

# Ways Busy Families

Can Help Children

## Succeed in School



**S**tudies show that close to 80 percent of adults wished that they had more time. With families already feeling so harried that they hardly have time to sit down for a meal, how can they find the time to help their children succeed in school?

Many busy families have figured out ways to find the time for the important job of helping their children learn. Here are some family-proven tips on how you can, too.

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## TIPS FOR 'FINDING' MORE TIME

**S**ome people seem to fit more things into a day than the rest of us. No, they haven't found a way to stop the clock—they've just learned to use their time more efficiently. Here are some ways you can get control of your time:

- **Set priorities.** Decide what's most important to you. (Odds are, it's your family.) Then, consciously decide how to spend your time. Make sure your decisions reflect what is important to you. Have a choice between cooking a fancy dinner or reading with your child? Fix something simple and read the book.
- **Use time in the car with your child,** or other pockets of time, to squeeze in a little more learning. Kids can't write an essay in the car—but they can talk about what they're going to write or review spelling words. Of course, children can't read library books in the tub—but they can count their toes.
- **Spend one-on-one time.** Kids need both "quality" and "quantity" time with you. There's nothing like spending time alone with a family member to make a child feel special. Every week, make an appointment to spend some time alone with each of your children. Get out your calendar and write it in. Then treat that appointment as seriously as you would an important business meeting.
- **Find your child's "prime time"** for studying. This may be a key to success in school. One mother found that after her daughter, a real early bird, set her study time for 5:00 a.m., her grades went up. Another family of night owls found that evening study hours were best. Work with your child to find the most effective study time. You might find that your child's "prime time" works to your advantage, too.



## Check with Your Employer

**F**ind out whether your employer works with local schools. A growing number of companies now allow employees to take some time off to volunteer in school or to attend parent-teacher conferences.

Other employers take part in Adopt-a-School programs where the company helps the school with volunteers, supplies and other support to help children learn. If your employer does not have such a partnership, perhaps one could be established with your child's school.

Many companies allow employees to take personal leave days each year. Most are happy to have employees use a leave day to visit a school. Why not ask?



## Volunteer After Hours

**Y**ou don't have to come to school during the day to be involved with your child's education. Here are some things you can do at home or after school:

- **Collect and send in materials** the teacher needs for a class project.
- **Put together a list of community resources** that support what the class is studying.
- **Take care of the class pet.**
- **Prepare food from a country** the class is studying.
- **Recruit other parents** to volunteer.
- **Enlist businesses** to donate to a school fundraiser.
- **Attend school events** held in the evening—meetings, concerts, plays.
- **Put together Welcome Kits** for families new to your school.



## Exchange Notes With Your Child

**H**ere's a great way for you to keep the lines of communication open with your child while building her self-esteem and writing skills at the same time.

Whenever you have a few free moments throughout your day, write a note to your child. Compliment a job done well, write about the things you are doing at work or say you are thinking about your child. Be sure to ask your child to write back to you.

You can exchange notes in the morning before school, or at night before bedtime. Your child will feel important, while practicing reading and writing skills at the same time.



### *Five Years From Now ...*

Remember, five years from now, your child won't remember the night you left the dishes in the sink. But your child will treasure forever the memory of the walk you took together to look at the night sky.

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