

A New School Year – Tips for Parents

By Shawnta S. Barnes – July 30, 2017



Summer vacations are now wrapping up and it's time for parents to get their children prepared to return to school. Parents send their children to school to receive a good education, but there are actions parents can take to help promote their children's success.

Register for school before school starts and update your contact information.

The first day and the first week of school sets the foundation for the school year. There aren't any good days of school to miss. When children miss these days because their parents did not register on time or return from vacation before school begins, they miss an opportunity to bond with their teacher and classmates and learn about the school and their new grade. If parents don't have to register because their children are returning to the same school, they should still update contact information. Parents may miss pertinent information about their children because the contact information no longer works.

Attend back to school events.

Back to school events are an opportunity for parents to hear from the principal, meet teachers and other school staff. Many schools also have other services available where parents can put money into their children's breakfast/lunch account, complete paperwork to sign children up for counseling or to sign up for a club.

At these events, schools typically hand out the school's calendar and share other resources to help parents support their children during the year.

Obtain required supplies.

Children need to have all supplies on the first day of school. There's nothing worse than a child feeling ashamed or choosing to act out because he or she is not prepared for success. Yes, times are hard, but there are options to obtain supplies if parents cannot afford them. Many community organizations such as churches give away supplies every year. If parents don't know who these organizations are, then they should call the school before school begins because most of the time the school will know who those organizations are and get parents connected.

Encourage and prepare your child.

I can never forget the year I heard a parent say on the first day of school to her son, "Don't be a dummy this year." A new year is a new opportunity. A child's biggest cheerleader should be in the home. Parents should talk to their children about the new school year and ask if there are any lingering questions or concerns. Knowing there is encouragement and support at home goes a long way.

Make a plan to stay involved over the course of the school year.

Occasionally, I would be in the front office when a parent would arrive to pick up a child early. Then, I would hear the parent say to the secretary, "I don't know who the teacher is, but I need my child now because I need to go." This should never be the case; parents should have a strong relationship with the teacher. Teachers need support from parents. Parents should have the parent/teacher conference on their calendars and days marked when they can come in and observe to see how their child is doing. Volunteering in the classroom or at school events is another way to be involved. Involvement shows children school is an important place to be.

Student success is not just the school's responsibility; all stakeholders must work in tandem to ensure our children receive the best education.