

Parent Power: Build the Bridge to Success

To parents, we can't tell our kids to do well in school and then fail to support them when they get home. You can't just contract out parenting. For our kids to excel, we have to accept our responsibility to help them learn. That means putting away the Xbox and putting our kids to bed at a reasonable hour. It means attending those parent-teacher conferences and reading to our children and helping them with their homework.

—President Barack Obama, July 17, 2009

President Obama has a cradle-to-career plan to reform our nation's schools. He also is calling on parents to take responsibility for their child's success. His vision includes the belief that all children can and will succeed, and that parents are the bridge to this success. You as the parent, guardian or caregiver can help your child by connecting with his or her school to find out what's needed to ensure success and how you can help reach that goal. Studies of successful schools report that parent involvement is a major factor in their outcomes, including closing the achievement gap between various groups of students. With his vision, the president is asking that you make education a priority and a legacy for your family.



How can you accomplish this? By adopting the following principles and taking the steps indicated for each age group, you will be able to help your child learn at each step of the way and ensure success in school and in life.

Be responsible.

Accept your role as the parent and make education a priority in your home.

Be committed.

Once you have begun to work with your child, continue doing so throughout the year.





Be positive.

Praise goes a long way with children, especially with those who struggle in school. Provide positive feedback.

Be patient.

Show your child that you care through your commitment and encouragement.

Be attentive.

Stop your child immediately when bad behavior appears. Show him or her what to do and provide an opportunity to do it correctly. Discipline should be appropriate and consistent.

Be precise.

Provide clear and direct instructions.



Be mindful of mistakes.

Record your child's performance. Look over all the work your child brings home from school and keep it in a folder. Help him or her correct any errors.

Be results-oriented.

Gather information on how your child is performing in school. Keep notes of conferences with teachers, request progress reports and carefully read report cards and achievement test results. Ask questions about these results.

Be diligent.

Work from the beginning to the end of the year with your child and the teacher.

Be innovative.

Keep learning lively and dynamic.

BE THERE.

Just be there for your child—to answer questions, to listen, to give advice, to encourage and to speak positively about his or her life. Be there to support your child whenever needed.

