

Tips for a Great School Year

Keep a Family Calendar

Be sure to read the school year calendar and post it in a visible spot. Note parent-teacher conference dates, report card distribution dates, and other school events. Record them into your personal calendar too.

Focus on Friendship

When a child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness to his environment, he will learn and develop with greater ease and comfort.

Look for Extra-Curricular Activities

However, parents beware: Do not over-schedule your child (and yourself) to the point of stress and exhaustion.

Spend Some Time at School

Most teachers and principals are delighted to have parents lend a hand in the classroom and around the school campus. It provides an additional sense of connectedness to strengthen their village of care and support. Make sure you check with your child's teacher on when it is appropriate to visit and help. Sometimes parents in the class can be a distraction.

Create Two-Way Communication

After checking to see whether your child has accurately completed her homework, take a moment to initial the agenda or school planner to let her teacher know you have reviewed the work. Write a comment or ask a question.

Read the School Newsletter

This shows your interest in the school community and your willingness to be a part of that connection.

Develop Healthy Habits

Good physical health, proper nutrition, and enough sleep are the most important elements for school success.

One More Thing

Enjoy yourself and your child's elementary year, they go by fast!

Education consultant Trish Dolasinski is an experienced principal, teacher, and former PTO president.

Things To Tell the Teacher

What can you tell a teacher that will help him do his job better?

Students do best when parents and teachers work together as partners. Not sure where to start?

Health conditions: If your child is diabetic, uses an inhaler, is allergic to peanuts, or has a serious health condition, her teacher should know. It's also helpful to let the teacher know whether your child has been diagnosed with

conditions like ADHD, which may affect behaviour and concentration.

Family issues: Fill in the teacher if your family is going through a major change that could affect your child, such as a divorce, a death in the family, or a move.

Personality traits or behavior issues: Maybe your son is painfully shy and is worried about making friends at a new school.

Strengths and weaknesses: If you tell teachers these things up front, they will have more time to help your children improve in the areas they need it most.

Learning style: If your child learns better through hands-on activities than through listening to explanations, mention that to his teacher. Also share any teaching strategies that you've found work well with your child.

Study habits: Tell teachers about your children's study habits and any issues they face in completing the work. Teachers often can offer suggestions to make homework time go more smoothly.

Special interests: Let the teacher know that your young son loves a particular comic book superhero and that your middle school daughter is a gifted painter.

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http://www.canadianliving.com/health/mind_and_spirit/8_back_to_s

Overcoming Anxiety

Let your children know you care.

If your child is anxious about school, send personal notes in the lunch box or book bag.

Reinforce the ability to cope.

Children absorb their parent's anxiety, so model optimism and confidence for your child. Let your child know that it is natural to be a little nervous anytime you start something new but that your child will be just fine once he or she becomes familiar with classmates, the teacher, and school routine.

Do not overreact.

If the first few days are a little rough, try not to over react. Young children in particular may experience separation anxiety or shyness initially but teachers are trained to help them adjust. If you drop them off, try not to linger. Reassure them that you love them, will think of them during the day, and will be back.

Remain calm and positive.

Acknowledge anxiety over a bad experience the previous year. Children who had a difficult time academically or socially or were teased or bullied may be more fearful or reluctant to return to school. If you have not yet done so, share your child's concern with the school and confirm that the problem has been addressed.

Reinforce your child's ability to cope.

Give your child a few strategies to manage a difficult situation on his or her own. But encourage your child to tell you or the teacher if the problem persists. Maintain open lines of communication with the school.

Arrange play dates.

Try to arrange get-togethers with some of your child's classmates before school starts and during the first weeks of schools to help your child re-establish positive social relationships with peers.

Plan to volunteer in the classroom.

If possible, plan to volunteer in the classroom at least periodically throughout the year. Doing so helps your child understand that school and family life are linked and that you care about the learning experience.

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/home_school/b2shandout.aspx

Here are a few final tips for a fantastic school year:

Get enough sleep.

Eat a healthy breakfast.

Try your best.

Use good work habits.

Take your time with school work.

Ask the teacher for help.

Keep a sense of humor.

www.kidshealth.com