

## Tips for Parents

*Your children need you to be interested and involved in their academic progress. Your children must, however, be responsible for their own grades, attendance, and behavior.*

**Be interested.** Make certain that your child knows that his/her academic progress is important to you. Attend all open houses and parent conferences. Know when each grading period ends, and make sure that you see all progress reports and report cards soon as they come out. *Do not assume that someone will call you if there's a problem.* If you do not see progress report or report card, immediately call the school and request a copy.

**Discuss classes and set goals.** Sit down with your son/daughter and help him/her set realistic academic goals. Your child will better understand what your expectations are, and having goals will give him/her something to work towards. Throughout the year, recognize effort and improvement. Acknowledge each academic success, even if it's only a good grade on a quiz or homework assignment.

**Offer to help.** Offer to help, but don't give more help than is wanted. Your son/daughter may not ask again. Keep in mind that it is your child's responsibility to be organized, to get homework done, and to prepare for tests.

**Listen.** Talk to your child about what's happening in school and be a good listener.

**Encourage involvement.** Students who are involved in school-related activities enjoy school more, and they generally have greater academic success.

**Monitor activities.** Make sure that your child is not spending too much time watching TV, playing computer games, "surfing the Net," or talking on the phone.

### **Avoid these "don'ts."**

- Don't nag about school or grades. Your child will tune you out.
- Don't allow your child to miss school unless he/she is really ill. You will send a message that school isn't important.
- Don't criticize a teacher in front of your child. Your child will only lose respect for that teacher.
- Don't make your child's failures (or successes) your own. Your child may see getting poor grades as a way to rebel.
- Don't have expectations that are unrealistic. Knowing he/she will never be able to meet them, your child may decide not to even try.

**Work with the school.** Know that teachers, counselors, and principals are there to help you child get the best education possible. A health problem, a death in the family, or a divorce can affect your child's attitude and/or performance in school. If such a circumstance should arise, call the school and tell them what's going on. If you have a question or concern that relates to a specific teacher or class, call the teacher. For other questions and concerns, call your child's counselor.

## **If Your Child is Not Doing Well in School**

Most students who don't do well in school feel like failures. They are frustrated, discouraged, and sometimes angry. The "I don't care" attitude they display is often a defense mechanism. It's important for these students to know that their parents have not given up on them. They also need to know that their parents are interested, supportive, and willing to take the time and effort to help them figure out how to be more successful in school.

Students who are not doing well in school usually have problems in one or more of the following areas:

**Attendance.** It is extremely important for students to be in school, on time, every day. Unless a child is truly ill, he/she needs to be in school.

**Accountability.** It's human nature to be tempted to "slack off" when we're not held accountable. Your child needs to know that someone cares and that someone is checking on how he/she is doing. Your child also needs to know that successes will be recognized and that poor performances will be noticed. See every progress report and report card, and if your child has a low grade in a class, contact the teacher. Your son/daughter also needs to know that you will be consistent in your interest.

**Alcohol/Drug Abuse.** Students who abuse alcohol and/or drugs are often distracted to the point where their school performance is affected. If you know or suspect that your child is drinking or using drugs, talk to him/her. If you need information or advice, talk to your doctor or to the school counselor. They can help.

*If you think there are other causes for your child not doing well in school, make an appointment to see your son/daughter's counselor. Recognizing that there's a problem is the first, and most important, step in finding a solution.*