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For children to be successful in school, parents must be actively engaged in their children's learning. Many studies show that parents' involvement in school is more important to their children's academic success than the parents' level of education or income. By showing interest in their children's education, parents can spark their children's enthusiasm, showing them that learning, both inside and outside of school, is enjoyable and rewarding.

Parents can help children succeed by participating in school or other learning activities, reading with their children, assisting with homework assignments, and talking with their children's teachers. Parents can share the goals they have for their children with teachers to make sure that teachers hold all students to high standards of performance.

At the heart of the No Child Left Behind Act, the nation's effort to improve education, is a promise to raise academic standards for all children and to help children reach those standards. This brochure is based on the Helping Your Child series of publications for parents and families, which is designed to provide parents with the latest research and practical information to help them support their children and ensure their children's success in school and in life.

A parent is a child's first and most important teacher, which is why the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 recognizes parents' vital role in education.

— Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

tips for parents

As a parent, you have a special interest in your child's education. As you become more involved, here are some basic tips that you may use at home:

- **Encourage your child to read.** It's the single most important thing that you can do to help your child succeed in school. Read with your child right from the start, and make sure there are lots of reading materials in the house.
- **Talk with your child.** Talking and listening are major components of children's school success. By having many opportunities to use and hear spoken language, children are given a tremendous advantage, picking up the language skills they will need to do well in school.
- **Monitor homework, and how much time children spend watching television, playing video games, and using the Internet.** Help your child get organized and provide a quiet place in the home for him or her to study. Limit the amount of time your child spends watching television,

surfing the Internet, and playing video games. Help your child learn to properly and effectively use the Internet.

- **Encourage your child to be responsible and work independently.** Make it clear to your child that he or she has to take responsibility for actions both at home and at school.
- **Encourage active learning.** Listen to your child's ideas and respond to them. Active learning also can take place when your child plays sports, acts in a school play, plays a musical instrument, or visits museums and bookstores.

helping your child with test-taking

You can be a great help to your child if you follow some of these tips about tests and testing:

Don't:

- Get upset because of a single test score.
- Place so much emphasis on your child's test scores. Too much pressure can affect his or her test performance.

Do:

- Encourage your child and provide praise for the things that he or she does well.
- Meet with teachers and ask for test preparation activities that you and your child can do at home.
- Make sure that your child attends school regularly.
- Provide a quiet place for studying at home and make sure your child is well rested on school days.
- Provide books and magazines for your child to read at home.
- Help your child avoid test anxiety.

You can help reduce test anxiety by encouraging your child to do the following:

- Plan ahead. Start studying for the test well in advance to avoid "cramming" the night before.
- Get a good night's sleep before the day of the test.
- On the day of the test, read all directions carefully before beginning work.
- Look quickly at the entire test to see what types of questions are on it. This tactic will help determine how much time to spend on each part of the test.
- Skip difficult questions and go on. If there is time at the end of the test, return to them and try again.

resources


This brochure was drawn from the larger booklet in the Helping Your Child series, "Helping Your Child Succeed in School," which provides parents with information, tools, and activities they can use at home to help their children develop critical skills for academic success. For more information on helping your child succeed in school—along with a variety of other topics—visit the Helping Your Child series Web site at www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html.

For more information on how you can help your child succeed in school, take a look at the following resources from the U.S. Department of Education and other organizations:

- **U.S. Department of Education:** www.ed.gov or 1-800-USA-LEARN
- **The Parents Portal:** www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml
- **Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE):** www.ed.gov/free/index.html
- **Parental Information and Resource Centers:** www.ed.gov/programs/pirc/index.html

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