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10 Things Parents Wish Schools/Teachers Would Do

1. Build children's self-esteem by using praise generously and avoiding ridicule and negative public criticism.
2. Get to know each child's needs, interests, and special talents, as well as the way each child learns best.
3. Communicate often and openly with parents, contacting them early about academic or behavioral problems and being candid, rather than defensive, when discussing these problems.
4. Regularly assign homework that helps children learn, and advise parents how they can work with their children on this homework.
5. Set high academic standards, expecting all children to learn and helping them do so.
6. Care about children, since children learn best when taught by warm, friendly, caring, and enthusiastic teachers.
7. Treat all children fairly and do not play favorites.
8. Enforce a positive discipline code based on clear and fair rules that are established at the beginning of each school year; reinforce positive behavior rather than punish negative behavior.
9. Vary teaching methods and make learning fun.
10. Encourage parent participation by reaching out to involve parents in their children's education, showing them how they can help their children at home, and remembering that parents want to work with teachers to help their children do their best.

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10 Truths About Parent Involvement

The research is clear and convincing: Regardless of income or background, when parents are involved, students are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, graduate, and go on to postsecondary education. Here are 10 more truths about parent involvement.

1. All parents have hopes and goals for their children.
2. Parents differ in their abilities and/or resources to help their children reach those goals.
3. The parent is the central contributor to a child's education.
4. Parent involvement must be seen as a legitimate element of education and deserves equal emphasis with elements such as school improvement and evaluation.
5. Parent involvement is an ongoing process, not a series of events.
6. Parent involvement requires a shared vision, policy, and framework for planning programs and practices that are connected to student learning.
7. Many barriers to parent involvement are found within school practices, attitudes, and assumptions.
8. Successful parent involvement programs help families guide their children's learning from preschool through high school.
9. Families from diverse backgrounds have their own set of norms and experiences that often influence their relationship with schools.
10. Parents are more likely to become involved when:
 - They understand that they *should* be involved.
 - They feel *capable* of making a contribution.
 - They feel *invited* by the school and their children.

A Report Card for Parents

Grade yourself with an “A”, “B”, or “C” on how well you help your child succeed in school. An “A” means you’re doing a great job and can see the results of your involvement. A “B” means you’re doing a good job but could do more. A “C” means you realize you need to do more—and will!

Do I as a parent:

- Maintain a good working relationship with all my child’s teachers?
- Show my child that I value education by talking about the importance of education in his or her life and mine?
- Attend all parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and other school events, particularly those that support student learning?
- Read to my child every day or make sure my child reads every day on his or her own?
- Provide a quiet time and place for my child to study and read?
- Insist that my child complete all assigned homework?
- Make sure my child attends school every day (not including legitimate excused absences)?
- Expect my child to do his or her best in all subjects?
- Take an interest in what interests my child?
- Show pride in my child’s accomplishments—big or small?
- Encourage my child to do his or her best, without putting undue pressure on him or her, in scholastic, athletic, and extra-curricular activities?
- Secure special assistance if my child needs it?
- Limit television watching and plan other individual and family activities?
- Make sure my child gets regular exercise, eats nutritious food, and has adequate time for sleep and rest?
- Make sure my child has free time to play and enjoy him- or herself without being overscheduled with after-school activities?
- Listen to my child and respect/understand his or her feelings, even if I disagree?

Supporting Learning at Home

Establish a Daily Family Routine

- ❖ Provide a quiet space, time, and materials for studying and reading.
- ❖ Assign chores and regular household tasks.
- ❖ Support good health habits: regular exercise, proper amount of rest, nutritious meals and snacks, and health care as needed.

Monitor Out-of-School Activities

- ❖ Guide the constructive use of leisure time: after-school activities, use of TV, and time with friends.
- ❖ Set clear rules and expectations.
- ❖ Reward success and apply consequences appropriately and consistently.

Model the Value of Learning

- ❖ Set an example by reading at home and engaging in other learning activities.
- ❖ Play games together that require planning ahead and problem solving (e.g., Scrabble, Dominoes), rather than pure luck (e.g., The Game of Life).
- ❖ Communicate openly.

Express High but Realistic Expectations for Achievement

- ❖ Encourage your child to work hard in school.
- ❖ Regularly discuss education, careers, life skills, and interests.
- ❖ Regularly affirm your child's personal worth through positive messages.

Support Your Child's Overall Development and Progress in School

- ❖ Stay in touch with your child's teachers.
- ❖ Reward achievement in school.
- ❖ Provide a home learning environment that is equipped for studying and encourages learning (e.g., Internet access, good lighting, books, quiet space).

Read, Write, and Discuss

- ❖ Read to your child and listen to your child read.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for writing (e.g., grocery lists, letters, stories to share with family).
- ❖ Discuss with your child his or her school day, your day, and current events.

Use Community Resources to Expand Learning

- ❖ Expose your child to cultural activities (e.g., visits to library, museums, concerts).
- ❖ Enroll your child in youth enrichment programs (e.g., after-school sports or lessons, community programs, clubs).
- ❖ Connect your child to volunteer opportunities, summer jobs, or internships in the community.