

Got Family Involvement?

25 Tips for Schools to Involve Parents



School-family partnerships contribute to academic success in Washington State.

Help parents make home a learning center

1. Put a “Question of the Week” on the school website or in the parent newsletter or in the school reader board to get parents talking with their children.
2. Encourage teachers to assign homework that requires talking with someone at home.
3. Involve parents in goal-setting for their children. It promotes working as a team.
4. Set up a homework hotline where families can call to get forgotten or missed assignments.
5. Provide information on appropriate homework and space requirements at home.
6. Provide parents who don’t read or speak English with picture books. Teach them how to discuss the pictures they see with their children in their language. Explain how this contributes to their learning how to read in English.
13. Provide alternative opportunities for parents who can’t volunteer during the typical school day. They can help from home.
14. Create a “Wall of Fame” to highlight parent volunteers.
15. Create flexible scheduling for school-family interactions so all families have an opportunity to participate in formal and informal school activities.
16. Host a “Take Your Family to School Week” with special activities throughout the week.

Communicate with parents

7. Challenge your staff, not just teachers, to make one positive contact with a parent each week.
8. Use various communication avenues to ensure that family members of all education levels understand school materials.
9. Have children write personal notes to their parents on school papers or design invitations to school programs. (Watch parent response rates soar!)
10. Help all school staff understand their role in building parent support.
11. Offer to hold parent conferences at a local business or office where many of your parents work. Offer Saturday pancake breakfasts and parent-teacher conferences.
17. Video tape parent meetings or workshops and provide copies for parents to check out who couldn’t attend.
18. Hold a “Lunch and Learning” noon workshop to share parenting or instructional strategies with families.
19. Create a lending library or family center with parenting materials.
20. Provide welcome kits throughout the year for new families.

Help parents play a bigger role

12. Invite parents to be a part of a school improvement team or leadership council.
21. Partner with local employers so that working families have support in their efforts to volunteer in school or help classroom teachers.
22. Find out which community organizations serve diverse cultural groups and help the school connect with them to provide services for families.
23. Organize a “community scavenger hunt” for families to get to know local resources.
24. Survey parents to find out what connections they have to community groups and organizations.
25. Consider ways to develop elementary-middle school and middle-high school partnerships.

