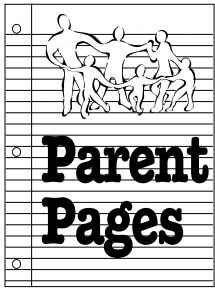


# Getting Involved with Your Child's School



Children, teachers, parents, and school administrators can all benefit from creative parental involvement in schools. Children can be motivated to learn by knowing that their parents and teachers all value their education and keep in touch about their progress.

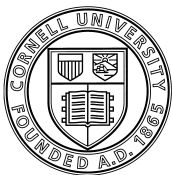
Parents can increase their communication with the school in positive ways. Caring teachers appreciate the concern parents show when they call or send notes on a fairly regular basis to keep in touch with their children's education. Parents who have become part of their children's school lives through notes, conferences, phone calls, or volunteering report many benefits for themselves and their children. The satisfaction of helping to shape school policy, a greater sense of community and stronger communication with their children are some of the benefits of being actively involved with your children's school.



## **There Are Many Ways Parents Can Get Involved With Their Children's Education.**

- ◆ Stay informed. Read newsletters and other materials you receive from the school. Know the school's policies and procedures. Become aware of the school curricula.
- ◆ Keep in touch with your child's teacher. Notes, phone calls or a quick visit to the classroom can let the teacher get to know you, and your child, in a more positive way. Many schools have adopted practices like communication notebooks that students bring back and forth to school. Find out the best time to phone the teacher. Or perhaps the teacher prefers to communicate via e-mail.
- ◆ Attend parent-teacher conferences and be prepared to ask thoughtful questions.
- ◆ Join the Parent-Teachers Association. PTAs plan many educational and cultural activities that supplement the school curriculum. Moreover, they exert an influence on school policy and reform.
- ◆ Participate in PTA, committee and school board meetings. Join a shared decision-making team in your child's school.
- ◆ Volunteer to serve on a committee, share your skills with students or give time to special enterprises like school events or PTA fund-raising.
- ◆ Arrange a classroom visit and share information about your job or cultural background. Geography and history classes can be enriched tremendously for the young students by adding this personal touch. Many parents have special and interesting skills they can demonstrate to their child's class.

*~Continued~*



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- ◆ Parents who question school policies or aren't even certain of what the policies are, should keep in touch not only with teachers, but also with administrators. Parents can make their opinions known -- in a friendly, positive way -- and help administrators keep in contact with the families they serve.
- ◆ At home, it's helpful for parents to talk frequently with their children about classroom activities, what they enjoy and don't enjoy, any problems they may have and other important issues. They can support schoolwork by reviewing homework, or at least being sure it is getting done.

Parents have ultimate responsibility for their child for nearly two decades. Although they do not need to know how to teach the intricacies of the metric system or the geography of Central America, they do have a right and responsibility to become familiar with the people and institutions that share the joys and difficulties of their child's growth.

*Source: Christiann Dean, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University. Parent Pages was developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.*