

Getting To Know Your Child's Teacher

By Connie Ragen Green When your child first starts school your life changes overnight. Suddenly they are spending more waking hours with the teacher than they do with their own family. If this is your first child the adjustment can be difficult. Up until now you have been the most influential adult in your child's life. Now they are coming home each day and telling you what the teacher said about everything from brushing teeth to going to bed early to how to hold a pencil. Most parents are at least slightly annoyed by this turn of events in their lives. So just how can you successfully deal with this situation? The best thing to do is to visit your child's school and classroom regularly. Make every attempt to go daily if your schedule allows for that. Get to know the classroom teacher. He or she will appreciate your involvement. But just how involved you should be is not always an easy question. You will want to get to know your child's teacher so that you can become an integral part of this new relationship. It is crucial that parents take the proper steps in the very beginning so that this relationship may develop naturally over time. Visit the classroom as soon as school begins. Let the teacher know that you are interested and available to help your child in their educational process. Try to get a feel for how the teacher deals with parents. Every school and teacher is different. You want them to feel comfortable with your presence. Ask if the school has a policy about parents in the classroom. If the teacher seems to back away from the idea of regular visitation, ask if there is anything you can do at home to help. In the primary grades there is usually quite a bit of cutting and preparation of folders and packets for each child. Many teachers will appreciate your help. If you offer to do it at home and bring it back the following day it will be a way for you to help while taking the burden off of the teacher. This may also serve as an icebreaker and the teacher may invite you to help inside of the classroom on a regular basis. When you are visiting or helping in your child's classroom be aware of what message you are sending. Your child is now becoming more independent and may be embarrassed by your attention or any displays of affection in front of their peers. Do not take this personally; instead, be pleased and proud that your child is developing in this perfectly normal manner. After you have been in the classroom, ask your child about it. Find out if they like having you there or feel shy about your presence in their domain. There also may be some jealousy from your child if you were helping other students more than you helped them during your visit. Take it day by day. When children are young it is sometimes difficult to know what to expect next. One day they may be looking forward to you coming to their classroom and the next day they may be dreading such a visit. Play it by ear. Remember that the most important thing is that you are making the connection with the teacher and your child sees that you are taking an interest in where they spend much of their day.

About the Author

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