

25 Ways You Can Make a Difference

by Sharron Kahn Luttrell

Being involved in your children's education can be as simple as asking them about their school day or as bold as volunteering once a week for lunchroom duty. Here are some ideas to get you started.

1. Ask your child about school. Saying "Tell me something you learned today" shows your child that you're interested in what happens in the classroom.
2. Read to your child. As your children get older, let them read to you.
3. Help your child with homework. If your child doesn't need help, get in the habit of checking his answers.
4. Join your school's parent group. Attend a meeting to find out what's happening in school and how you can get involved.
5. Help out in your child's classroom. Most teachers are grateful for an extra set of hands. They might need you for special projects, or to work one-on-one or with small groups of children on reading, math, or other subjects.
6. Take over some of your teacher's photocopying. Commit to an hour or two a week of photocopying to free up your child's teacher for classwork.
7. Prepare a presentation for your child's class about your hobby or your family's ethnic or religious traditions.
8. Help decorate the classroom for a class party.
9. Volunteer in the lunchroom or at recess. This is a great way to get to know your children's schoolmates.
10. Help out in the school library. Librarians may need help cataloging books or straightening up after classes visit.
11. Help the art teacher mount student artwork for display. Or volunteer to assist with projects during art class.
12. Serve as volunteer tech support in the school media lab.
13. Paint scenery and build sets for the school play.
14. Answer phones and greet visitors in the school office.
15. Chaperone a field trip.
16. Take photographs for the school yearbook or memory book.
17. Volunteer to head a club or teach an after-school enrichment class. Share your expertise—for example, photography, chess, or sewing doll clothes.
18. Speak at career day.
19. Help plan school events such as dances, holiday productions, or special assemblies.
20. Work the concession stand at sporting events.
21. Offer to contribute to or produce the school newsletter.
22. Work with school administrators to write grant proposals or seek other funding sources.
23. Judge a competition such as a science fair or spelling bee.
24. Attend school board meetings. You'll learn about issues affecting your district.
25. Vote in school elections. Learn about candidates for school board. Take your child to the polls on election day so he can see you exercise your civic responsibility.