

Connecting Learning at Home and at School

74 ways for families to become partners
in learning

74 Ways for Families to become Partners in Learning

The following seven headings provide a list of useful points for families to follow that encourages families to become partners in their child's education. This list of suggestions should be made available to families.

Communicating

1. Share your child's strengths, talents, and interests with teachers.
2. Share expectations and set goals for your child with his or her teacher.
3. Make appointments as needed to discuss your child's progress or concerns.
4. Attend family-teacher conferences with specific questions you want to ask.
5. Decide with your child's teacher the best way to stay in touch (phone, e-mail, notes, etc.).
6. Give positive feedback and show appreciation for teachers and the principal.
7. Approach interactions with school administration and staff with a positive attitude and an open mind.
8. Listen to others' viewpoints when having a discussion.
9. Understand and reinforce school rules and expectations at home.
10. Participate in informal opportunities to talk with and get to know school administrators, teachers, and other staff.
11. Address concerns or questions honestly, openly, and early.
12. Attend parent / family meetings regularly.
13. Read classroom and/or school newsletters with your child.
14. Visit your school's webpage.
15. Know the names of your child's teacher(s) and school principal.
16. Read and know your school's handbook.
17. Request that information be available in all languages spoken by school families.
18. Share your family's practices related to culture, values, and parenting with your child's school.
19. Communicate your perceptions of how families are treated and, when necessary, work with school staff to improve perceptions and school climate.
20. Notify teachers of any significant changes that have taken place in your child's life (such as death of a pet, family move, loss of income, family member's illness or divorce).

Your child's learning

21. Discuss your child's school day and homework daily.
22. Know your child's academic strengths and weaknesses.
23. Provide a quiet, well-lit place with basic school supplies for studying/homework.
24. Help your child break down big homework projects into smaller, more manageable steps.
25. Develop a consistent daily routine and time for studying and doing homework.
26. Provide encouragement and praise for your child's efforts.
27. Share your interests, hobbies, and talents with your child.
28. Provide your child with books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials and encourage regular reading.
29. View selected TV programs together and then discuss them.
30. Make family trips to the library, zoo, museum, or park a fun learning experience.
31. Talk with your child's teacher about creating home learning games and activities.
32. Assist with homework, but avoid doing it for your child.
33. Help set goals and develop a personalised learning plan for your child.
34. Participate in activities that help you understand school technology.
35. Help plan and attend family nights on improving study habits, doing homework, etc.



Parenting

36. Meet your child's friends and get to know their family.
37. Take advantage of family programs and resources offered at the school.
38. Work with others to establish a family resource centre at the school.
39. Help create a school toy/book lending library and visit it regularly.
40. Assist in developing family support groups or programs.
41. Seek out classes or information on child development, learning styles, discipline, etc.
42. Start a family book club to discuss current publications.
43. Help create and/or contribute to a school newsletter on parenting.
44. Ask teachers or school counsellors about how to talk with your child about tough topics.

Partnering with the school

45. Learn about school policies and practices that affect children.
46. Voice your support or concerns on any issue that will affect your family.
47. Serve on school sub-committees that examine such things as uniform, homework, student engagement or bullying policies.
48. Encourage and support children to serve in student leadership positions.
49. Help your school create a student's rights and responsibilities guide for families.
50. Attend Parents & Friends meetings or school council meetings and speak about issues of concern.
51. Learn candidates' positions and participate in school council elections.
52. Work with teachers and school administrators to develop a family-school partnership policy.

Volunteering

53. Respond to school surveys regarding your interests, talents, and skills.
54. Let school staff know your availability to volunteer (days, times and how often).
55. Assist your child's teacher in the classroom or on excursions when you are able.
56. Work with school staff and teachers to develop volunteer activities you can do from home.
57. Assist school staff and teachers in creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for families.
58. Collaborate to develop creative ways to use volunteers at school.
59. Work with others to develop volunteer job descriptions and evaluations.
60. Assist school staff in recruiting family and community members as volunteers.
61. Attend training and orientation on how to be an effective volunteer.
62. Learn and uphold school discipline, confidentiality, and other policies as a volunteer.
63. Set a time to talk regularly with school staff and teachers with whom you are working.
64. Participate in organising and planning ways to recognise and appreciate volunteers.
65. Help develop and distribute a volunteer directory to families, school staff, and teachers.
66. Volunteer your consulting services in your areas of expertise to school staff or teachers.

Collaborating with the community

67. Find out about and use information on community resources and organisations.
68. Help your school develop a directory of specialist and community services.
69. Help coordinate and participate in events that support community groups.
70. Ask employers and local businesses to make donations and support school programs.
71. Recruit community members (seniors, business people) to volunteer at school.
72. Help organise and/or participate in a community 'cleanup' or 'beautification' project.
73. Encourage and facilitate your child's participation in community service.
74. Be a role model; be active in community service yourself or with your child.