

## **For Immediate Release:**

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# Parental involvement is vital to child's school success

By Sandy Lackey

ARDMORE, Okla. –School is in full swing and many parents, along with their children, have busy schedules to keep. With all the activities, it is important that parents realize their involvement with their child is vital and contributes to success in school and in life.

A home that encourages learning and supports positive physical, mental and emotional development can help a child succeed.

Sandy Lackey, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension family and consumer science educator, said decades of research show that students whose parents are involved in their schools have better grades, are more motivated and have higher self-esteem.

“Demonstrate a strong interest in your child’s school life and help your child understand how education relates to life in practical ways, such as exploring local history, handling money, developing hobbies and making decisions,” Lackey said. “Tie learning to the kinds of activities and interests they enjoy.”

All children learn differently. It is important to know and understand if a child responds better to visual, verbal or written methods. They may also learn better by performing a task, by interacting with others or physical movement.

“More often than not, what your child expects to happen causes greater anxiety than what actually takes place,” she said. “It is important that a child feels loved and appreciated even when mistakes are made. They must be assured that because they are criticized or fail at something one time doesn’t mean they will always fail or continue to be scolded.”

Children can lose motivation to learn for several reasons. For one, school work that is beyond a student’s ability level threatens their sense of being capable and adequate. Feeling competent is a basic human need.

“When children lose interest in what they are doing it could indicate that they are struggling with a learning difficulty, the teaching method or a problem with their eyesight or hearing,” Lackey said. “They may be experiencing difficulty relating to the teacher, their peers or with other emotional, social or physical concerns. If these signs are present parents should seek further assistance from a school counselor or teacher. When your child needs extra help make sure he or she receives it.”

Health is a major contributor to overall success. Lackey suggests eating less junk food, incorporating more physical activity, getting enough rest and learning how to manage stress. All these can boost a child’s wellness and help him or her have better school days.

The following tips are some ways to help your child succeed:

- Regularly talk with your child and listen to their thoughts and feelings.
- Set high but realistic expectations and goals.
- Build your child’s self-esteem and confidence.
- Keep your child healthy—ensure they get enough rest and eat nutritious foods.
- Parents are the first teachers—support learning at home.
- Communicate and stay connected with your child’s school.
- Encourage exploration and discovery at home and in the community.
- Help your child develop a circle of friends and good, healthy relationships.
- Keep your child safe at home, school and the neighborhood.
- Participate in community service activities.

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