



10 PGCPS Parent Guide: Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School

Support from parents and families is key to helping children succeed academically. Here are 10 ways you can put your elementary-aged children on track. For questions or more information, please contact the Department of Family and School Partnerships at 301-618-7456.

1 Attend Back-to-School Night and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Students do better in school when parents are involved in their academic lives. Attending back-to-school night is a great way to get to know your child's teachers and their expectations.

Parents or guardians can request meetings with teachers or school staff any time during the school year. Meetings can be scheduled to set up or revise individualized education plans (IEPs), 504 education plans, or gifted education plans for children with special learning needs.

2 Stay Connected

Knowing the physical layout of the school building and grounds can help you connect with your child when you talk about the school day. The school website has key information about the school calendar, testing dates, extracurricular activities and includes links to communications portals, such as SchoolMax and Blackboard.

3 Support Homework Expectations

Homework reinforces and extends classroom learning and helps children practice important study skills. It also helps to develop a sense of responsibility and work ethic that will benefit them beyond the classroom.

Provide a well-lit, comfortable and quiet workspace for homework. Avoiding distractions and setting up a start and end time can also help. Be available to interpret homework instructions, offer guidance, answer questions, and review the completed work. Resist the urge to provide the correct answers or complete the assignments.

4 Send Your Child to School Ready to Learn

A good night's sleep – most school-age children need 10 to 12 hours – and a nutritious breakfast prepares students for a successful school day.

If your child is running late, provide a healthy, portable snack. Many schools provide nutritious breakfast options before the first bell.

5 Teach Organizational Skills

When children are organized, they can stay focused instead of spending time hunting things down and getting sidetracked. Use an assignment book and homework folder to keep track of assignments and projects and check them every day. Talk to your child about keeping their school desk orderly so papers don't get lost. Teach your child how to use a calendar or personal planner to help stay organized. It's also helpful to teach your child how to make a to-do list to help prioritize and get things done.

6 Teach Study Skills

Introducing your child to study skills now will pay off with good learning habits throughout life. Be sure to know when a test is scheduled so you can help your child study ahead of time. You also might need to remind your child to bring home the right study materials, such as notes, study guides, or books. Teach your child how to break down overall tasks into smaller, manageable chunks so preparing for a test isn't overwhelming.



7 Know the Disciplinary Policies

Review the PGCPS Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook for rules and consequences for not meeting expectation for behavior, dress codes, use of electronic devices and more.

8 Become and Stay Engaged

Whether children are just starting kindergarten or entering their last year of elementary school, there are many good reasons for parents to volunteer at school. It's a great way for parents to show they're interested in their kids' education. Even giving a few hours during the school year can make a strong impression on your child.

9 Take Attendance Seriously

Sick children should stay home from school if they have a fever, nausea or worse. Children who lose their appetite, are clingy or lethargic, complain of pain, or who just don't seem to be acting "themselves" also might benefit from a sick day.

Otherwise, it's important that students arrive at school on time every day. Having to catch up with classwork and homework can be stressful and interfere with learning.

10 Make Time to Talk About School Every Day

Make time to talk with your child every day, so they know that what goes on at school is important to you. When kids know parents are interested in their academic lives, they'll take school seriously as well.

Aside from family meals, good times to talk include car trips, walking the dog, preparing meals, or standing in line at a store.

