

**Family Newsletter**

February 2019

**Talk.** When you show concern by talking to teachers, talking to counselors, talking to administrators, and talking to your child, you force people to notice that you value education. This is a powerful statement.

Make statements such as:

"I’m concerned that my child is not doing well in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ class."

"I care about the relationship between my child and his/her teachers."

"I want to make sure that my child’s teachers expect him/her to succeed."

**Get involved**. Attend school activities for parents, such as PTA meetings. Your presence shows you are concerned about education and allows you to develop positive relationships with school staff.

**Require the school to be responsive**

Ask questions such as:

"What can we do together to help my child improve in school?"

"What subject gives my child the most trouble in class?"

"What subject does my child like the most?"

"Do you have a Stay-In-School program at this school? How does it work?"

More information can be found at TheLearningCommunity.us at <http://www.thelearningcommunity.us/ResourcesbyFormat/TipsforParents/KeepingKidsinSchool/tabid/303/Default.aspx>



**Keeping Your Child in School**

As a parent, you are the single most important influence on your child’s decision to stay in school. In fact, your example largely determines how much importance your child attaches to school. Even if you didn’t have the chance to finish school yourself, you can show your child that school is important by getting involved in his or her education. You just have to be enthusiastic, understanding, and supportive.

A child can show signs of being a potential dropout as early as fifth grade. If your child is falling behind in class, doesn’t make friends, complains about school, doesn’t do homework, and has become a discipline problem for the teacher, it’s time for action.

**Show your interest.** The simple actions listed below force your child to notice that education matters to you. This is the most powerful statement you can make.

Sit at the same table while your child does homework.

Discuss what your child likes and doesn’t like about school or class.

Ask about the schoolwork your child is doing in class and for homework.

Encourage your child to read. (You can do this simply by reading more yourself.)

Raise your own expectations for your child’s education and academic achievement.

Tell your child what you expect. Express your confidence that your child can meet your expectations

**Teaching Your Child about Volunteering**

Becoming a responsible citizen is only one reason your child should get involved now. In fact, the rewards young volunteers reap are often as great as the ones they give to others.

**What Kids Learn**

Children who volunteer are more successful in school and more likely to graduate from high school and college. This may be because most service opportunities teach kids essential school — and life — skills like planning, working in groups, interacting with people who are different from yourself, and defining and solving complex problems. Children who volunteer are also challenged to figure out how to manage their own time and are empowered to do something to right wrongs. They see and hear about terrible things and giving them an outlet to help others in need reminds them that they can make a difference.

**Where to Start**

Make volunteering a family effort when possible. Most volunteering opportunities are managed by institutions, such as churches and other religious congregations, schools, libraries, unions, and fraternal associations. Try starting with organizations you may already have a connection to, and to be sure to follow your child’s interests, like the environment, animals, and issues in the news. National organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Keep America Beautiful, or the American Red Cross also often have local efforts and established volunteer networks.

**Planning Your Volunteer Schedule**

Be realistic about your child’s abilities and time commitment when choosing an opportunity. Begin by volunteering for an hour and work it up to a longer commitment as he gets older. Choose a place that’s used to child volunteers since the experience is as important as the result.

**Why Volunteer**

Kids should volunteer because there are other kids who really need them. They can learn to become active members in their community, which will follow them into adulthood.

Information provided by Scholastic.com at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/global-awareness/how-and-why-your-child-should-start-volunteering>

**School Fundraising Tips**

In a time when school budgets often cover only the basics, many parent groups recognize school fundraisers as a way to pay for sports, computer, music and arts programs and equipment. And while these campaigns can be helpful, the right planning is necessary to be really successful. Before you choose a school fundraising campaign, be sure to review these school fundraising tips for parents:

**School Fundraiser Planning**

Identify what the funds are needed for, and set a clear goal. Be sure to state the goal clearly to every participant and buyer.

Choose a fundraising product or program that is fun and interesting to get the most participation. Avoid the same old program year after year, and do something different than other local schools.

Sell quality products. Make sure the product you choose is something people would be interested in buying anyway. Often, the most successful school fundraisers are those that take into account the season.

**School Fundraiser Selling**

Kids will be more successful if they compete by class rather than individually. Motivate them with donated prizes for the most products sold, the most funds raised, the first to reach a certain number sold, etc. Keep the prizes somewhere visible, as well as a photo of what they’re working for.

Have kids rehearse the sales pitch and role play typical customer questions and responses.

Make clear safety rules: a parent must always be present, don’t carry large sums of cash, don’t sell to strangers, and don’t do neighborhood sales after dark.

**After the School Fundraiser Ends**

Incorporate adding up the funds received and running stats by class into age appropriate math lessons for the kids.

Have a big assembly to praise everyone’s efforts and give plenty of thanks to all who participated.

Request feedback from the parents on how they think the fundraiser could be improved and what worked well.

Information provided by TheLearningCommunity.us at <http://www.thelearningcommunity.us/ResourcesbyFormat/TipsforParents/SchoolFundraising/tabid/355/Default.aspx>

**Beware of Bullying: What You Can Do**

If your child is the victim of bullying, he may suffer physically and emotionally, and his schoolwork will likely show it. Grades drop because instead of listening to the teacher, kids are wondering what they did wrong and whether anyone will sit with them at lunch. If bullying persists, they may be afraid to go to school. Problems with low self-esteem and depression can last into adulthood and interfere with personal and professional lives.

If you're concerned that your child is a victim of teasing or bullying, look for these signs of stress:

* Increased passivity or withdrawal
* Frequent crying
* Complaints of physical symptoms such as stomach-aches or headaches with no apparent cause
* Sudden drop in grades or other learning problems
* Not wanting to go to school
* Significant changes in social life — suddenly no one is calling or extending invitations
* Sudden change in the way your child talks — calling herself a loser, or a former friend a jerk

Give your child space to talk. If she recounts incidences of teasing or bullying, be empathetic. If your child has trouble verbalizing her feelings, read a story about children being teased or bullied. Once you've opened the door, help your child begin to problem-solve. Role-play situations and teach your child ways to respond.

Many schools have programs especially designed to raise awareness of bullying behavior and to help parents and teachers deal effectively with it. If you are concerned about your child:

* Share with the teacher what your child has told you; describe any teasing or bullying you may have witnessed.
* Ask the teacher if she sees similar behavior at school, and enlist her help in finding ways to solve the problem.
* If the teacher says your child is being teased, find out whether there are any things he may be doing in class to attract teasing. Ask how he responds to the teasing, and discuss helping him develop a more effective response.
* After the initial conversation, be sure to make a follow-up appointment to discuss how things are going.
* If the problem persists, or the teacher ignores your concerns, and your child starts to withdraw or not want to go to school, consider the possibility of "therapeutic intervention." Ask to meet with the school counselor or psychologist, or request a referral to the appropriate school professional.

More information can be found at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/social-emotional-skills/bullying-and-teasing-no-laughing-matter>



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**Unique Extracurricular Activities**

**Cooking**

Why?

Child culinarians have never been cooler. Check out the popular T.V. show *Chopped Junior*!

What it teaches:

Early exposure to cooking leads to a love of healthy food. On top of nutrition, kids pick up on sequential order and following directions.

Where?

The Marquette Food Co-op offers kid-friendly cooking classes at a low cost! Information can be found here: <https://marquettefood.coop/event/kids-class-seasonal-cooking/>

**Golf**

Why?

There have never been so many young stars. Kid golfers look to Ginger Howard, 18, the youngest female black golfer to go pro.

What it teaches:

Golf is the only sport that requires you to call a penalty on yourself, allowing children to develop integrity. They shake hands with opponents before the first tee and at the 18th hole, which builds sportsmanship.

Where?

Information about youth golf opportunities can be found at <http://mqtjuniorgolf.com>.

**Chess**

Why?

More kids than ever play chess, encouraged by parents who know it boosts analytical skills. It’s easy to learn and inexpensive to start.

What it teaches:

Playing chess can teach your child strategy skills and think ahead to identify when an opponent botches a move.

Where?

The Peter White Public Library offers special Chess Club events for children age 7-14. More information can be found here: <http://www.pwpl.info/>.

Information provided by Scholastic.com at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/extracurricular-activities/6-unique-extracurricular-activities-kids>

**How to Address Your Child Bullying Others**

Kids who bully may have difficulty forming positive relationships. They are more apt to use tobacco and alcohol, and to be abusive spouses. Some studies have even found a correlation with later criminal activities.

There are many risk factors that may contribute to the child's involvement in the behavior. Often, these students require support to change their behavior and address any other challenges that may be influencing their behavior.

Kids may be bullying others if they:

* Get into physical or verbal fights
* Have friends who bully others
* Are increasingly aggressive
* Get sent to the principal’s office or to detention frequently
* Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
* Blame others for their problems
* Don’t accept responsibility for their actions
* Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:

* Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
* Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school
* Engage in early sexual activity
* Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults
* Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults

Kids learn from adults’ actions. By treating others with kindness and respect, adults show the kids in their lives that there is no place for bullying. Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict, as well as how they treat their friends, colleagues, and families.

Information provided by StopBullying.gov at <https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/index.html>

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