

STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE ELEMENTARY YEARS

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

How can I help my child succeed at school?

The following strategies can help your child to be successful at school.

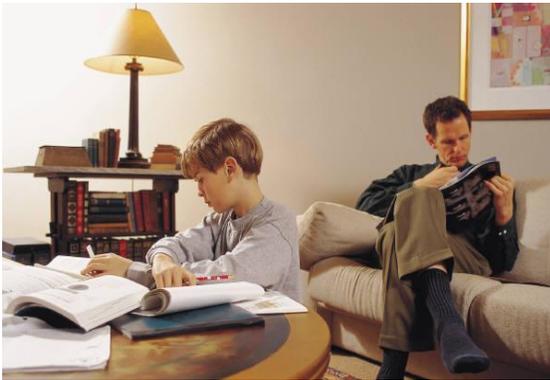
- **Show confidence in your child's abilities.**
When parents communicate a belief that their child can be successful, the child is more likely to believe in his or her abilities as well.
- **Expect your child's personal best.**
Remind your child that being perfect is not the same as doing one's "personal best". Parents can help children to be proud of their accomplishments and understand that mistakes are normal and provide lifelong learning opportunities.
- **Understand your child's strengths and needs.**
Help your child recognize his or her abilities and encourage improvement where needed.
- **Communicate with your child's teacher.**
Inform the teacher about any issue or stresses that may interfere with your child's ability to perform well at school.
- **Set specific goals with your child in areas requiring improvement.**
Develop goals with your child and post them in a visible area to act as a daily reminder.
- **Show interest in your child's school work.**
Talk to your child about his or her schoolwork, read with your child and ask about subjects and school activities. Rather than posing general questions, use conversation starters such as:
"What was the best thing that happened at school today?"
"What was the toughest part of the day?"
"Which subjects do you like best...Why?"
- **Create a homework schedule.**
Establish a consistent homework or reading routine with your child. Choose a viable time that can be maintained without conflicting with other activities.
- **Set an Example.**
Tell your child that regular school attendance and learning are important priorities. Let your children see you reading or completing work to model that learning is a lifelong activity.



Why is regular attendance important?

Regular and punctual attendance teaches children important social and work habits such as reliability. Children who arrive late interrupt the learning that is taking place in the classroom and the time needed to repeat information takes away from the teacher's ability to attend to the needs of other students.

- Frequent absences or late arrivals have a negative effect on a child's learning, which can hinder achievement and lead to frustration at school.
- There is a strong connection between school attendance and academic success. Students who are frequently late or are often absent are more likely to have poorly developed basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and are more likely to have a negative view of school.
- Children need to develop good habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility. All of these will serve an individual well as he/she continues through school and into the world of work.
- Children from age 6 to 16 are required by law to attend school regularly and punctually. Parents or guardians are legally responsible to ensure their children attend school.



Reading is an important activity that parents can model for children.

How can parents help their children get to school on time?

- Lay down rules and stick to them (e.g., going to bed on time, getting up on time).
- Design a chart that breaks down what needs to be done to get ready for school each morning into manageable and specific steps. Then set consequences and rewards for accomplishing these steps. It is important to check the chart each day and review it with your child.
- Teach children to have a positive view of school by presenting school as exciting and worth the effort to arrive on time.
- Develop a morning routine and be consistent. Get ready the night before. Establish a routine that requires children to pick out an outfit for the next school day and pack their backpack before going to bed. This will avoid an anxious last minute search in the morning for misplaced belongings.
- Set the alarm early enough to allow for a relaxed morning routine and to accommodate for unplanned delays.
- Teach children the importance of paying attention to the time and consider purchasing a watch for children once they can tell time.
- Follow-up with children if the school relays behaviour or schoolwork concerns and work with the school to resolve problems.

Other important considerations

If your child will be home due to illness or other unavoidable causes, please call the school in the evening or first thing in the morning to report your child's absence. You can leave a message on our voice-mail at any time.

Resist giving in to pleading or coaxing from your child to stay home for unclear reasons. If this happens frequently, explore further by asking your child why he or she wants to stay home. If your child tells you about a problem at school, follow up with your child's teacher to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. This will help to reduce any fears or concerns your child may be having that can interfere with his or her learning.

If your child stays home without your knowledge or consent, or resists going to school, contact the school. Assistance can be provided by the school through professional support staff. The earlier this involvement occurs, the sooner we can resolve the problem.

By working together, schools and families can establish good routines for children. Regular attendance is one of the first steps to academic success. The staff recognizes that creating a positive school culture is a prerequisite for good attendance. By school culture, we mean the overall physical and psychological atmosphere in a school: the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs exhibited by all school staff, students, parents, and community workers. We strive to create a school culture that is accepting and inclusive and enables children to reach their full potential.

Some Helpful Parenting Websites

Ontario Ministry of Education: Parent Information
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/>

Alberta Ministry of Education: Tips for Parents
<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/parents/tips.asp>

Settlement.org: Information on school and work for everyone, particularly newcomers to Ontario (translated into various languages).
<http://www.settlement.org/path.html>

For more information:
 Contact your child's teacher or the principal
 Mary Shadd Public School
 Phone: 416-396-6450