

## Wellness Articles

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## How to stay involved in your child's education

Parental involvement in a child's education is important to youth development. It's one of a series of positive qualities and experiences, known as the 40 Developmental Assets.

The non-profit Search Institute has identified these assets as the building blocks of healthy development. The more assets a young person has, the more likely they are to thrive and grow up healthy, caring and responsible. The fewer they have, the more likely they are to engage in risky behaviours.

But before you say, "I'm sure they don't want me at school," remember this: Your children are proud of you and love having the chance to show you off to their teachers. Everyone is busy, but a little can go a long way. Consider speaking at career day. Help out at a classroom party or sports event. Or simply check in with the teacher every other month to catch any concerns before they become problems.

If you have more time, you could supervise children on the playground, volunteer to tutor struggling students or join the school council.

Typically, parents tend to be more involved in the earlier grades. You may want to read to the class or individual students, or share your culture through food, music and celebrations.

It's just as important, however, to maintain that school connection in the later grades. You could chaperone for a ski trip, or help kids fill out university or college applications. This is a critical time in your teen's life, and your presence as a role model, navigating new boundaries and setting expectations with them, can't be understated.

No matter your child's age, you may want to start by asking them how they might like you involved with school. Or ask what they like about other parents who help out. Check in with the teacher or principal to find out what's really needed in the school community.



As a family, you can demonstrate that school is important to everyone. Make attending school events a priority and schedule them on the family calendar. Consider reading the same book your child has been assigned, and talk about it at dinner. Attend all parent-teacher conferences with your child so that everyone is on the same page about challenges, strengths and goals.

We all want our children to grow into caring, responsible and productive adults. Parental involvement in school is one of the ways to help get them there.