

Parent Homework: A Child's Success in School Starts at Home

While formal education occurs in a school building, studies verify that the success of a child in school directly correlates to the value placed on education in the family and the extent to which parents reinforce a child's school activities at home. In school, children are taught and evaluated in terms of ability, progress, participation, performance and task completion. However, a good school encourages and assesses your child's growth not only in academics, but also in terms of spiritual, emotional, physical and social development.

Today, many educational "experts" remark about the unrealistic expectation for a school to act in Loco parentis, Latin for "in place of a parent" or "instead of a parent". However, the administration, faculty, and staff of St. Mary's Academy believe that a school must operate in consortio parentis, Latin for "in partnership with parents".

*No matter what school your children attend -or even if they are still too young for school - the degree to which they will succeed in school is affected at home, by you, each and every day. Studies show that *when their parents are involved, students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance and more homework done, fewer placements in special education, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates and greater enrollment in post-secondary education.*

The administration, faculty, and staff of St. Mary's Academy concur with the research. On a daily basis, they have found that children who do well in school have families that: establish a daily routine; monitor their children's out-of-school activities; model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work; express high expectations for their success; encourage their leaning and progress in school, and stay in touch with their teachers; read, write, and have frequent conversations; and use community resources like libraries, recreation centers, after-school programs, family resources centers, clinics, etc.

By loving your children, you have already given them the best chance of success. While you are probably engaged in many activities which foster a love of learning, as primary educators of your children, you can do more to make education a priority at home to ensure their success in school.

- *Accept your role as primary educator as the most critical factor in the overall development and success of your child;*
- *Promote your belief that family, Church, school and state share responsibility for the holistic education of your child;*
- *Attend Mass and be active in your faith as an example to your child;*
- *Model service beyond work to your child by your involvement in church, parish and community;*
- *Integrate faith and religious values throughout your child's educational and recreational activities;*
- *Support your school through prayer, positive relationships and the giving of your time, talent, and treasure;*
- *Help your child understand that their main responsibility is to their studies first, and extracurricular activities second;*
- *Establish a good rapport with teachers and contact them at the earliest sign of your child's academic struggle;*
- *Understand and share school policies with your child to teach personal responsibility for following rules and meeting expectations;*
- *Help your child to be conscientious in completing assignments;*
- *Assist with organizing assignments, materials and supplies so your child is fully prepared for school each day;*

- *Use academic challenges and successes to help your child develop a positive self-concept and improved self-esteem;*
- *Promote the value of reading by providing your child with a library card and by reading with our child regularly;*
- *Stock your home with age-appropriate reading materials like books, magazine and newspapers;*
- *Encourage good homework and study habits by developing a routine in an appropriate home setting so work done at home supplements, complements, and reinforces classroom teaching and learning;*
- *Make school a priority by planning family vacations according to the school calendar;*
- *Speak supportively about school and teachers in front of your child;*
- *Foster responsibility in your child by not acknowledging excuses for forgotten homework, lunches, etc.;*
- *Maintain a home environment of safety, structure and discipline;*
- *Monitor media influences on your child's lives by scrutinizing reading materials, internet sites, television programs, movies and music to ensure that they reflect your family values;*
- *Ensure technology is used in your home in a responsible, moral and ethical manner consistent with the educational and moral objectives of your family and your school;*
- *Show your child that school work is important to what your child wants to be and do as an adult;*
- *Discuss school daily to foster a dialogue of interest, trust and support;*
- *Quiz your child on materials being studied at school;*
- *Encourage your child to be responsible and to work independently;*
- *Talk with your child first and then with teachers if a new lack of interest in or a change of attitude toward school occurs;*
- *Emphasize the positive rather than the negative when dealing with school issues;*
- *Provide a home environment that engenders healthy emotions and good behavioral patterns;*
- *Promote good sportsmanship and teamwork to your child;*
- *Attend school programs and activities as often as possible to show your child that school life is important to you;*
- *Ensure good eating, exercising, playing and sleeping habits at home so that your child's mind, body and soul are ready to learn at school;*
- *Furnish the school with all medical, dental, psychological and other pertinent information so teachers know your child's limitations, capabilities and potential;*
- *Help your child to organize personal belongings at home;*
- *Assign age-appropriate responsibilities to your child at home;*
- *Foster a respect for the property and belongings of others;*
- *Help your child develop respectful relationships with teachers and coaches;*
- *Foster a willingness in your child to obey school rules just as the rules you set forth and consistently enforce in your home are obeyed;*
- *Volunteer at your child's school to build awareness of and familiarity with school personnel and routines;*
- *Know your child's friends and their attitudes toward school;*
- *Communicate effectively with your child to develop confidence, feelings of self-worth, and good relationships with others;*
- *Catch your child being good and offer plenty of praise;*
- *Tell your child that you love him or her and that you are proud of him or her each and every day.*