



# What parents can do to be more involved at school

Parents can make every effort to encourage children to make the most of the school experience, including academics and extracurricular activities. Though students' level of engagement is ultimately up to them, parental involvement at school can be crucial for students' success.

According to the National Education Council, when parents get involved in their children's education, those children are more likely to do better in school and be more positive about the school experience. They also may be well-behaved. Parents wondering what they can do to assist at the school level can consider these possibilities.

**Attend school board meetings**

Many community school boards are comprised entirely of volunteers who

work with superintendents and other personnel to advocate for policies and procedures for students. Decisions typically are up for vote, and parents can run for school board positions or simply attend meetings each month and let their voices be heard about various issues.

**Attend open houses and conferences**

Parents can make every effort to get to know teachers and other staff. Putting faces to names can help parents develop a connection to teachers and vice versa. Most schools have back to school nights, meet the coaches opportunities, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences. Parents can take part in these events.

**Open lines of communication**

Parents can ask teachers

and other staff how they prefer to communicate. Some teachers want students to take the lead and reach out first, with parents providing support if need be. Adults can be responsive when teachers reach out.

**Attend school events**

Families can make it a point to support students in all endeavors. Whenever the opportunity to visit the school comes up — whether for a concert, sports game, trivia night, or fundraiser — parents can make an effort to attend.

**Volunteer**

When parents want to be involved even further, they can head committees at school or volunteer with the PTA or PTO. They also can help out in the cafeteria, library or in the main office. Parents who have particular skills



**GET INVOLVED.** Parents wondering what they can do to assist at the school level can consider several possibilities.

may volunteer to provide tutoring or mentoring as needed. Furthermore, parents can volunteer in school-sanctioned extra-


curriculars, such as Scouts BSA or as sports coaches.

Involvement in school is part of being an informed and supportive parent.

Parents wondering what they can do to assist at the school level can consider these possibilities.

# Help student-athletes balance academics and athletics

The rigors of academia demand every student's utmost devotion. For some, the challenges in the classroom are accompanied by the thrill of



**BALANCE SCHOOL WORK AND PLAY.** Student-athletes can consider many strategies as they try to do their best in the classroom and on the competitive playing fields.

competition on the playing fields. Multi-tasking may be most associated with modern professionals, but many might have learned how to balance

multiple responsibilities at once during their days as student-athletes.

Student-athletes typically have a lot on their plates. Managing multiple priorities at once can overwhelm anyone, especially young student-athletes without much experience hand ling such a juggling act. As a new school year begins, student-athletes can consider these strategies as they try to do their best in the classroom and on the competitive playing fields.

- Practice time management. Create your schedule of activities and allot a certain amount of time to devote to each. A schedule can lay the foundation for the hopefully successful manage-

ment of time that will be necessary during the school year.

- Take steps to avoid burnout. Burnout can affect student-athletes in the classroom and on the field. Work with parents, coaches and school staff, including a nutritionist if one works for the school's athletic department, to devise a meal plan that will help to energize the body and reduce injury risk. In addition, follow a consistent sleep schedule that helps to overcome mental and physical fatigue. According to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 should sleep eight to 10 hours each night.

- Avoid distractions. Student-athletes who are finding it hard to get at least eight hours of sleep each night might be too distracted during the day to get everything done so they can go to bed at a reasonable hour. Smartphones ensure distractions are never too far away, but student-athletes can take a proactive approach and turn off app notifications once a new school year and season begins. In addition, pick a quiet homework/study room in the house without distractions like a television or the hum of outside noise.
- Set academic and athletic goals. Coaches typically establish goals for players before the

season and then again during end-of-season exit interviews. Such goals can help athletes maintain their motivation, and a similar strategy can be employed in the classroom. Parents and student-athletes can meet with teachers to establish study goals to keep them striving toward academic achievement. Clearly defined goals can improve student-athletes' focus, and that can make it easier to balance their responsibilities.

Student-athletes face a balancing act once a new school year or season begins. Various strategies can help young people successfully juggle their academic and athletic obligations.



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**BACK TO SCHOOL Safety**

**Review these safety tips with your kids**

1. Opt for a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and keep it light. You may want to consider a rolling backpack for heavy books.
2. At the bus stop, wait for the bus to reach a complete stop before approaching it.
3. Stay seated on the school bus until it arrives at your stop, and remember to wear your seatbelt. Always keep your head and arms inside the bus.
4. Use the handrail when exiting the bus, and cross in front of the bus so the driver can see you. Remember to check both ways for traffic before crossing the street.
5. If you walk to school, go with a buddy, and avoid crossing through any empty lots or fields along the way.
6. If you ride a bike or scooter to school, remember to always wear your helmet.
7. Don't talk to strangers, and never accept gifts or rides from strangers.
8. Cross the street only at designated crosswalks, and obey school crossing guards.
9. If you're bullied or see somebody being bullied, tell a teacher or trusted adult.
10. Memorize your home address and phone number. In case of an emergency, call 911.

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Get On Board With These

School Bus SAFETY TIPS

1- Seat belts should always be worn, even on the bus. Never get out of your seat while the bus is moving.

2- Always look both ways before crossing the street and always use the crosswalks.

3- Find a safe place away from the road to wait for the school bus.

4- Every time you ride your bike, be sure to wear a helmet.

5- Tell a teacher or parent if somebody is bothering you.

6- Your phone number is important to know—memorize it. Also be familiar with other im-

portant phone numbers like the police and fire departments.

7- Walk to school with a friend, and follow a familiar route where you won't be alone. Never talk to strangers along the way.

8- Instructions during fire drills should be followed carefully. This way you'll know what to do in a real fire.

9- Say no to smoking and drugs!

10- Exercise caution with unfamiliar animals you may see on your way to school. Remember, WITH SCHOOL not every animal is friendly.

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Play It SAFE at School

by following these smart tips!

• Make sure you know your full name, street address and phone number including area code. If you can't remember all of these things, carry them on a piece of paper.

•Never get into anyone's car without your parents' permission.

•Always tell your parents if you are going somewhere after school.

•Cross streets only at corners, and always look both ways before crossing.

•Observe and obey traffic signals as well as crossing guards.

•Know how to use the telephone for help in case of an emergency.

•Walk, don't run, across streets. If you are riding a bike, walk it across the street.

•If you are walking where there are no sidewalks, walk on the shoulder of the left side of the road, so you are facing oncoming traffic.

•When waiting for the school bus, stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter. Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

•When leaving the bus, walk ten giant steps away from the bus before crossing in front of it. Never cross behind the bus.

•Tell your parents, teacher or another trusted adult if somebody at school is making you feel uneasy or doing something you think is wrong.

•When walking to school, stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around. Always walk with a buddy.

•If you are home alone after school, be sure to lock the door and call a parent as soon as you arrive. Never open the door for anyone you don't know well and trust.

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# How to help STEM students fulfill their potential

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes are now integral components of students' educations. Increasingly students are drawn to STEM education, including pursuing STEM pathways in high school, because of the doors such an education can open in the future. According to the United States Department of Labor, there were nearly 10 million workers in STEM occupations in 2021, and this total is projected to grow by almost 11 percent by 2031 — roughly two times faster than the total for all occupations.

STEM subjects may not come so easily for some students, who at times may feel disengaged from the coursework. That doesn't mean students should give up. Even if STEM classes do not come easily, one still could have what it takes to be involved in science or engineering, and eventually land STEM jobs.

**Recognize that STEM is more exacting**

Unlike other classes in liberal arts education that are highly subjective, STEM involves answers that are exact. There is no wiggle room for subjectivity, so students must get in the habit of checking their work and ensuring their answers are correct. Students may need some assistance from tutors or parents to recognize common mistakes and learn how to proof their work. This fosters a greater attention to detail.

**Show the work**

Teachers often require students to show the computation involved in reaching a mathematical conclusion, or the reasoning behind how an answer is derived. While the answer may be correct, points may be deducted for not showing the work. Students should make it a habit to be transparent with their calculations so educators can point out where they were right and where they went wrong.

**Recognize your own scientific tendencies**

Those who are science-minded tend to make good observations, base claims on evidence, express curiosity, and make connections between complex ideas. Some students may not think they are intellectual enough to be involved with STEM, but after recognizing these traits in themselves, they may find they have more in common with great scientists than they first imagined.

**Maintain good notes**

Get the most out of courses by taking excellent notes, as the best instruction often comes from lectures and class time. Review notes regularly and practice work frequently.

**Have a study buddy**

Studying with someone else can be helpful with STEM coursework. A study buddy can be a fellow classmate, a parent, a friend, or anyone else to bounce ideas off of. Others view problems differently and may see something a student is missing, or be able to explain it more readily.

**See failure as a motivating force**

Only by failing can STEM students dissect missteps and improve work to get to more concrete conclusions. While it initially may not seem enjoyable to fail, it does present opportunity to do things differently the next time. Failure usually lights a fire to get students to work harder and fulfill their potential.

STEM classes can be quite challenging and not every student takes to them immediately. But with a little work and support, students can improve their performance in STEM subjects.



DON'T GIVE UP. Even if STEM classes do not come easily, one still could have what it takes to be involved in science or engineering, and eventually land STEM jobs.

# How students can get the most out of tutoring

No student's academic career is free from challenges. Classroom challenges can help students get more out of their coursework, which can benefit them as their academic careers progress and prepare them to excel in the professional arena.

Students can sometimes overcome challenges on their own or with a little extra assistance from educators and parents. When coursework is especially challenging, students may benefit from working with tutors. Direct one-on-one communication with a tutor can help students fully understand complex concepts that parents may not understand. In certain instances, educators cannot always pause lessons to help struggling students in the classroom, particularly if others in the class are ready to move on. So tutors may be just what students need to unlock their academic potential and stay the course as their knowledge of a specific subject expands.

The partnership between student and tutor is most effective when each person fully commits to a tutoring session. Professional tutors are paid to be committed, and it's up to students to match that commitment. Making the most of working with a tutor comes down to preparation, interest, a willingness to put in the work, and a host of additional factors.

- Prepare for each tutoring session. Students should prepare for each tutoring session just like they do for other activities they care about, including extracurriculars. Student musicians would not arrive to a recital without their instrument, nor would athletes arrive for a game without their equipment. Prior to the beginning of a tutoring session, double-check to ensure you have all the necessary materials, including books, class notes, past and current assignments, and a syllabus for the class. If possible, send the tutor the syllabus in advance of the first session, and note the challenges you're having in regard to the material.
- Recognize the student-tutor dynamic is a two-way street. Tutors should not be the only ones to speak during a session. Students can prepare questions prior to each session and then ask any additional questions that come to mind during the session. Open, free-flowing communication can help students gain a stronger grasp of the material, and it's the responsibility of both tutors and students to keep lines of communication open. If a tutor's approach is not resonating, speak up and ask for more clarification.
- Actively engage. Tutors may give some additional work to help students learn the material. Students should not write off such assignments because they won't be graded. Active engagement in tutoring, both during sessions and between them, can ensure students get the most out of tutoring.
- Be patient. Tutors are typically utilized when students have trouble understanding complex subjects. That complexity means it will likely take time before students fully grasp what tutors are teaching them. Students should stay patient and not grow discouraged if it's taking awhile to grasp material. Celebrate any progress that is made, however incremental it may be. Small steps forward can lead students down a successful path that could ultimately end with mastery of a complex subject.

Tutors help millions of students fulfill their academic potential each year. The most successful student-tutor relationships are characterized by hard work on the part of both parties.



EXTRA HELP. Making the most of working with a tutor comes down to preparation, interest, a willingness to put in the work, and a host of additional factors.

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