

# The Parent and Family Engagement Connection

Home & School

*"Together We Can Make a Difference"*



## Let's Grow Together

A new school year is upon us with all its new and exciting possibilities. The Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative is starting the 2022-2023 year with an all-new staff and many new learning opportunities for parents and school staff alike. Our goal is to provide a multitude of trainings across the state so that all stakeholders can learn and grow in the area of parent, family, and community engagement and how we can work together to make the optimal environment for our children. In a recent planning session for these events, the old proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" became part of the discussion. This idea resonated for a few days as we thought that this could really be the mission statement for our organization. A saying that could be thousands of years old, still holds true today in that our children are products not only of the nuclear family, but of the entire community that surrounds and influences them. In the last several months, we have seen tragedy unfold here in our Texas schools, but in the dark times, we have also seen communities rally together to provide love and support to those who have experienced loss. These acts of kindness and solidarity are what our students need to see on a regular basis and not just in times of grief and sadness. We encourage you to take the time to look and find the small acts of kindness displayed by others and point those out to the youth we serve. The more we see and acknowledge these behaviors, the more they will be repeated. The PFE team wishes everyone a wonderful 2022-2023 school year. We hope to see each of you at one of the events listed to the right. Let's continue to learn and grow together in order to create the world we want for all our kids.



**Shannon Lang, Coordinator**  
**Title I, Part A Parent and Family**  
**Engagement Statewide Initiative**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Cluster Meetings

- ⇒ October 3, 2022—Edinburg
- ⇒ October 4, 2022—Victoria
- ⇒ October 5, 2022—Corpus Christi

*Register at:*

<https://esc16cluster.com>

### PI Conference

- ⇒ December 8-10, 2022—Frisco



*Register at:*

<https://statewideparents.com/register/>

### Summit

- ⇒ South: February 9-10, 2023—Galveston, TX
- ⇒ North: April 4-5, 2023—Irving, TX

*Register at:*

<https://esc16summit.com>

## Parents' Right under ESSA, Section 1116

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These are laws that govern public education from kindergarten through high school. Under this law, parents have many rights regarding their child's education. School Districts have a responsibility to provide certain information to parents and involve parents and families in decision making at their child's school. Below is a brief list of parents rights under ESSA, Section 1116.

### Statutory Reference: Section 1116 (a-f)

(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency conducts outreach to all parents and family members and implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and family members in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. **Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.**

### Shall develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to:

- Written Local Education Parent & Family Engagement Policy (a)(2)
- Written School Parent & Family Engagement Policy (b-c)
- School-Parent Compact (d)

Parents need to be involved in developing these documents and agree on the final product. Each parent must receive a copy of each of the above listed.

### Annual Evaluation (a)(2)(d)

- Evaluation must be conducted with meaningful involvement of parents

### Reservation of Funds (a)(3)(B)

- Parents shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for PFE activities

### Convene an Annual Meeting and involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way (c)(1-5)

- Annual meeting will convene at a convenient time and all parents are invited to attend (c)(1)
- Parents should be provided a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening and may use Title I, Part A funds to pay transportation, child care, or home visits
- Involve parents in an organized, ongoing and timely way in planning, review and improvement of PFE activities, including PFE Policy and School-Parent Compact
- Provide parents:
  - o Timely information about programs
  - o Description and explanation of curriculum in use at the school
  - o If requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children

### Communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis (d)(2)(A-D)

- At least annually discuss the compact at parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools (d)(2)(A)
- Provide frequent reports to parents on their child's progress (d)(2)(B)
- Reasonable access to staff (d)(2)(C)
- Ensure regular two-way communication between home and school (d)(2)(D)

### Building Capacity for Involvement

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency assisted under this part (e)(1-2, 5, 14)

- **Shall** provide assistance to parents in understanding State standards and assessments (e)(1)
- **Shall** provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement (e)(2)
- **Shall** ensure information is sent to parents in a format and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand (e)(5)
- **Shall** provide reasonable support for PFE activities (e)(14)116

If parents have questions regarding any of the information shared here, they need to contact their child's school or school district for specific information.

**\*\*This section of ESSA Law (Section 1116) provides guidance for school receiving Title I Funds\*\***

## RAISING MENTALLY STRONG KIDS

Mentally strong kids are prepared for the challenges of the world. They're able to tackle problems, bounce back from failure, and cope with hardships. Mental strength isn't about acting tough or suppressing emotions. It's also not about being unkind or acting defiant.

Instead, mentally strong kids are resilient and they have the courage and confidence to reach their full potential. Helping kids develop mental strength requires a three-pronged approach:

- ✓ Teaching them to replace negative thoughts with more realistic thoughts
- ✓ Helping them learn to control their emotions so their emotions don't control them
- ✓ Showing them how to take positive action

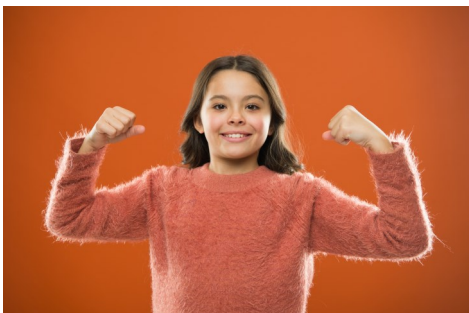
**TEACH SPECIFIC SKILLS.** Discipline should be about teaching your kids to do better next time, not making them suffer for their mistakes.

**LET YOUR CHILD MAKE MISTAKES.** Teach your child that mistakes are part of the learning process so he doesn't feel ashamed or embarrassed for getting something wrong.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO FACE FEARS HEAD-ON.** If your child avoids anything scary, she'll never gain the confidence she needs to handle feeling uncomfortable. Cheer her on, praise her efforts, and reward her for being brave and she'll learn that she's a capable kid who can handle stepping outside her comfort zone.

Parts taken from an article in:

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/tips-for-raising-mentally-strong-kids-1095020>



## 10 Solutions for Morning Madness

**Have a productive p.m.** "Do as much as you can the night before," says Sissy Biggers, a time-management expert in Fairfield, Connecticut. Pack your child's lunch and her backpack, and have her pick out her clothes.

**Forgo 15 minutes of sleep.** By waking up earlier than the rest of the family, you'll have a sliver of quiet time to soak in the bathtub or savor a cup of coffee. No doubt, you'll feel less rushed and better prepared to handle the day.

**Let routines rule.** Have your child do the required activities, such as brushing teeth and getting dressed in the same order every morning, so he knows what comes next. Help him create a morning to-do list, so he can check off each job without being reminded.

**Don't hesitate to delegate.** Avoid arguments over who does what by assigning your kids regular morning chores, such as feeding the pet or clearing the table.

**Prepare for breakfast.** At night, lay out cereal boxes, bowls, and spoons on the table. Make enough pancake batter on Sunday evenings for several days.

**Keep the TV off.** This may cause grumbling, but watching cartoons or videos definitely distracts from the tasks at hand, says Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D., a child psychologist and author of *Playful Parenting*.

**Lighten up.** "If you're tense in the morning, your child will pick up on it," Dr. Cohen says. Instead of nagging her to get dressed, have a playful race to see who gets finished first.

**Stick to a strict bedtime.** "If your child is hard to wake up and takes a long time to get ready in the morning, make his bedtime earlier," Dr. Cohen suggests.

**Learn from your mistakes.** If you have a frustrating morning, think about why it was so stressful. "By examining what went wrong today, you can figure out how to do things better tomorrow," Biggers says.

Taken from the August issue of *Parents magazine*

# Getting Involved at Your Child's School

Whether their kids are just starting kindergarten or entering the final year of high school, there are many good reasons for parents to volunteer at school. It's a great way to show your kids that you take an interest in their education, and it sends a positive message that you consider school a worthwhile cause.

## Reasons to Get Involved

Parent volunteers offer a huge resource and support base for the school community while showing their kids the importance of participating in the larger community.

Not only will the school reap the benefits of your involvement - you will, too. By interacting with teachers, administrators, and other parents on a regular basis, you'll gain a firsthand understanding of your child's daily activities. You'll also tap into trends and fads of school life that can help you communicate with your kids as they grow and change (all without intruding on their privacy or personal space).

Here are just some of the ways a parent volunteer can help:

- ◆ act as a classroom helper
- ◆ mentor or tutor students
- ◆ help children with special needs
- ◆ volunteer in a school computer lab
- ◆ act as a lunchroom or playground monitor
- ◆ help to plan and chaperone field trips, track meets, and other events that take place away from the school
- ◆ help to plan and chaperone in-school events (dances, proms, or graduation ceremonies)
- ◆ work as a library assistant or offer to help with story time or reading assistance in the school library
- ◆ sew costumes or build sets for theatrical and musical productions
- ◆ supervise or judge experiments at a science fair



Remember that not everyone is suited for the same type of involvement - you may have to "try on" a number of activities before you find something that feels right. If you're at a loss for how you can help, just ask your child's teacher, who will likely be glad to help you think of something!

## Getting Started

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when signing up to volunteer:

- ◆ **Make it clear before you begin just how much time you're willing to volunteer.** Even stay-at-home parents don't have an unlimited amount of time to volunteer. Many parents have other activities and interests, as well as other kids to care for.
- ◆ **Start Small.** Don't offer to coordinate the holiday bake sale, the band recital, and a swim meet all at once. If you've taken on too much, find out if you can delegate some duties to other interested parents.
- ◆ **Don't give your child special treatment or extra attention when you're volunteering at the school.** Follow your child's cues to find out how much interaction works for both of you. Make it clear that you aren't there to spy - you're just trying to help out the school.
- ◆ **Get frequent feedback from the teachers and students you're working with.** Find out what's most and least helpful to them, and ask what you can do to make the most of the time you spend on school activities. It's important to keep the lines of communication open among teachers, administrators, students, and volunteers, and to be flexible and responsive as the needs of the students and the school change.

Remember that volunteering not only benefits your kids, but will enrich the classroom, the whole school, and the entire community by providing students with positive interaction, support, and encouragement.

And don't underestimate the students. You may feel that what you have to offer might not interest them or might be above their heads, but you'll probably be pleasantly surprised. You'll help build skills, confidence, and self-esteem that will last beyond their school days.

Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD

<http://kidshealth.org>



## High School Checklist: Freshman and Sophomore Years

You can save yourself a lot of stress if you start thinking about what you would like to do in college while you are still in high school. The earlier you prepare, the more time you will have to adjust your plans if you change your mind or to dig deeper into what you know you're passionate about. Not sure how to start? This checklist lays out what you should do and when you should do them, including when you should talk to your school advisor or counselor and what you should ask them, when you should start your college search, tips on deciding your major, when you should take the SAT or ACT, and more. With a clear plan, you won't have to worry about juggling high school with the intimidating process of preparing for college.

You can never be too prepared, so make your life easier by following these steps and reading the other articles referenced in this one. This four-year plan will set you up for success when the time to apply actually comes. Even if you are already a year or two into high school, this list can still help you make sure you're on track!

### ✓ Freshman Year

The best time to start your college decision making process is during your freshman year of high school. Yes, really! High school goes by so quickly, and you don't want to save all of your work for when you're just a few months away from graduating.

During your freshman year, you can meet with your counselor to learn about your graduation requirements, you can evaluate how you're doing academically, you can get involved in different extracurricular activities, and you can sign up for new and exciting things to learn in the summer!

- Meet with your school counselor and find out your high school's graduation requirements
- Get Active! Choose a few electives and extracurricular activities to get involved in
- Decide if you'd like to take the ACT Aspire exam to evaluate your academic strengths
- Volunteer or learn a new hobby during your summer break



### ✓ Sophomore Year

By the time you're a sophomore, you may have already realized why preparing for college requires a four-year plan. Your current school work and activities are beginning to pile up, so it's natural for you not to think about anything but the present. Check back with your counselor and see how you are doing academically and whether you're on track with your yearly plan.

A couple of recommended sophomore tasks include taking the PSAT to familiarize yourself with the ACT and SAT testing format as well as beginning the search for where you might want to go for college and what you might want to do professionally. You don't need to wait on anyone else to get started with these steps. Keep asking questions and taking initiative!

- Meet with your school counselor for a follow-up on your grades from freshman year.
- Implement any advice gained from your school counselor.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT® or PSAT™ 10 to get familiar with the testing format and time constraints before taking the SAT/ACT your junior year.
- If you can, get more involved by adding extracurricular activities to your schedule.
- Add electives to your schedule that allow you to explore areas of study that you might be interested in.
- Research your future career. Learn its education requirements.
- Review LinkedIn profiles of people currently in that profession to see the steps they took to get there.
- Start your college search!
- Decide what you want and need in a college.
- Research and develop a list of 20 colleges that offer your major and fit those needs you'd like to attend.
- Request information from those colleges.
- Review their acceptance/graduation rates, financial aid, scholarships resources, and tuition costs

Taken in part from: <https://collegesofdistinction.com/advice/freshmen-through-senior-year-high-school-checklist/>

# Parent-Teacher Conferences: A Tip Sheet for Parents

## What should you expect?

- ⇒ **A two-way conversation.** Like all good conversations, parent-teacher conferences are best when both people talk and listen. The conference is a time for you to learn about your child's progress in school. Find out whether your child is meeting school expectations and academic standards. When you tell the teacher about your child's skills, interests, needs, and dreams, the teacher can help your child more.
- ⇒ **Emphasis on learning.** Good parent-teacher conferences focus on how well the child is doing in school. They also talk about how the child can do even better.
- ⇒ **Opportunities and challenges.** Just like you, teachers want your child to succeed. You will probably hear positive feedback about your child's progress and areas for improvement. Be ready to ask questions about ways you and the teacher can help your child with some of his or her challenges.

## What should you talk to the teacher about?

- ⇒ **Progress.** Find out how your child is doing by asking questions like: Is my child performing at grade level? How could he or she improve?
- ⇒ **Assignments and assessments.** Ask to see examples of your child's work. Ask how the teacher gives grades.
- ⇒ **Support learning at home.** Ask what you can do at home to help your child learn.
- ⇒ **Support learning at school.** Find out what services are available at the school to help your child. Ask how the teacher will both challenge your child and support your child when he or she needs it.

## How should you follow up?

- ⇒ **Make a plan.** Write down the things that you and the teacher will each do to support your child.
- ⇒ **Schedule another time to talk.** Communication should go both ways. Ask how you can contact the teacher. And don't forget to ask how the teacher will contact you too.
- ⇒ **Talk to your child.** The parent-teacher conference is all about your child, so don't forget to include him or her. Share with your child what you learned.

For more resources on family involvement, visit [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. You and your child's school have something in common: you both want your child to learn and do well. When parents and teachers talk to each other, each person can share important information about your child's talents and needs. Parent-teacher conferences are a great way to start talking to your child's teacher.



## 'BE HEARD'

Keep these principles in mind for a great parent-teacher conference:

- B**est intentions assumed
- E**mphasis on learning
- H**ome-school collaboration
- E**xamples and evidence
- A**ctive listening
- R**espect for all
- D**edication to follow up

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"Together We Can Make A Difference"

The Parent and Family Engagement Connection is posted on our website four times a year for parents and educators of Texas. This newsletter is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, German, Tagalog and Korean.

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