



Keeping in Touch with School

Studies show that children do best in their schoolwork when their parents are involved in the school. Parents who come to school performances, open houses, sporting events, and other activities show their children that school is important to the family and that they are proud to see the work of their children and their friends. But working families often find it difficult to break away for their children's events. What are some ways to handle this situation?

Be there. You may need to miss some school events, but be sure to be there for the most important ones. Trade shifts with a co-worker, take vacation time, or arrange to work longer another day to make up the time. See what options your employer offers for such occasions. Your children's school activities are just too important to miss.

Send a family representative. If you can't attend, can you send someone else to a special event? A well-loved aunt, uncle, or family friend? If your child has a separated parent, this may be a good time for him or her to help out. If you don't attend, be sure to set aside a time to hear a report from those who did go to let your child know you're interested. You may want to send a camera to the event, so you have pictures of the special occasion.

Make sure your child can attend. Even if you can't go, make sure your children can attend school events. Carpool with another family, or ask a relative or friend to drive.

Keep in touch with teachers. Most schools have a special time for parents to talk to their child's teacher about his or her progress. This is your chance to find out how your child is doing in school. It is important to take advantage of this chance for a private conversation about your child's progress. This is also a great time to ask your questions about the school program.

Can't make it to your conference time? Your child's teacher will work with you to find another time. Cancel your appointment if you can't make it, as a courtesy to all.

How about a telephone conference? If you can't get to the school, a phone conversation with the teacher may do just as well.

There's nothing like good news. Don't wait until trouble develops to consult the teacher. A conference when things are going well can bring a good feeling to both you and your child and can help keep your child's schoolwork on a positive course.

What about teenagers? Many parents regularly attend school activities for their elementary school children, but their older children tell them it's not cool to have their parents at school. Don't believe them. Studies show that teenagers, like their younger brothers and sisters, do best at school when their parents attend and support school events.

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