

*It is vital for parents to be involved in their child's education; this helps students excel in tough academic subjects such as math or reading.*

## **A Parent's Role in Education**

Parents hope their children will have success with their education so they can make great accomplishments in life. What is important to remember when wishing your child to succeed, is that parents play an integral part into their student's education. Parents assume the role of the cheerleader, friend, teacher, and enforcer when they send their children to school. If a parent fails to fill one of these roles, their child's confidence and achievement may wane, leaving them with a partially unfulfilled education. The first step in helping to improve your child's education is to understand the four major roles you must fill as a parent.

Acting as the cheerleader, or motivator, in your child's school work and academic skills can be one of the easiest or hardest roles to fill. One would think it would be easy to motivate a child to live up to their full academic potential but some students squirm at the very thought of school. In order to motivate, a parent must find what is most important to their child, and relate it to school. If it is sports, for example, then explain to your child that the logic skills gained through math and reading will help when executing the skills and strategies used in their favorite game. Also, remind them that they must maintain a certain grade in their classes in order to continue with their sport. Another way to fill the cheerleader role is to celebrate your child's successes. One of the best ways to motivate a person is to reward them for positive behavior or outstanding work. This will give your student something to look forward to when they are studying or working hard on a subject.

The best way to fill the role of your student's friend is to listen to their concerns. Sometimes your student will be confronted with a difficult task or subject matter. Or maybe they are having problems with one of their teachers, friends, or a bully at school. No matter what the problem is, it is important that they have someone they can trust and talk to. If your student is holding in their worries, they will have extra stress in their life that will take away from their studies, hindering their success in school. Make sure to let your student know you are there and care for them.

Next is the role of the teacher. Even the most adequate and effective school teachers have problems addressing each child's needs. This is why parents must step up and help their students after school with the subjects they are struggling with. There are numerous signs that your child is having problems with their school work, including: Lack of self-confidence, poor attitude, self-defeating behaviors, poor and declining grades, and teachers expressing concerns. When you notice these changes in your child, it is especially important for you to take your role as the teacher.

Designate a specific time each day for your child to ask you their homework questions. Additionally, make it a daily habit to read with your child and to challenge them to do mental mathematical problems. This allows you to keep track of their education and knowledge. If you have noticed the warning signs listed above, you might also want to check into a tutoring program. Tutoring programs will fill a role that parents are sometimes unable to fill. Tutors are trained to help children catch-up with their fundamental math and reading skills. There are tutoring centers all over the country and some are even available online. Online tutoring programs can be especially convenient because students are able to complete their lessons on any computer with Internet access. These Internet lessons are individualized through an assessment test to ensure your student is learning the skills they are lacking.

The last role of a parent is the role of the enforcer. As hard as it may be, parents must discipline their children if needed. There is no need, however, to be overly harsh or strict. When it comes to your student's education, the enforcer makes sure the child is studying and completing their daily homework and special projects. One way to do this is to create a homework calendar. Students write in the calendar when homework, projects, and tests are due or scheduled for each class. This helps the student and the parent to stay aware of which assignments are due and what the child should be working on each day after school. Also, sit down with your child and create the rules together. Rules are fully effective only when both the parent and the child understand what they are and why they are necessary. Many parents worry they will lose their child's trust when they fulfill the enforcer's role. However, children actually tend to lose respect in their parents or authority figures when they fail to fulfill this role. The truth is, children know there must be boundaries and rules, and this is especially true when it comes to important matters such as their education.

Once parents are able to fulfill these four roles, there are other actions they should take in their child's education. These include: Staying involved with the school, keeping communication open with teachers and counselors, attending school events, and being up to date in state educational matters. One cannot expect a child to be mature about their education if adults fail to do so. By becoming your child's cheerleader, friend, teacher, and enforcer, you are teaching them the importance you place in education, which helps your child succeed more than any wish or hope could.