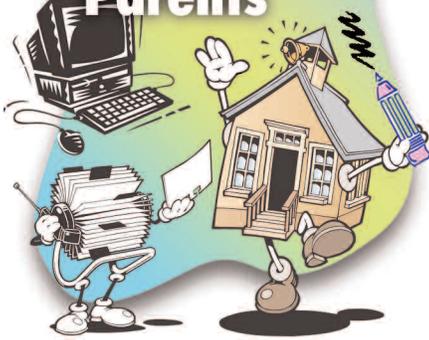


10 TIPS for Involving Parents



Experts agree that active parent involvement raises student achievement.

Parents and teachers can form a powerful partnership when it comes to helping students do their best, whether in the classroom or on the playing field. Following are 10 tips for involving parents:

- 1 Ensure that “parent” includes all caregivers.** Many young people are cared for by someone other than a natural parent. Be certain to include biological and adoptive parents, foster parents, and grandparents and other relatives who are rearing the child.
- 2 Communicate using multiple means.** Websites, mailed and hand-delivered newsletters, notes home, phone calls, and e-mails — all are useful tools; use a variety to ensure that messages from the school reach home.
- 3 Invite feedback and two-way communication.** Create ways for parents to respond to school communications — and invite parents to initiate contacts with teachers, counselors, and other school personnel.
- 4 Identify and address communication problems.** Are there barriers that block communication? Lack of computer technology for e-mail and Internet? Limited English skills? Look for ways to get the school message into *every* home, and find ways for parents to respond.
- 5 Broadly define “involvement.”** Not every parent can volunteer to help in a classroom or at a book fair, or attend a parent-teacher night or a student performance or a sporting event. Identify many ways that parents can stay engaged in their children’s schooling, even if they are not able to come physically to the school.
- 6 Consider using alternative meeting sites.** If parents find coming to school inconvenient or intimidating, try scheduling parent-teacher gatherings at an alternative site, such as a community center or public library meeting space.
- 7 Share ideas for parent involvement.** Many teachers report being unprepared when it comes to involving parents. Seek out colleagues, share experiences, and discover how others have successfully involved parents in their children’s schooling.
- 8 Focus on enhancing performance.** Researchers have found that parent-child study time in areas such as reading and math shows students what is important and encourages students to study. Structure opportunities for in-school and at-home parent-child engagement in learning.
- 9 Involve parents of all ages of students.** The younger the child, the easier it is to get parents involved. But all students — even high-schoolers — can benefit from knowing their parents are interested in and willing to be part of their educational experience.
- 10 Don’t give up.** Some parents are hard to get involved. Reasons vary. But keep trying various strategies and involve as many parents as possible in some way. Everyone benefits when there are positive connections between the school and the home.

— Donovan R. Walling

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