



September 18, 2017

Often when people think of parent engagement the thought of the time commitment is front and center. However, engagement can take whatever time you determine you can give. It starts with attention and thought. Here are some ideas. You will have more. Please share. You will see it isn't rocket science, but it matters to your child's academics, health and happiness. Here are a few reminders of how you can be engaged in your child's education at the level of time commitment that fits your family.

- Be actively engaged in your child's interests and know their friends.
- Help with the homework in subjects that you enjoy.
- Make an effort to attend back to school night to meet their teachers and start a partnership
- Check the school website for activities and events or assemblies your child might not have shared with you. Ask what your child thought about them, What was good; what would have made it better?
- Join the PTA as a member of your school to get news about your school and commit to help at one event.
 - If you can be more involved, think about where your particular skills might be best used. Volunteer, even if it is only once a year or once a semester. Your child will notice. They probably won't thank you, but they will notice.
 - (children with engaged parents do better academically, are happier and healthier).
- Be involved with the sports team or club that your child participates in- donate water for the bus ride back from the game or concert or event.
- At home start a conversation- see below:

-Conversation Starters for Parents-

-Sign up for daily texts with conversation starters from Q4KIDZ.org- locate the link at www.parents.nea.org

Locate the sign up link at the bottom right of the page.

-101 Conversation Starters for Kids- <https://www.rockbrookcamp.com/> lists of questions to start a conversation with kids and teens that funny to informative.

- Can you remember a time when you laughed so hard you snorted?
- What do you do during recess?
- If you could change one thing about your room, what would it be?
- Would you rather eat your least favorite vegetable or have extra homework?

For teenagers, knowing what makes them comfortable is key. Are they serious or irreverent?

Try the Conversation Starter Game while you are driving or at dinner. The Conversation Game rules and questions at: <http://elguides.cc/Conversation.html>

This website states, “ Learning effective conversation skills ranks as one of the most significant social abilities. The challenges include talking too much, not taking turns, talking when others can’t listen, dwelling on inappropriate topics, and not responding to communication.”

For older teens or more serious questions check out: https://icebreakerideas.com/deep-conversation-topics/#Deep_Conversations_Topics_for_Teens

Questions include: What do you think are the 5 most important traits for a person to possess?

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/>
- How do I talk about bullying with my child?
 - Talk about what bullying is and isn't.
 - Talk to your child about times when you felt you didn't fit in or struggled.
- Make it ok for them to talk with you about bullying without reacting to strongly.
- Brainstorm what they can do to alleviate and prevent bullying.
- Share a time when you acted in a way that you aren't proud of and share what you learned.
- Ask them what they would do if they received something derogatory online or were included in a bullying
- Message to someone else. (it's particularly hard to be a bystander)
- Talk about what is and isn't acceptable online and in social media; nothing is private.
- Give them the guideline that if they wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online
 - online communication can feel anonymous; explain it isn't and it is as damaging if not more than in person;
 - For posting pictures- if you wouldn't want your Grandmother or a future employer to see it, don't post it.
 - Show them that you support and understand how difficult it is to navigate social media and that you are there to help, not judge.

National I'm -Me-Just-Because Month- <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/im-me-just-because-month-october>

-The message is to spread acceptance of one's self and others.

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 are :

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

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.