HEALTHY COMMUNITIES HEALTHY YOUTH®

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ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

Staying Involved in School

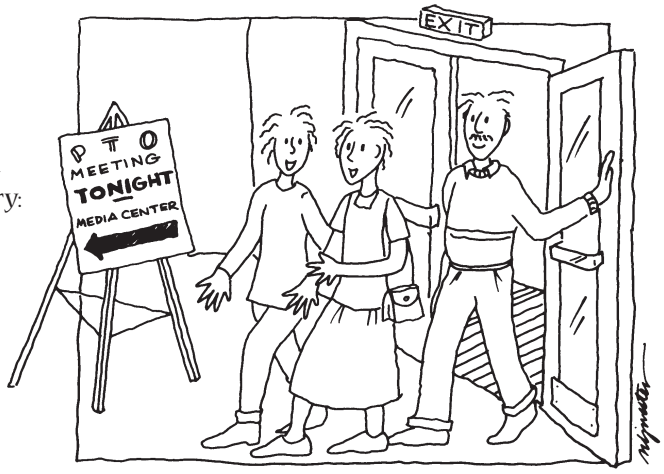
It's a downward trend. As children start kindergarten, parents are quite involved with their education. We attend parent-teacher conferences, cheer on our children at school concerts and events, and hang up schoolwork in the family art gallery: on the refrigerator.

But sometimes we distance ourselves from school as our children grow older. Kids seems to be doing well without as much of our involvement. They're supposed to be independent. Right?

Kids need their parents to stay actively involved in their education throughout middle and high school.

Parents can easily stay involved in small ways that will make a big difference. For example:

- Maintain ongoing communication with your child's teacher(s). Call to check in every other month—before trouble appears. See if teachers have email.
- Join a parent-teacher organization. If you can't volunteer a lot of time, say so.
- Volunteer to help out in small ways. Check with the teacher or the school's volunteer coordinator.
- Help seniors fill out college applications.



- Volunteer to speak on career day.
- Attend all conferences. If you can't make it on the designated date, arrange to meet at another time.
- Read the same book your child is assigned in English class, and talk about it together.

The CHALLENGE

Most youth don't have parents who are active in their schooling. Only 34% of young people experience this asset. And involvement drops dramatically across the middle and high school years, from 50% of 6th graders having this asset to only 20% of 12th graders.

time together

Three ways to be more involved with your child's education:

1. Encourage your child's teacher to meet with both you and your child so that everyone can have a say in expectations and goals.
2. Go to a museum together to look at exhibits that are related to your child's classes.
3. Make attending school events a priority. Keep track of them on a family calendar.

FAST FACTS

ASSET #6: Parent Involvement in Schooling

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when their parents are involved in their education and school.

34% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?
Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Parent involvement in schooling" is one of six support assets

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999–2000 school year.

Ways of Staying Involved

When parents participate in their children's education—even in small ways—children can reap great benefits. Here are a few ways to serve:

- Ask teachers about ways to share your culture and traditions with their classes, including food, music, celebrations, and photos.
- Offer to read to the class or individual students.
- Volunteer to tutor struggling students.
- Help out with an art or science activity.
- Supervise children on the playground or in the library.
- Set up and clean up after a classroom party.

Children's Pride

Remember, your children are proud of you and love having the chance to show you off to their teachers and principal.

More Help for Parents

The **U.S. Department of Education** has available a number of free publications on family involvement in learning. Check out the Web site at www.ed.gov.

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- *In what ways would you like me (us) to be involved with your school?*
- *What do you like about other parents who help out at school?*
- *What would make school more enjoyable? Why?*

Final Word

"Forge a partnership with your child's other educators from the start."
—Jacqulyn Saunders, author of *Bringing Out the Best*, a parenting book

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