
WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Tips for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

- Try to spend 10–15 minutes of uninterrupted time with your child every day. Give him your complete and undivided attention. Don't talk about school unless he brings it up; instead, talk about things he is interested in. Listen with your ears, your eyes, and your body language, and resist asking questions or giving advice. Use phrases like these to let your child know that you want to know and understand him better:
 - "Tell me about . . ."
 - "So, what you are saying is . . ."
 - "It sounds like you are feeling _____ about _____ . . ."
- If your child has nothing to say during your time together, tell him something positive about your own day.
- If you have a large family, set up a "buddy system" and encourage children to share information with each other. During dinner, invite everyone to share something positive about their day.
- Monitor your child's TV- and video-watching time. Restrict or prohibit violent programs, including some cartoons. Help your child choose shows that educate. Watch them together when you can, and ask questions during the viewing. Encourage kids to ask questions, too. If no one knows the answer to a particular question, the child might be motivated to "look it up."
- Help your child develop a skill she is interested in and shows a natural talent for. Excellence in sports, the arts, crafts, volunteer work, or anything else kids feel passionate about can help develop high self-esteem.
- Never imply that your child should somehow be "different" in order to be a better person or better student. Help him learn how to separate his wonderful self from any problems he may have at school. Praise his positive qualities at every opportunity. *Examples:* What makes your child special? His ability to make people laugh? His singing? His honesty? His talent at drawing? What else can you think of?
- Use words sparingly when giving your child directions. Always demonstrate what you want her to do. Give one direction at a time, never a string of directions all at once. Show what you mean, give an example, and offer positive reinforcement as soon as she completes the task.
- Predictability, consistency, and routines increase children's sense of security. Strive for regular bedtimes and mealtimes. Provide as much structure as possible—chores to do, homework schedules, time spent together.
- Instead of doing things *for* your child, work *with* him on tasks he is learning to do. Coach him to tell you when he no longer needs your help.