

Teachers' Tips FOR KEEPING IN TOUCH

Connect to your child's classroom.

Want to give your child the best experience possible? Team up with the teacher! Don't be discouraged from coming into class because you feel you're "not educated enough" or because you don't feel you have anything to contribute. Your child's teacher would love to strengthen the bond between school and home.

So, how do you strengthen that bond? Read on for teachers' tips.

- **Talk to your child every day about**

school. This is a great way to find out what she's learning. It will also help you identify potential problems that you might need to discuss with her teacher. Start a conversation. Ask "What was your favorite activity today?" instead of "How was school today?" That way, you'll avoid getting vague answers from your child.

- **Read everything that comes home.** Many teachers send daily or weekly newsletters to parents. These newsletters may contain information about class projects and field trips. Sometimes, students forget to pass this information on to parents. So check your child's backpack regularly. If the teacher prefers to post information on the school's website, check the site regularly.

- **Communicate.** Is something unusual going on in your child's life that might affect him at school? Then tell your child's teacher. Write the teacher a note or schedule a conference to discuss the issues. You can discuss crises like illness and divorce. You can also talk about less drastic changes, like a grandmother moving in or a parent getting a new job. Mention any medication your child uses, even if he doesn't take it at school.

- **Be a cheerleader!** Don't just focus on problem areas. Let your child's teacher know about her strengths too. This will help the teacher think of new ways to engage her.



- **Respect the schedule.** When there's an emergency, don't hesitate to call the school at any time. But for more routine matters, find out the best times to contact teachers. Ask at back-to-school night. Write the teacher a note or email.

- **Spend time in the classroom.** Parent volunteers are very valuable to teachers, but the experience can be equally rewarding for parents. Visiting the classroom is a great way for you to learn about your child's experiences firsthand. Offer to tutor individual students or help with special projects. You can also chaperone on field trips, give a talk about your job or your cultural background, or teach the class how to make an art project.

- **Bring learning home.** Find ways to relate everyday activities at home to concepts your child is learning in school. For instance, explain percentages at breakfast using the nutritional info on the back of cereal boxes. Or, talk about the fat content of skim versus two-percent milk.

- **Don't be afraid.** Your child's teacher wants to hear from you. Teachers understand that there's no such thing as a stupid question. So ask away!