

You Can Help Your Child Be Successful

Parents naturally want their children to succeed in school; however, sometimes they don't know where to start, when to find the time, or how to go about making positive connections with their children regarding school.

At the most basic level, parents can encourage the education of their children by showing that they truly value education themselves. Discuss new things you are learning at work or at home to show children that learning is a lifelong, dynamic process. Check the class website's "Week At A Glance" to see specifically what is happening in class and what the homework assignments are so that you can open a discussion more easily. Give children a chance to show what they know by asking simple questions about the subject. Ask children why they are completing the tasks that they are, and ask them to relate ideas they are reading about to experiences in their own lives. Restating major ideas from class in their own words helps students clarify their thinking.

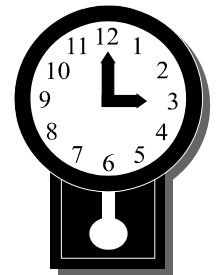
When helping with homework, parents need to be sure they are not doing the homework for their children. Remember, the main purpose of homework is to challenge students to complete tasks independently. I want students to come to class with questions about their homework, and I want them to learn to discover those answers within class discussions. It is not a great concern when students cannot answer a few of the homework questions; more importantly, students should be able to complete all questions after the class discussion of the homework. If you find you inadvertently have answered a question on your child's homework, ask your child to explain why that is the correct answer. This always includes finding the specific evidence from the reading. Students need to understand why an answer is correct in order to complete a question.

If a child cannot seem to begin a writing assignment, try having the child talk out some of his or her ideas with you. Students think about what they write through brainstorming to generate ideas, discussion to clarify ideas, re-examination of the text,



Help your child maintain a routine for homework time.

Encourage children to complete more difficult tasks first when they are more alert.



Students can develop time management skills by using their agendas to identify their busiest nights of the week. They can begin tasks early to avoid too much work in one night. In this class, students have the materials to begin most assignments several days before they are due.

creation of charts to organize ideas, and other prewriting activities. A parent could take dictation for a child, writing down exactly what the child says. Ideas now have been recorded, and the child has a place to begin.

Students are encouraged to develop their ability to evaluate and edit their writing independently. However, if you want to take a more active role, you could ask your child to read the writing piece aloud to you. Students see their errors more clearly when they are reading aloud, trying to communicate their ideas orally. However, do not expect children to be able to evaluate sentence structure, grammar, word choice, and the quality of their ideas within an essay all at the same time; rather, at this level, students are taught to read through their essays several times and evaluate different aspects of their writing each time. If the child is reading too quickly and not focusing, ask the child to slow down so *you* can better understand; this way, the child does not feel criticized and become defensive.

When responding to your child's writing assignments, don't simply look for errors or correct the errors for your child. First of all, find something specific to praise. Does the beginning grab your attention? Does a particular phrase seem lively? Is it clearly organized? Next, focus on the message the child wants to convey. Questions such as "Why do you think that?" and "Where in the text do you see that?" inspire children to support and develop their ideas.

Students are learning to become stronger writers through self-evaluation and reflection. Encourage your children to review their Writing Reflection Journals where they record their previous essays' strengths and weaknesses. You and your child can use the journal entries to discuss specific aspects of your child's writing.

When assignments and grade reports come home, focus beyond the grade to the information and skills they learned by completing the task. Show pride when your children do their best on particularly challenging assignments, regardless of the grade. Praise effort and improvement to reinforce the value of hard work. Encourage your children to describe mistakes that they made, and then talk about solutions. When children can learn from their mistakes, rather than feel discouraged by them, they are on the path to success.



Reading is contagious! Keep books, magazines, and novels around the house. If children live with adults who read and talk about what they read, and if they are encouraged to join discussions where others' ideas are respected, they usually grow up with the skills they have observed.

Use the Parent Portal at the district website to keep informed of a student's posted grades and average.



While the Internet can be a valuable resource, students should not plagiarize. Plagiarism is using another's direct words or paraphrased ideas and presenting them as one's own. Plagiarism, along with any type of cheating, is a serious offense and will result in no credit for the assignment.