

Helping kids get the best out from school this year

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Parental withdrawal from children's education is a big problem these days as increasingly parents are worn out from working too hard or being involved in a variety of activities. By the time you get home from work or doing other activities you are spent.

But the message for parents is clear – become involved in as many aspects as practical in your child's education. The involvement of parents helps break down the mystique about schools that exists for some children. Their chances of success are better when they see school as an extension of home rather than merely an institution for learning.

Positive parent participation demonstrates to children that you value learning and their school in particular. Children copy many of their parents' views so your positive attitude to school and learning is catching.

Make the most of these opportunities that schools offer to assist in the classroom including hearing kids read, taking small groups in elective activities and assisting children when writing stories.

Parent participation is much broader than helping out in the classroom. There is a range of simple ways that you can assist teachers to maximise the learning of your child. These include hearing young learners read, helping with homework and making sure kids go off to school happy, healthy and with plenty of sleep.

Here are some more ideas to help you participate in your child's education in positive ways:

- ✓ **Make sure your kids start each day well.** That means they should get a good night's sleep, have a healthy breakfast and arrive at school on time with all their learning requirements as well as a healthy lunch.
- ✓ **Attend school activities** such as open days, concerts, parent evenings, sports events and celebrations. Read the school newsletter and other forms of communication so you can stay in the loop with what's happening at your child's school.
- ✓ **Consult with your child's teacher** about homework expectations and practical ways that

you can assist both at home and at school. Each teacher has his or her own expectations about how you can help so make sure you work within their guidelines.

- ✓ **Find out** what your school is trying to achieve for your child and show your support for its aims. Support a broad, balanced curriculum that offers children a variety of educational experiences rather than a program that focuses narrowly on the traditional 3 R's. School discipline is always more effective when it's supported by parents so be supportive of their attempts to promote good behaviour in your child.

- ✓ **Direct any problems or constructive criticism through the correct channels** such as your child's teacher, the principal or the school's governing body. Gossip or thoughtless criticism within the general community can easily tarnish a school's reputation. Support your school's

- ✓ **Become an advocate** for your child's school and promote its positive features throughout the wider community. Encourage your child to take pride in their school through your example.

Positive parent participation in school and learning is a proven criterion for student success. One practical way to assist your child as a learner is to become actively involved in his or her school-life.

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