

How parents can help support their children's education?

We need to keep in mind that there are different stages in life and each one implies different necessities as well. So, I tried to think about the most common events as a teacher I have faced at schools the last 15 years in order to share general tips.

1. The first thing we really appreciate from parents is to drop-off kids who have already had **breakfast at home**. Please, feed your children with protein, not sugar products because they come to school wild and hyperactive. ¿Do you really think your child is going to pay attention or able to concentrate with such a high sugar level in the body? Otherwise, if the kid doesn't eat anything previous to class, guess what, oh yeah, the same that happens to you and me, our mind is disconnected just thinking about food and might be sleepy.

Breakfast – Protein – Energy / not starving – Pay attention and concentrate

2. Practice grade-level **reading** strategies for comprehension and vocabulary. Read with your children at least 20 minutes a day. It is known that there are many benefits to reading such as expanding our knowledge, enhancing creativity, improving memory, concentration, focus, vocabulary and communication skills.
3. Use strategies to **connect real-world concepts to curriculum**. For example, if we are teaching your kid addition you can ask him to add the number of items you put inside the cart when shopping. So, this is very important to know what your children are being taught at school. Then, the importance of the next tip.
4. In order to know the grade-level curriculum you should (I would like to use MUST but don't want to sound so rude) **attend parent workshops**, curriculum nights, read the e-mails from school and teacher and, of course, ask your child what he/she learns every day. These will allow you to have a wider idea of the curriculum and what is happening at school. And every single time you get involved in school meetings your child feels important, powerful and confident because mom and dad are dedicating their valuable time and busy schedule to be at school and listen to the teacher. I can tell you this because we, as teachers, see how the kids express joy because their parents are involved at school.
5. **Don't compare your child with others** because you destroy his/her self-esteem. Never tell them someone is more intelligent, more capable, and do never question them why they don't do things the way someone else does. I know, I know, our parent's mind blows up because we do it unconsciously but, you are allowed to think about it and think deeply how to help your kid to improve in that specific area. Your child born in May is in the same class than the one born in September, so your child is 8 months younger than the one you are using as a reference to compare him. That's so cruel because in a young child 8 months mean a lot. It's our job as teachers to kindly teach and take every single child to his learning pace but we can't help a

child whose self-esteem has been destroyed because he is sillier and slower than their classmate, you got my point?

6. **Stop saying you hate Mondays.** Have you ever think about it? When your children are constantly hearing that you hate Mondays because the fun weekends end and you hate to go back to work, they are going to hate Mondays because they have to go back to school. So, this is hard for us as teachers to keep them motivated to start the week by doing their assignments the best they can and trying to convince them that every single day matters.
7. **Avoid expressing yourself negatively about a teacher** in front of your kids. If you disagree with the teacher the first thing you should do is to reach out the teacher to talk about that situation. We do appreciate feedback and we will try to fix it in the best possible way. But if your kids hear that you don't like the teacher or refers to him/her in a derogatory way, they will express the same way as you do. The fine line of respect in the classroom will be lost and the children will surely never trust his/her teacher again.
8. **Teach your kid to say NO.** Most of us grew up with the idea that saying NO meant to be rude and disrespectful and "nobody wanted children who were rude". So we are the generation of saying YES to everything even when we felt uncomfortable with someone. Now, this is very important to recognize it, to learn that sometimes we can't or don't want to do something and it is ok to express it and say NO. This is so important if your children understand this because it might be very helpful to avoid bullying at schools. As teachers sometimes don't see if a bully problem is "behind the scenes". However, if you teach your child to be brave, self-confident, aware that he will not be seen as a disrespectful kid if he says NO, STOP, or talks about what bothers him/her, you are saving him/her from being bullied.

I hope this information is meaningful for you. I've spoken from my own experience but I know there are too many tips missing and I recognize other colleagues' experiences and I respect them.

Thank you for listening to me.

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