



strong start, bright future

helping your child succeed in school

U.S. Department of Education



*Parents will always be a child's first and most important teacher.
And parenting is the most important job that every parent takes on.*

—Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

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. Most states have **voluntarily** adopted rigorous **college- and career-ready standards** to better ensure the **success** of all learners.

To help children reach those standards, this brochure, based on the *Helping Your Child* series of publications for parents and families, has been 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. Further, it builds upon the idea that all children **benefit** from quality **early learning** programs and effective **preschool** experiences.





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.



If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education.

—President Barack Obama



helping your child with test-taking

You can be a great help to your child if you follow 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 <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/succeed/index.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

Parents Families Webpage:

<http://www.ed.gov/parent-and-family-engagement>

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE):

<http://www.free.ed.gov/>

Early Learning

<http://www.ed.gov/early-learning>

Connectivity/Technology

<http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/connected/>

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