



*'Quality Education in a Friendly, Caring and Supportive Environment'*

## **PARENTAL GUIDELINES: HELPING YOUR CHILD TO SUCCEED AT SCHOOL**

Endorsed: March, 2017

Review date: March, 2020

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When parents and families are involved in their children's schools, the children do better and have better feelings about going to school. In fact, many studies show that what the family does is more important to a child's school success than how much money the family makes or how much education the parents have. There are many ways that parents can support their children's learning at home and throughout the school year. Here are some ideas to get you started!

### **DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF**

**Meet your child's teacher.** As soon as the school year starts, try to find a way to meet your child's teacher. Let the teacher know you want to help your child learn. Make it clear that you want the teacher to contact you if any problems develop with your child.

**Get to know who's who at your child's school.** There are many people at your child's school who are there to help your child learn, grow socially and emotionally, and navigate the school environment. Familiarise yourself with the responsibilities of teachers, administrators, and support staff.

**Attend parent-teacher conferences and keep in touch with your child's teacher.** Schools usually have one or two parent-teacher conferences each year. You can also ask to meet with your child's teacher any time during the year. If you have a concern and can't meet face-to-face, send the teacher a short note or set up a time to talk on the phone.

## **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD ACADEMICALLY**

**Find out how your child is doing.** Discuss your child's learning progress with their teacher. If your child has an area of concern discuss/plan with the teacher a range of school based and home based support strategies. Make sure you read your child's school reports carefully as this will inform you of your child's progress.

**Ask the school about student support services if you think your child may need them e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech Pathologist & Social Worker.** If your child is having problems with learning or socialising, discuss the issues with your school as a referral to student support services may be required. The teacher may be able to provide adjustments for your child within class. If your child has a learning disability, extra assistance/funding may be available.

**Make sure that your child gets home learning tasks done.** Let your child know that you think education is important and that home learning tasks matter. You can help your child's learning at home by setting aside a special place to study, establishing a regular time, and removing distractions such as the television and digital devices. If you are reluctant to help your child at home because you feel uncertain about how to, you can speak with your child's teacher for advice. You can also help by showing that you are interested, helping your child get organized, providing the necessary materials, asking your child about daily assignments, monitoring work to make sure that it is completed, and praising all of your child's efforts. Remember that doing your child's home learning tasks for them won't help in the long run.

**Description of homework tasks.** During the Prep – 2 years the major task to be undertaken at home is home based reading. This is important as it provides your child with invaluable reading practice, it helps create a sound reading habit and sends the all-important message that reading and learning generally is a valued by you. As your child progresses through school, homework tasks will increase in complexity and cover a wider selection of tasks. You may need to provide extra guidance but your child should be encouraged to complete their own work. If there is any difficulty or uncertainty contact the school and discuss the homework task with the teacher concerned.

**Help your child prepare for assessment tasks.** Assessments play an important role in tracking your child's progress. Your child's teacher will also help prepare students for assessment tasks. As a parent, talk to your child about assessments and reassure them if they feel anxious. Remember, most assessments are to inform teachers as to the child's future learning needs.

## **GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL**

**Find out about the school.** Read the information the school sends home. Talk to other parents to find out what programs the school offers. Remember newsletters, the school website etc. will help you keep track of events throughout the school year.

### **Volunteer at your child's school and/or join your school's Parents Club.**

Teachers appreciate it when parents help out at the school! There are many ways you can contribute. You can volunteer in your child's class or in the school library. You can make food for a school event. Make an effort to attend evenings that focus on aspects of the curriculum or your child's performances. The Parents Club meets regularly to talk about ways to assist the school. These meetings give you a good chance to talk with other parents and to work together to improve the school.

## **GET INFORMED AND BE AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD**

**Ask questions.** If something concerns you about your child's learning or behavior, ask the teacher or Principal about it and seek their advice.

**Let the school know your concerns.** If you have a concern, communicate it to the school. The school cannot respond to concerns if you don't communicate them.

## **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME**

**Demonstrate a positive attitude about education to your children.** What we say and do in our daily lives can help them to develop positive attitudes toward school and learning and to build confidence in themselves as learners. Showing our children that we both value education and use it in our daily lives provides them with powerful models and contributes greatly to their success in school.

In addition, by showing interest in their children's education, parents and families can spark enthusiasm in them and lead them to a very important understanding-that learning can be enjoyable as well as rewarding and is well worth the effort required.

**Monitor your child's television, video game, and Internet use.** Children, on average, spend far more time watching TV, playing video games and using the Internet than they do completing learning tasks or other school-related activities. Guide your child to use these devices wisely.

**Encourage your child to read.** Helping your child become a reader is the single most important thing that you can do to help the child to succeed in school and in life. The importance of reading simply can't be overstated. Reading helps children in all school subjects. More importantly, it is the key to lifelong learning.

**Talk with your child.** Talking and listening play major roles in children's school success. It's through hearing parents and family members talk, and through responding to that talk, that young children begin to pick up the language skills they will need if they are to do well. For example, children who don't hear a lot of talk and who aren't encouraged to talk themselves often have problems learning to read, which can lead to other school problems. In addition, children who haven't learned to listen carefully often have trouble following directions and paying attention in class. It's also important for you to show your child that you're interested in what they have to say. Talking with your child will stimulate language development.

**Attendance.** Regular attendance is critical for success at school. Avoid unnecessary time off school e.g. take vacations during school vacations where possible. If your child is absent, you need to inform the school, giving a reason, as D.E.T. tracks student attendance.

**Encourage your child to use the library.** Libraries are places of learning and discovery for everyone. Helping your child find out about libraries will set him/her on the road to being an independent learner.

**Encourage your child to be responsible and work independently.** Taking responsibility and working independently are important qualities for school success. As a parent, you can help your child/children to develop these qualities by establishing reasonable rules that you enforce consistently, making it clear that they have to take responsibility for what they do, both at home and at school. Show your child/children how to break a job down into small steps, and monitor what they do after school, in the evenings and on weekends.

**Encourage active learning.** Children need active learning as well as quiet learning such as reading and doing homework. Active learning involves asking and answering questions, solving problems and exploring interests. Active learning also can take place when your child plays sports, spends time with friends, acts in a school play, plays a musical instrument or visits museums and places of interest. To promote active learning, listen to your child's ideas and respond to them. Let him/her jump in with questions and opinions when you read books together. When you encourage this type of give-and-take at home, your child's participation and interest in school is likely to increase.