

Tips for Helping Your Child Succeed

Parenting/Guidance

- * **Set high expectations.** Make sure your child knows what you expect and work together to set goals that are realistic and achievable. Expect every child, not just those considered bright, to take tough academic courses. Advanced Math, Science, English, History, Arts and Foreign Language courses provide the kind of knowledge and skills they need.
- * **Provide nutritious meals.** Children are more alert in school if they eat a good breakfast. If your child isn't hungry first thing in the morning he/she can eat breakfast at school!
- * **Limit TV and video games.** Experts recommend that children watch/play no more than 1–2 hours of TV and video games per day. Studies show that excessive screen viewing is directly linked to poor school performance.
- * **Ensure adequate sleep.** Children 6-12 years of age need approximately 10 hours a night and 12-18 year olds need at least 8-9 hours.
- * **Help your child get organized.** Children's brains are not fully developed until well into adolescence. Organizational skills are important for school success but many children need help from a parent. For example, you can help your child pack up for school the night before and set a routine for getting out the door on time in the morning. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to school success.

Learning at Home

- * **Provide a quiet place for your child to study.** Create a space in your home that is comfortable, well lit and free from distractions where your child can study. This could be at home, at a neighbor's home or at the library.
- * **Assist your child with his/her homework.** Make sure your child is completing and handing in assignments. Assist him/her with lessons but do not do the work for your child.
- * **Monitor your child's progress.** Watch for report cards. Make appointment with your child's teacher or school counselor if you need assistance understanding your child's report card.
- * **Read with your child and/or encourage reading.** Preschool children should read with you or on their own at least 20 minutes each day. Have older children read to you. Add to your children's enjoyment of reading by discussing each book they read. It helps them learn to express themselves. You'll enjoy the conversations, too.
- * **Share stories with your child.** If you have difficulty reading, tell your children stories. Hearing about your family history and your experiences will help your children develop an appreciation of language, storytelling and the past.



Communicating with Your Child's School

- * **Communicate regularly with your child's teacher.** Teachers play a critical role in your child's development. It's important that you know the name of your child's teacher(s) and that you communicate with him/her regularly.
- * **Attend parent-teacher conferences.** This is one of the most effective ways to learn about your child's progress in school. If you need an interpreter, notify the school and one will be made available.
- * **Ask for REAL data and information about student performance and progress.** Ask how your school ranks compared to other schools. Find out whether students have additional learning opportunities before and after school and during summers.
- * **Let the school know if your child will be late or absent.** Call the school and notify them on the morning that your child will be late or absent. Send a note of explanation with your child when he/she returns to school.
- * **Let the school know if there is a concern.** Contact your child's teacher or the school counselor if your child is not doing well or is unhappy at school. It is important to address issues as soon as possible so that your child's education is not affected.
- * **Know school policies and procedures.** It is not always easy to understand school policies and procedures. Your school principal would be happy to help you with this. Call the school and request a meeting with the principal. If you need an interpreter, let the school know.
- * **Read the school newsletter.** This is an easy way to stay informed about upcoming events at the school and important information regarding your child's education.
- * **Utilize Language Line.** If you prefer to speak in a language other than English when communicating with your child's school, notify the school office staff. They can use "Language Line" to call for an interpreter on the telephone. This is a free service.



Volunteering

- * **Volunteer.** Schools gladly welcome parent volunteers. You can volunteer to help teachers, administrators, students and/or other parents at your child's school. Visit www.acps.k12.va.us/getinvolved/volunteer/ for more information.

Decision Making

- * **Attend a PTA meeting.** The PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) offers an opportunity for parents to get more involved. A list of ACPS PTA presidents is on page 17. Call them for more information.
- * **Serve on an advisory committee.** If you want to help make important decisions that impact your child's school, join a school advisory committee or a community group that works with the schools.

Community Involvement

- * **Attend school programs.** School programs offer fun opportunities to get involved and support your child and his/her school.
- * **Participate in volunteer opportunities.** Encourage your child to get involved with you. Together as a family, you can participate in activities that serve the community.