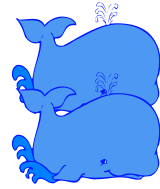


Suffolk Region



October 2017 Family Engagement

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Why should I care about family engagement? What's in it for me? And What exactly is it anyway? How do I get involved?

Let's take the last question first. Family engagement as it relates to your child's education is simply being involved with your child's school life, partnering with the school they attend and the teachers who teach your child. It can be expanded to advocating for all school age children in your community, but in its simplest terms, family engagement is being engaged in your child's school community.

To answer the first question why you should be involved, let's review some research. Students with involved parents are more likely to experience the following:

- 1. Higher grades**
- 2. Better social skills**
- 3. Graduation from High School**
- 4. Regular attendance at school**
- 5. Post secondary education**

Family Engagement in children's education allows kids to perform better in school, and navigate more easily some of the challenges of growing up, such as bullying.

To read more on this go to

http://www.nyspta.org/Resources/Resources_ParentResources.cfm

To research how your school is ranked compared to other schools in your area, go to:

<https://www.greatschools.org>

Lastly, what is in it for the parents? Beside the obvious academic and social benefits, family engagement is a way to keep the communication open with your child as they branch out and try new friends and interests. In elementary school, children want to tell you everything and show you their triumphs and struggles. In middle school, it can be less so and by high school, your child can become a bit of a stranger. To some extent that is good. They are branching out and they need to. However, high school teenagers still need advise and support and it can be difficult for them to reach out. Being appropriately involved, throughout their school career continuously builds support and security, so that when something comes up, the structure is already there to bring it up. Whether it is helping out at their sports event, attending back to school night (so you at least know the teachers they are talking about and their expectationS), or being more involved ,you will benefit as much as your child. By being present, it demonstrates that your child is a priority. We all know it goes by really fast. Whatever age your child is now, he/she will only be here once. The foundations we set now will set up our friendship with them as adults later.

Ok so that is all great, but you are a busy parent with work, other family and community responsibilities. How do you find time to be engaged? Or, what if all the school activities are during times when you are working? What then? Can you commit 3 hours total during the school year to help out with school activities?

First, join your school's PTA because the funds directly go to programs at the school. Without parent participation in the PTA, many programs have to go unfunded.

Second, attend Back To School Night so that you have open communication with your child's teachers; and at the very least, you will know the expectations and personality of the individual teachers. You may be able to give your child some insight on how to do better in the class or remind them of a resource the teacher has that your child didn't know about or forgot. When a child is struggling with a class, you will have a point of reference. Sometimes, just understanding is all a child wants. Family engagement doesn't have to be hours and hours. Think quality over quantity, if you are strapped for time.

Third, make a goal of attending and ideally helping out at one school related function. For high school students who may not want you hanging around school, help out with their sports team or club instead. Donate water to the team for after a game or meet, if you are able. If you can't attend a sport or play they are in, have them text you the score or how it went right after it is over.

IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE FAMILY ENGAGEMENTS

National PTA's Take Your Family to School Week—Feb. 11-17, 2018.

For over 120 years, National PTA has been encouraging families to get more involved in their child's education. Help us celebrate PTA's long legacy of family engagement. For more ideas for activities for that week- particularly for younger grades go to:

<https://www.pta.org/programs/familytoschool.cfm?ItemNumber=3262&navItemNumber=5106>

OCTOBER IS :

National Bully Prevention Month- <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-bullying-prevention-month-october/>

-160,000 students skip school every day for fear of bullying-
<http://rachelschallenge.org/about-us>

-What is Bullying and what causes it? <https://nobullying.com/what-are-the-causes-of-bullying/>

- In October, National PTA's [Every Child in Focus](#) campaign centers on LGBTQ History Month. Using the PTA [National Standard for Family-School Partnerships](#), we will explore ways PTAs can welcome and support the families of LGBTQ children in the school community.
- Negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students puts them at an increased risk for violence and bullying. Negative attitudes also impact a student's ability to learn at school.
- US Department of Education released [Civil Rights Statement](#) discusses a school environment that is free from sex discrimination.
- 61% of LGBT students were more likely than their non-LGBT peers to feel unsafe or uncomfortable as a result of their sexual orientation.
- 11-30% of gay and lesbian students and 12-25% of bisexual students missed at least one day of school because of safety concerns.
- 12-28% of LGBT students were threatened or injured on school property from 2001-2009, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

October 16-20, 2017 – SAY SOMETHING WEEK -

http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs?lightbox+0#say-something

-Say Something- Teaches kids to speak up if a friend is tweeting, texting, posting or talking about doing violence at school or elsewhere. Between 70-80% of the violence that happens in schools is talked about to a friend or someone else in some format before it happens.

A partial list of signs to look for in a child who may be contemplating violence is below:

- isolation
- preoccupation with guns and weapons
- Easy access to firearms
- Bragging about easy access to firearms
- Being bullied
- New or increased aggression

-Isolation is a key factor along with bullying that leads kids to seek violence. **Start with Hello** is another program offered that teaches kids and schools how to be more inclusive and create inclusive environments.

Reminder_ A useful tool for conversation starters with your child is www.Q4KIDZ.org. Once a week you get a text of daily questions (5 question/ topics, 1 text to start a conversation). The questions are quirky and tailored to the age of your child. I have been randomly texting the questions I think my daughter will find funny or odd and it has turned into a game with us. Try it with your son or daughter.