



Teachers offer school tips

Not since Sputnik prompted fears 25 years ago that American schools were falling behind has any school year opened with education so much in the spotlight. Because of the renewed interest in excellence in education, the Oregon Education Association has prepared a list of 16 tips to parents to help their children have a productive school year. The tips were gathered from the association's 27,000 members.

The most common thread running through the teacher suggestions was parental input, according to Sandy Ellis, OEA president. "Parents influence their children's success or failure in school much more than most of them realize," Ellis said. "Any parent can give a child a head start in school. The key is motivating the child to learn."

Ellis also emphasized that teachers want to meet parents and that parents should not be reluctant to make the first contact. "No good teacher is threatened by a parent's interest in education," she stated.

Sixteen OEA tips to parents

1. Make the time to meet your child's teacher and follow up during the year with parent-teacher conferences. Work with your child's teachers and don't always wait for the teacher to make the first move.

2. Safety and education go hand in hand. Go over the route to school and discuss safety rules for streets and playground. Caution children about strangers. Make sure that first-graders can write their name and address and know their telephone number.

3. An unhealthy child will have learning problems. Be sure your child has all inoculations required by state law. Alert school authorities to special problems such as allergies or disabilities. Be particularly alert for signs of poor vision or poor hearing. Squinting, frowning, chronic inattention, and frequent requests to repeat a statement are signs.

4. Don't give children the impression they have a choice about going to school. Stress that attendance and promptness are important.

5. Ask your child regularly what has happened in school. Do not accept "nothing" as an answer. If you do, you give the impression that you are not really interested.

6. If your child announces that he or she "hates" a certain subject or teacher, find out why. Perhaps the teacher is moving too quickly — or too slowly. Seek the reason for the negative feeling and enlist the teacher's help in conquering it.

7. Set a definite time for homework and make sure your child has a quiet, well lit place to study. Do not let other family members disturb a child during this homework period.

8. Help children with homework, but don't let them depend on you. Part of the purpose of homework is to help children develop the ability to think on their own. Show children where they can go for sources of information — the dictionary, the atlas, newspapers, etc.

9. Make television a constructive rather than destructive experience. Establish time limits and encourage

your child to select programs rather than watch just whatever happens to be on. Steer your child toward quality programs.

10. Show children that what they learn in school has useful application in everyday life. For example, sharpen math skills by having your child check grocery tape addition, figure gasoline mileage on family trips, and calculate square footage for a new carpet or other family project.

11. Encourage younger children to read everything — billboards, posters, street signs, cereal boxes, etc. Introduce older children to the library as soon as possible.

12. Make the connection between reading and pleasure by encouraging children to read about things they are interested in — hobbies, cars, music, even comic books. Give your child a subscription to his or her own magazine.

13. Make writing a normal part of family activities along with reading. Encourage children to write letters and notes, even when a phone call to "grandma" seems simpler.

14. Encourage children to think and apply logic rather than accepting generalities. Challenge broad statements by asking, "how do you know that's true?" Demand supportive evidence.

15. Discuss the world of work with your child, including the demands of various jobs and the training necessary to qualify. Stress the idea that training may begin at an early age and that attention to school work is vital to future success.

16. Build self-esteem by praising children for what they can do. Youngsters who are having problems in school may particularly feel the need to be successful in some other area. Nurture any special ability — drawing, growing tomatoes, throwing a baseball, etc. This gives a child the confidence to deal with other problems.

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 - September 6**
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Orange Half Milk
 - September 7**
Corn Dog
Green Beans
Watermelon
Peanut Butter Cookie Milk
 - September 8**
Oven Baked Chicken
Fluffy Rice w/Gravy
Carrot Coins with Ranch Dip
Banana Half Milk
 - September 9**
Cheeseburger on Bun
Lettuce, Tomato, Pickle
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