

Become Involved in Your Child's Education

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Children's education can be greatly enriched by parent involvement. Becoming an active part of your child's education is one way you become an advocate for your child's future success.

The positive impact of parental involvement in children's education is well documented. Research shows that children whose parents are involved in their education have: better grades and test scores; better school attendance; greater completion rate of homework; higher graduation rates; more involvement in extra-curricular activities; and, improved attitude and better all-around behavior at school.

Parent involvement doesn't have to mean spending lots of time at your child's school or tutoring your child. Some ways to help your child have a positive school experience include the following.

Help your child develop a study area. Children usually do better with homework and studying when they have a quiet, private area away from interruption. Some children prefer to work at the kitchen table with an adult close by in case they need assistance. Set up the study area with good lighting, a clock, pencil and paper.

Establish a regular time for study/homework. An established study routine is important, especially for younger school age children. If a child knows, for example, that he is expected to do homework immediately after supper prior to watching television, he will be better able to adjust and ready himself than if he is allowed to do homework anytime he pleases.

Help your child develop a homework “to do” list. Keeping track of homework assignments can be difficult for some students. Help your child develop a system for writing down assignments as the teacher gives them, checking them off when completed.

Help your children pace themselves with large assignments. If your child feels overwhelmed by a large project, help her break the task into small parts and put the parts into her homework schedule. Planning ahead and keeping to a schedule are important skills for children to learn. They’ll use these skills throughout their school and work lives.

Organize homework into short work periods with time in between to play or exercise. The renewed energy can be helpful. Most children can benefit from physical activity right after school before sitting down to do homework. Research shows that children who are physically fit are more apt to be at their best mentally.

Limit your child’s television time. In addition to taking time away from physical activity, having the television on at all times makes it harder for children to get their homework done. Children can easily be distracted by the television as well as video games and the Internet. Consider limiting your children’s screen time to no more than one hour a day.

Attend parent-teacher conferences. Parent-teacher conferences are designed to help parent’s understand where their child is academically. Conferences also give parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss issues, such as behavior, that may be interfering with academic success. Use this time to work with the teacher on possible ways to help your child address these issues and succeed in school.

While these suggestions may not solve all of your child’s educational issues they can help both you and your child have a more successful school year.

Visit the UNH Cooperative Extension web site at <http://extension.unh.edu> for information on a variety of parenting issues.

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