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## How To Get Parents Involved With School Activities

By Will Hanke

Research has repeatedly shown that children succeed academically, socially and emotionally and become more well-rounded and balanced individuals if their parents are involved in their education and school activities. Getting involved also sends the message to children that parents are genuinely interested in their education, and that going to school is a positive, valuable cause.

But many parents don't seem to show much interest in this cause when they aren't participators in their children's school activities. They often say they don't have the time or energy or that they feel uncomfortable in their children's schools. Other parents just seem to be confused about their options and how they can participate, or are just lacking the right information.

So how can schools get parents involved with school activities?

Communication is the key. A major reason for lack of parental involvement is lack of clear, straightforward and helpful information. Schools and teachers need to make contact with parents—in person, on the phone, through e-mail and websites, through letters and notes sent home, through newsletters. Teachers need to talk to parents in a basic manner without adding "educational jargon" and ensure parents have regular access to readable information about their children's school activities—both in and out of the classroom.

Parents want to know what their children are learning, what school activities they are involved in, how they as parents can specifically be involved with their children's education and school activities, how they can approach teachers and how they can help their children at home.

Providing this information regularly, consistently and in various formats will help bridge the gap between schools lacking parental involvement and parents not being involved in the schools.

Accommodation and inclusion is another strategy for getting parents involved in school activities. Parents need to know that schools are sensitive to their needs, lifestyles and demands. Teachers should try and work around parents' work schedules for school activities, meetings and conferences, and also work around cultural or language barriers. Schools should make it easy, too, by letting

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parents know that involvement doesn't have to be an all-consuming, complicated process.

Another way to be accommodating is to invite parents to act as partners in the school decision-making process. They should regularly ask for parents' concerns and suggestions, and then deal with them accordingly. If schools want parents to come to school meetings, they could first of all provide a survey asking what dates and times are the most suitable, provide child care for younger siblings, and a "parental platform" during the meeting where parents are given the opportunity to speak, make suggestions and ask questions.

Be resourceful. Finally, schools should provide resources for parents who want to learn more and become more involved in their children's school activities and education. Offer parent education classes. Create a parenting resource center at the school with informational material such as brochures, articles, magazines, tips, textbooks, videos and CDs or tapes. Develop a school website with a section for parents. Set up sessions or workshops at the school on issues like single parenting,

helping with homework, improving grades and study skills, child care, raising teenagers, drug and sexual awareness, etc. Send "goodie bags" home filled with activities parents can do with their children.

The opportunities are endless, and if schools and teachers are truly committed to the cause of parental involvement in education and school activities, then they can get parents on board as well.

Getting parents involved in their child's education can be a daunting task. Websites like

<http://GetParentsInvolved.org>

help teach how parents can get more involved with their local school.

### **Home Schooling Information for the Parent**

**By Chris Miller**

Home schooling can be a difficult decision. Many believe that home schooling can not prepare a child to deal with real life situations. By attending a public school, the child is more likely to be involved in school team sports, drama clubs, band activities, after school clubs, and be more socially interactive with others. Many of these activities are fundamental for the growth and emotional well being of a child.

Alternatively, an argument can be made that there is just as much social stimulation at home as there is in public school. For a large number of home schooled children, many have friends that live within their neighborhood that they can play and interact with. After school sports programs are available for in many areas, typically at community centers. These programs can prove to be a great source for social interaction.

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A good way to obtain additional home schooling information is to ask parents of other home school children. More than likely they can share what activities they do, as well as inform you what type of approach they use; a facilitated self study approach or lecture oriented approach.

This information will help lead you to a better idea of whether or not you are able to handle a teaching job. Contrary to some beliefs, teaching is not an easy task. It takes great dedication and determination to ensure that the children are always excited about learning, moving at a steady pace, and keeping them interested in what is next. If you are interested in home schooling, teaching classes are available through some schools.

There are many resources available online regarding home schooling. Blogs and websites can provide you with relevant home school information. Many of these sites are maintained by parents who home school and provide information on what problems may be encountered in home schooling and the solutions they have.

Although teaching can be difficult, many find the end result rewarding. Home schooling can provide parents and children a nice balance and learning environment to exceed in.

As an author at

<http://www.ez-search.us>

Chris Miller shares his knowledge about

home schooling

information

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