



## Participating Parents

### The Facts

From the day their child is born, parents want to be a part of their child's life and help better their skills, learning abilities and knowledge. As new parents, they put a lot of time into their baby and/or infants. However, as a child grows and independently develops they mature within their learning skills. With this change, it does not mean that a parent should put forth less effort into their child's education; rather they should try to alter the way they help their child learn and participate with their child's education and school activities.

### Ways to Participate

Parental involvement is vital in gaining a successful education for a child. It involves two key components, which takes form when parents are both supportive and active. Parents can illustrate their active and supportive roles in many ways. According to J.L. Epstein, parental involvement can take shape through parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and/or working in partnership with the community. Here are a few examples and tips:

- Organizing fundraisers
- Tutoring students
- Becoming a teacher's assistant
- Joining a local Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Helping out with extracurricular activities
- Offering time to assist with school network and resourcing groups

You want the best for your child's education, right? So why not get involved? Time is beneficial in all aspects of our daily lives. In fact, time seems to be running out of supply for many busy families. From late meetings to weekend conferences, parents are on full speed and at times find it hard to juggle all of their daily tasks, including school participation. The good news is, is that participating in your child's education can be easy and can take as much or as little time that you may have. The important fact to remember here is that you are participating. No matter how large or small the task may be, your child will recognize your effort.



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### School participation can be as simple as:

- Communicating with the teacher through meetings, visits and emails
- Volunteering your free time with field trips, parties, etc...
- Checking on your child's classroom progress periodically through phone calls or visits
- Visiting a library, museum or event with your child
- Attending Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Teaching your child the value of education by showing an interest in reading and talking about educational concerns and topics

The first step in participating with your child's educational and school environment is to gather the information that allows you to do so. According to [greatschools.net](http://greatschools.net) here is a list of resources that are pertinent in parental participation:

- School's phone number and Web site URL
- Name's of the school's secretary, principal and your child's teacher
- PTA president's name, phone number and e-mail address
- School newsletter frequency
- Principal's e-mail address
- Teacher's e-mail address and voice mail, if applicable

Overall, the fact is, is that the ways a parent can show their support are countless, and the benefits from such participation are priceless. According to the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPPIE), family-school partnerships help students exceed in school, parents gain confidence, teachers obtain the support they need, schools as a whole improve and communities become strongly united. No matter what age your child may be, they are always growing and need your participation to help expand that growth educationally, physically and emotionally.

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