

Research has shown children do best when their parents are involved with their schooling. Being aware of your child's homework assignments, providing structure and space for homework, volunteering at school, attending parent teacher conferences and school programs are a few examples of ways parents can be involved. Regular communication with your child's teacher can be important and helpful.

A child's ability to get along with others, to learn, behave and feel good at school are impacted by the home. Parents may not realize that their own behavior, expectations for their child, and daily parenting strategies significantly influence their child's school success.

A teacher's guide, "Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child" (McGinnis, Goldstein, 1984) identifies skills necessary for school success. However, many of these skills are social and are first learned and practiced at home. Other types of self management skills can be taught directly either at home or school. A team approach, with teachers and parents as partners, helps children learn to use these skills more effectively.

Classroom Survival Skills

Parenting Strategies

- Listening** Make eye contact, don't interrupt
- Saying thank you** Set an example yourself, remind your child, praise them when they remember
- Bringing Materials to Class** Help your child plan ahead for what they'll need for activities (dance, soccer)
- Organizing School Work** Use family calendar, specific places for belongings, place/time for homework, routine schedule (morning, bedtime)
- Completing Assignments** Expect completion of household chores and other tasks, give opportunities for child to practice "biting the bullet" (doing undesirable tasks when asked)
- Following Instructions** Monitor child's follow through, provide praise or consequences* accordingly
 *ALLOW "natural consequences" to teach child: forgets gloves=gets cold, doesn't study=poor grade.
 USE "logical consequences": home late=miss dinner, chores not done=stay home
- Ignoring Distractions** Teach skills of staying focused (think "I won't look"; "keep on working"), read/think out loud, create visual barrier
- Working and Thinking Independently** Set limits for behavior, allow child to make choices, complete tasks independently and experience results

Friendship-making Skills

Parenting Strategies

- Beginning/Ending a Conversation** Talk about when, what and how (greetings, asking about others' interests, common experiences), practice and "role play" (imagine a situation and act out roles)
- Joining In** Provide opportunities for play (park, parties), teach to watch, listen, ask or move in
- Playing a Game** Play family games, practice taking turns, teach responses to winning and losing
- Inviting a Friend to Your Home** Allow child to choose a friend and make contact, assist in planning activities/structuring time, monitor interactions, later discuss your child's behavior and their feelings
- Including Others** Praise child for including siblings/others, teach respect and tolerance of differences, teach "the golden rule"
- Giving/Accepting a Compliment** Teach and model, help children see positive qualities in others, think of others feelings, respond with "thanks"

Skills for Dealing with Feelings

Parenting Strategies

- Knowing and Expressing Your Feelings** Model "I statements" ("I feel happy", "I'm mad"), make a list of feeling words, observe your child's facial expressions and body language and help them say how they're feeling, accept all feelings while teaching acceptable behaviors
- Recognize/Understand Another's Feelings** Teach child to watch facial expressions and body language and consider how they might feel in similar circumstances
- Express Concern for Another** Model/teach asking about another's feelings, discuss choices for ways to respond (offer help, leave them alone, make caring gesture)
- Dealing with Your Anger** Model/discuss acceptable ways to: calm self, express anger, help with problem solving*
 *Slow deep breathing, self talk ("I can handle this", "I can calm down"), make cooling off plan:
 physical outlet (walk, shoot hoops), alone time (journal, music)
 No hitting, destroying things, yelling, name calling, use "I statements"
 Assist child in coming up with possible solutions and choosing one
- Dealing with Another's Anger** Teach child to remain calm, consider choices (listen, walk away, ask to help, offer suggestions)

PARENTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Skills for Dealing with Stress

Parenting Strategies

Parents can not anticipate every circumstance their child will face, but parents can help their child learn to problem solve and build their self confidence. Include child in family decisions, allow choices to increase independence, express your faith in their ability, remind them of their strengths and of your unconditional love.

Parents can also help their child learn to problem solve by discussing ("what if...?") or acting out ("role play") difficult social situations.

- Responding to Teasing** Teach options (walk away, say "stop", move close to an adult, asking an adult to help) and how to decide which to use
- Responding to Being Left Out** Teach options (ask to join in, find other people/ activities, share your feelings, ask for help)
- Dealing with Group Pressure** Teach options (say "no", suggest an alternative activity, find an excuse), model and allow independent thinking and decision making
- Accepting Limits and Consequences** Set limits and consequences for your child's behavior, limit negotiations with child, be consistent and follow through with consequences, talk about and teach acceptable behaviors in response to limits/consequences (no whining, arguing, yelling), don't expect your child to like your limits and consequences
- Reacting to Failure or Mistakes** Teach your child that everyone fails/makes mistakes and to learn from them, help them identify and express their feelings, praise for effort more than performance
- Taking Responsibility for Own Behavior** Discourage blaming or denying, support admitting wrongdoing, teach how to apologize, discuss appropriate behavior, reward honesty, don't allow child to redirect your attention to others

Resources

Books for Children:

- Andrews Angry Words*, by O'Tool
- Don't Pop Your Cork on Mondays*, by Moser
- Inside of Me: I Feel*, by Walter
- Me First and the Gimme Gimmes*, by Jampolsku and Cirincione
- Sometimes I Feel Like I don't Have Any Friends*, by Zimmerman and Shapiro
- The Care and Keeping of Friends*, American Girl Library

Books for Parents:

- How to Discipline Your 6 to 12 Year Old Without Losing Your Mind*, by Wyckoff and Vnell
- Normal Children Have Problems Too*, by Stanley Turecki, M.S.
- Parenting With Love and Logic*, by Jim Fay and Foster Cline
- Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child*, by McGinnis and Goldstein
- SOS Help for Parents*, by Lynn Clark, Ph.D.

Community Resources

Your school social worker, counselor or psychologist can help with parenting strategies or finding community resources.

This brochure is a resource provided by LPS School Social Workers and Psychologists. . . because Families Matter.



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PARENTING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

All parents want their children to succeed in school.

