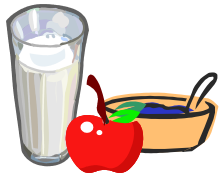


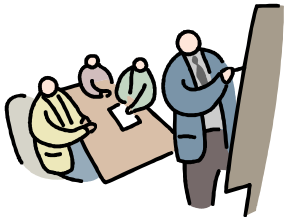
How families



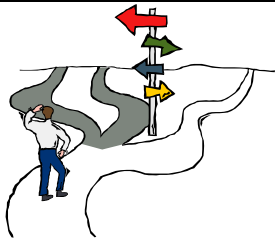
Teach



Support



Learn



Make Decisions

*Ways for families to help
children do better in school*

Ways for families to help children to do better in school

Teach, support, learn, make decisions

Every child – from pre-school through college – needs help from parents (and others in the family) to succeed. Even parents who work or don't have much extra time or energy can find ways to be involved in their children's education. This checklist offers ideas for using your own talents and time to give your children the chance to do the best they can in school.

Families help children in school in four basic ways: by teaching them, by learning new things so they can help their children learn, by supporting children and the school, and by advocating and making decisions about what and how children learn. This checklist can be your own personal "report card" with ideas on what you and your family can do (or may already be doing!) for your children's education.

How do families *support* children?

Support means to help, comfort and give strength to someone. On a basic level, families support children by providing food, clothes, protection, and health care. Basic support also includes giving praise and love, and encouraging children to do their best. It also includes giving children the feeling that the family wants and expects them to do well in school.

How do families *learn* to help children

learn? As the saying goes, you learn something new every day. Everything *you* know can help your children learn. Families can find out more about the school program, what children are expected to learn, how children can get extra help. It is also important to learn what courses children need to get into college. Discipline is also easier when families learn more about how children grow, develop and change at different ages.

How do families *teach* children?

Parents teach children from the day they are born – how to eat, speak, take care of themselves, play with other children, and help with chores. When children start school,

so do parents. While the school knows how to teach math, reading, writing, history, and science, parents still teach in other ways. They show the importance of school and making sure homework gets finished. They help children understand homework assignments by talking about what they've already learned.

How do families *make decisions* and



advocate for children? Families are entitled to make decisions about what is best for their children and to make sure their opinions are known by the school. Parents/families must be advocates for their child and other children in the school. To advocate is to support or defend a cause. An advocate is one who pleads on behalf of another. For every parent, this means working with the teachers/counselors to make sure the school knows what you know about how your children learn and what their interests and needs are. Parents must also advocate to ensure their children are provided opportunities for advanced placement (AP) courses. Other parents serve on advisory committees and school councils as a way of being partners in their children's education.

How do families

Teach



children?



At home we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Make reading or storytelling a part of our day.	▶				
Play games together, especially those that require children to think.	▶				
Talk with each other about everything. . . people, places, events.	▶				
Let children help with everyday activities and pass on our special talents.	▶				
Recognize that our children are learning values by watching how adults behave.	▶				
Provide a time and place for homework, and ask children if they understand what they are to do.	▶				
Use household chores to teach children how to complete a job.	▶				
At school, we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Share with schools the family's culture, tradition, language, and life experiences.	▶				
Share a special skill or hobby by visiting the classroom.	▶				
Tutor/read with children who need extra help.	▶				
Work with other parents to offer after-school activities for children or families.	▶				

How do families
Support
children?





At home we do this...		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Make sure children have breakfast, either at home or at school.	▶				
Make sure children get a good night's sleep.	▶				
Talk with and listen to each other every day about what is going on at school and in the neighborhood.	▶				
Show warmth and understanding towards each other.	▶				
Make sure children go to school every day unless they are ill	▶				
At school, we do this...		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Stay in touch with teachers and counselors through notes, phone calls, or visits.	▶				
Go to parent-teacher conferences and ask for one if needed.	▶				
Volunteer at school for field trips and other jobs when possible.	▶				
Let teachers know when their efforts with our children have worked.	▶				
Go to school events such as open house, plays, sports events, and awards ceremonies.	▶				

How do families

Learn

to help children learn?

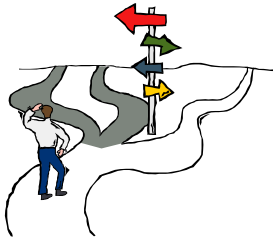




At home we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Read and talk about all information sent home from school, such as the parent handbook and newsletters.	▶				
Find out what children are learning about so homework can be reviewed.	▶				
Read newspapers, magazines, and books to talk about events. Collect college brochures and planning handbooks.	▶				
Watch TV together and talk about what we see. Listen to all types of music together.	▶				
Keep the computer in an open space for the entire family.	▶				
Take advantage of family learning activities offered by youth groups, community centers, and libraries.	▶				
Visit local colleges and Universities.					
Talk with other families about raising children, and school or neighborhood issues.	▶				
Take classes offered at schools and community organizations to show that learning is important.	▶				
At school, we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Observe children in their classes at school at least once a year.	▶				
Go to workshops that explain what the school is teaching and what the school values.	▶				
Go to parent education classes or workshops offered by the school.	▶				
Go to parent teacher conferences, and ask questions about what is expected in class.	▶				
Meet with other parents at the school, to discuss first-hand any concerns.	▶				
Talk with teachers and counselors to learn what courses are necessary to prepare children for college.	▶				

How do families

Make Decisions

and advocate for children's education?



At home we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Keep folders of children's work to keep track of how they are doing in school.	▶				
Communicate with the teacher to check on children's progress.	▶				
Fill out and return surveys or questionnaires when the school sends them home.	▶				
Ask questions to make sure children are placed in a program that's right for them.	▶				
Read the Title I information provided by the school and ask questions if we want to know more.	▶				
Make sure your child prepares for and takes college admissions exams. (PSAT, SAT, ACT)	▶				
Contact the teacher if children can't do the assigned homework or are not making good progress.	▶				
Vote in community elections.	▶				
At school, we do this. . .		Most of the time	Sometimes	Oops! Not Enough	Need more ideas
Tell the school staff about parents' needs, ideas, and concerns.	▶				
Go to parent meetings to find out about Title 1, GEAR-UP and other school programs. Ask about education terms you may not know.	▶				
Help the school make connections to organizations and business that can help the school.	▶				
Serve with other parents on PTA or school advisory councils and committees.	▶				
Work with the school to organize College Fairs and Career Days.	▶				

How to make conferences useful

Meeting with the teacher

One of the best ways to support your children is to stay in touch with their teachers, and counselors, especially through parent-teacher conferences. A recent successful trend is student led conferences. Student led conferences provide students an opportunity to take charge of their own learning. Here are some ideas to make these conversations effective:

Before the conference. . .

- Review your children's school work, progress reports, and report cards. Write down any questions you have.
- Think about your children's strengths and weaknesses so you can talk about them with the teacher.
- Talk with your children about what's going on at school: what they like best and least, what parts of school are hard for them.
- Send your questions to the teacher ahead of time.

During the conference. . .

- If you feel more comfortable, bring a translator or friend with you. Always take a note pad or journal to write in.
- Ask the teacher how your child is doing.
- Feel free to offer any information, advice, or opinions that you think are important.
- Ask questions when something is not clear or you want to learn more.
- Ask the teacher about his or her plans for teaching your child
- If possible create together an individual education plan for your child.
- Ask how you can help carry out that plan; what can you do at home to help?
- Talk about how you and the teacher will exchange news about how your child is doing in school.

After the conference. . .

- Debrief the conference with your child. Be positive, and point out the strengths discussed as well as areas that need work.
- Talk about the areas you will work on and make plans with the child about how you will do it together.
- Be consistent and follow through with what you said you would do.
- Let the teacher know how the plan is working, and call the school if you need more help.
- Praise your child for working hard to improve and do better in school.
- Ask for another conference, or call the principal, if you want more information.
- Often the conference does not offer the time needed for real dialogue and another conversation is needed.
- Teachers have many students in their class so 'you' must advocate for your child

Be confident! Remember that you are the main supporter of your child and know more about him or her than anyone else. Work together with the teacher and share any information, ideas, and opinions about your child's education. Both families and teachers want children to do well in school!