



Parents With High Expectations: You and Your Elementary Age Child

You can make a difference in your child's future by ensuring your child starts out on the right track for learning and by being involved in their education. The elementary school years are the foundation for later school success. They are the time when your child will learn the basics of reading, math, and other subjects on which later learning will depend.

Learn About Your Child's School

Before the school year begins, visit the school your child will attend. Obtain a copy of the school's parent involvement plan if available.

- What subjects are taught in this grade?
- How much time is spent teaching children reading and math each day?
- What tests does the school use to measure children's progress?
- Can I attend school orientation with my child?
- Is there a family center at the school?
- Is the school meeting the academic and learning goals set by the state? Ask the principal for a district or school report card to see if students are making progress. You can also visit <https://utahschoolgrades.schools.utah.gov/> for more information about your school.

Communicate with school staff

School staff are your partners in helping your child grow. They should be helpful and willing to meet with you.

What to discuss with teachers and principals:

- Explain your child's needs so they are able to understand and meet the needs.
- Share any problems happening at home which may affect your child's school performance such as divorce or illness.
- If English is not your first language, ask the school to arrange an interpreter to help you and the school communicate when you meet with staff.
- Have the school provide materials in your native language.

If it is your responsibility to be actively involved in your child's education, the more you are involved at school, the more likely it is that your child will succeed.

Support Your Child in Elementary School

Here are some ideas you can do at home to support your child's progress:

- Read together with your child.
- Use the local library and the internet as a source for reading activities, homework and opportunities to develop outside interests.
- Make sure your child does their homework. Give them the chance to be responsible and work on their own.
- Pay attention to how much your child watches TV, uses the computer or tablet, or plays video games. The American Academy of Pediatrics has ideas to help with this. Create your own Family Media Use Plan and get more information on the AAP Recommendations at:

https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/126/5/1012/65314/Media-Education?_ga=2.137162745.810178882.1671140805-170903793.1671140805?autologincheck=redirected.

- Listen carefully to what your child says and talk with them often. Research shows that children who talk with adults in their lives are not only more successful students but healthier and happier people.

What you can do with the school to help your child learn:

- Contact your child's teachers throughout the school year. Show them you are interested in your child's education and set up a way to communicate with them. Teachers will appreciate your interest.
- Find out what goals the teachers have for your child. Goals will change each grade level.
- Contact the teacher immediately if you notice a negative change in your child's behavior or school performance.
- Communicate with the teacher if your child has a problem cooperating and playing with other children. This allows you to identify and address problems at school before they become worse.
- Be persistent; if you do not receive an adequate response, you may want to consider meeting with your child's teachers, the school counselor, and the principal together.
- Contact teachers if your child regularly doesn't understand homework or needs extra help or feels uncomfortable in any situation.
- Attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences and be prepared to listen, and to talk. You may find it helpful to write out any questions beforehand. The teachers should be very specific about your child's work and progress. Think about what the teachers tell you and check back with them to see how things are going as the year progresses.

Still have questions?

Do you have questions about working with your child's elementary school staff? You can call to speak with one of the Parent Consultants at the Utah Parent Center, at 801-272-1051.

This information sheet was adapted with permission from, *Parents with High Expectations, You and Your Elementary School-aged Child*, PACER Center, and *You and Your Elementary School-Aged Child*, US Department of Education.