



# Why Family Engagement Matters for Student and School Success

PTA works with families, schools and other organizations to help all children be successful throughout their school years and prepare them for college and a career. As an engaged family member—parent, grandparent or other caregiver—you make essential contributions to your children's education to make their potential a reality.

The research is clear. [Findings from the Global Family Research Project report](#) show that when families and teachers join together to support children's learning and development, children are more likely to succeed in school, graduate and stay on their path to college or a career.

## How You Engage in Your Child's Education Matters

### Research Shows That Children Learn Anywhere, Anytime.

Children achieve more in school when their families engage in activities such as reading, asking thoughtful questions, and providing the structure children need to complete assignments. Discussing with your child your expectations for his or her future and monitoring their progress has also been linked with higher achievement. You can also promote your child's learning out of school through activities such as library visits and participation in after school and summer programs.

### Family Engagement is Crucial All Along Children's Learning Pathways From Birth Through High School and Beyond.

Your involvement in your child's education and school matters not only when he or she is in a young child but all through adolescence. Your engagement, however, changes as your child grows up. You will likely

take an active role in supporting your child's learning during the early grades. But as your child gets older, ask him or her to teach you what they are learning, encourage them to take ownership of their progress, and help them navigate pathways for college and career.

### Children and Families Aren't the Only Ones Who Benefit When Families Are Engaged in the Educational Process.

Your participation also contributes to the overall success of your school. And research shows that when families advocate for school improvements, such as backing educators to develop strong family engagement practices, all children receive a better education. When families are engaged, teachers also feel more supported and the atmosphere at the school is more positive and welcoming.

## 5 Ways Families, Teachers, Schools and Communities Can Work Together to Support Children's Learning and School Success

Research suggests that there are five especially powerful areas for engagement.



### 1. Ensure Children Attend School Regularly

Children can't make academic progress if they aren't in school—especially if they miss several days over the course of the school year. Regular attendance keeps children from falling behind, which could then lead to behavior problems, frustration, and, ultimately, dropping out. Communicating with children even in the preschool years about the importance of attendance can help build strong habits as they get older.

**Consider:** *How do you and your school support regular attendance?*



### 2. Share Information About Student Progress

use multiple ways to communicate how children are doing—conferences, report cards, standardized tests, and more. Some schools are trying to improve how they communicate with families so that families don't get mixed messages and more easily know whether their child is on grade-level. Talk to teachers and school leaders about whether there are ways to clearly communicate how students are doing.

**Consider:** *What questions do you have about how your child is doing, what different tests and measures mean, which results are most important, and what you can do to support your child's progress?*



### 3. Reinforce Shared Learning

Families play a key role in supporting learning in and out of school. For example, showing children how science, math, engineering, and technology are part of our daily lives and talking about careers in these areas can also motivate children to prepare for the future. Project-based learning activities in schools, after school programs, libraries, and other community venues give families hands-on experiences with some of the latest technological and scientific tools as well as opportunities for cooperation. Community organizations offering family-oriented learning experiences is one way to support children's interests outside of the classroom.

**Consider:** *What guidance, interactive activities, and opportunities for shared learning with your child does your school provide?*



### 4. Use Digital Media In Positive And Safe Ways

Technology now allows children to learn anytime, anywhere. You can show your children how to use apps and websites for learning and guide them in setting screen-time limits. Apps and other online communication tools can be a way to



### 5. Provide Support During Transitions to New Schools and Classrooms

Children and youth benefit from support from their families, schools and communities when they are adjusting to a new school, meeting a new teacher or learning with new peers. Whether children are beginning kindergarten, entering ninth grade, moving to a new neighborhood, or starting a new after school program, transitions can be a time of stress and uncertainty. Events for newcomers, buddy programs and helpful websites that anticipate some of the questions that families are likely to have are a few ways schools can smooth the transition process.

**Consider:** *What information and support does your current or future school provide to help you navigate key transitions with your child?*

build relationships with teachers too! Schools can also educate students and their families on the use of social media, how to prevent or report bullying, and how to develop media literacy skills that will help them throughout life.

## Reflect on Where You Are and Potential Solutions

Here's an exercise to reflect about what you are doing now and what you could do better to promote student success in partnership with your PTA and school community. Think about how you, your PTA, teachers and school administrators are working together and identify new opportunities and next steps.

### 1. Making Sure Children Attend School Regularly

### 2. Sharing Information About Student Progress

### 3. Reinforcing Shared Learning

### 4. Using Digital Media in Positive and Safe Ways

### 5. Transitioning to New Schools and Classrooms

What We're Doing

What Else We Can Do

We'd love to hear from you! Share your experience and ideas at [PTA.org/FamilyEngagement/ShareYourStory](https://www.pta.org/FamilyEngagement/ShareYourStory)