

Parents Make the Difference!



Parents play an important role in building children's character

If parents are committed to developing their child's good character, they'll get results. It takes dedication and constant watchfulness to raise a child with good morals. But it's worth it. Your child will grow up with a strong moral compass that will serve him well in school and in life.

To build your child's character:

- Keep a strong focus on good morals in daily activities. Incorporate the ideals of honesty and respect into dinner and car conversations with your child.
- Explain to your child why you make certain decisions. Talk about the values--such as tolerance and generosity--that guide your decisions.
- Watch TV with your child. When a character does something wrong, ask why it's wrong. When the character makes a good moral decision--such as returning something lost--discuss why that's the right thing to do.
- Catch your child showing good character. Tell him you're proud of him for telling the truth or working hard to finish a task.
- Evaluate how your efforts are working. If you need help, turn to friends, family and books about character and morals.

Ask these questions at your parent-teacher conference

Parent-teacher conferences can help you learn more about your child's strengths and weaknesses. They can also give you a better idea about the year ahead.

Here are 10 questions you might ask your child's teacher:

1. What will you cover in this grade or subject this year?
2. What are your expectations for homework? Has my child missed any of her assignments so far?
3. How are my child's work habits? Does she use time in class well?
4. Does my child read at the level you would expect for this grade?
5. Is my child able to do the math you expect for a student in this grade?
6. Is my child in different groups for different subjects?
7. Has my child missed any classes other than the ones I contacted the school about?
8. Does my child qualify for any special programs?
9. Does my child get along well with the other students?
10. What can I do at home to help my child be more successful?

Research shows parents influence children's views on math, science

Look at any list of the best-paying jobs. You are likely to see they have one thing in common: they require a knowledge of math and science. People who prepare to become engineers, computer specialists, and doctors find great jobs when they graduate.

So why don't more students--especially girls--prepare for these careers? The answer is found as far back as elementary school. That's when students' attitudes toward math and science seem to be set.

Researchers took a look at how parents influence their children's views on math and science. The study found that, in general, parents are more likely to encourage boys rather than girls to take an interest in science. As a result, girls tend to lose interest in math by high school--even though they may continue to get good grades.

So what can parents do to make sure their sons and their daughters stay interested in math and science? Here are some suggestions:

- Play games that encourage math and science. If you're in the car, see who can add the numbers on the license plate in front of you. If you're at the store, see if your child can figure the change.
- Help your child see herself as someone who is good in math. Teach her that brains, like muscles, get stronger with practice. Remind her that "smart is something you get, not something you are."
- Look for role models. Look for TV shows or news stories featuring a wide diversity of people who are doctors, engineers and scientists.