.

1 Know what your child's teacher is trying to achieve

Like children, every teacher is different with their own specific expectations, goals and interests. Get to know your child's teacher and gain an understanding of their approach and aspirations for your child's class.

2 Keep your expectations reasonable and positive

If your expectations are too high your teacher may give up. Too low and they will meet them! The trick is to keep your aspirations for your child in line with their ability and their interests. Also be realistic about what your child's school can deliver. Sometimes our expectations of schools are not in line with their capabilities or their roles.

3 Support your teacher's expectations & activities at home

One practical way of supporting your child is to take a real interest in their home-based learning tasks and follow the guidelines laid out by teachers.

4 Send kids to school ready to learn and on time

Maximise your child's chances of success by sending them to school in a good frame

of mind, with plenty of sleep and a good breakfast. Also make sure they get to school on time. It's estimated that many kids miss up to two weeks of school a year when they are routinely late by just five minutes a day.

5 Inform teachers of your child's challenges and changes

Life's not always smooth sailing for kids. Family circumstances can alter. Friends move away. Illness happens. These changes affect learning. Make sure you keep your child's teacher up-to-date with significant changes or difficulties your child experiences, so he or she can accommodate their emotional and learning needs at school.

6 Skill children to work with others

Schools are social places requiring children to work and play with each other much of the time. Teaching manners to kids, as well as encouraging them to share their time, space and things with others are practical ways to help kids with their social skills. Talk through any social challenges they may have, helping them develop their own strategies to get on with others.

7 Respectfully seek joint solutions to problems and difficulties

Resist the temptation to solve all your children's problems or think you have the only solution. Most learning and social problems can be resolved when teachers and parents work together in the best interests of the child.

8 Participate in class & school activities

There is a huge body of research that points to the correlation between parent involvement in a child's schooling and their educational success. Quite simply, if you want your child to improve his learning then take an interest in his learning, attend as many school functions as you can, and follow the lead provided by your child's teacher. This simple strategy will have a massive, long-term impact.

9 Trust your teacher's knowledge, professionalism and experience

Your child's teachers are your greatest allies. Their training, their experience around kids, and their objective professionalism puts them in a strong position to make judgement calls about your child.

10 Talk up what happens at school

Your child will take their cues from you about how they see their school. If you want your child to value learning, and enjoy their time at school then you need to support your school and make sure he or she hears positive messages about learning, teachers and the school itself. You can set a strong educational agenda at home by talking up your school.

This type of 10-point plan is easy to read but hard to put into practice, particularly when you get busy or your child has significant difficulties. Choose two or three ideas from this list to really focus on in the coming year and you'll find that the rest will fall into place. Good luck and nurture the partnerships you have with your child's teachers.



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