

Direct Government Services

Helping your 11 to 14 year old to learn



Getting involved with your child's education can make a significant difference to their chances of success. Research has shown that children whose parents are involved get higher marks, have a better attitude towards learning and develop more confidence.

Take a daily interest

Getting involved with your child's education at secondary school doesn't have to be difficult. There are some simple things you can do to show your interest:

- ask about your child's homework - find out when work is due and whether they need any help with anything
- find out the topics your child will be studying each term by looking at the school's curriculum plan or talking to teachers
- check the school newsletter for upcoming events and mark your calendar straight away for activities that will include your child

Support your child's reading

At 11 to 14 years of age your child may be too old for bedtime stories, but you can still help shape their reading habits. You can develop your child's interest by:

- encouraging them to read magazines, comics and newspapers as well as books
- buying books for presents - those that tie in to a favourite television show, pop band or computer game are often a hit
- reading together - try picking reading material on subjects you both enjoy like a sports team, music group or holiday destination
- reading the books or plays that your child is studying in school and discussing what you've read with them

Get the most from school reports

Your child receives a school report at least once a year. To get the most out of a report you should:

- read it carefully and note your child's strengths and weaknesses - work out what they need to do to improve in weak areas
- give praise when your child has done well, but for areas of concern agree on specific things that can be done to improve
- compare reports from year to year to highlight areas of improvement and concern

Make the most of parents' evening

In secondary school you might only meet your child's teachers once a year, so it pays to be prepared. You can make the most of parents' evening by:

- spending some time with your child before the evening discussing their strengths, weaknesses and any problems at school
- making a list of questions to ask teachers about your child's work, how they get along with classmates and their general attitude toward school
- being prepared to listen when meeting teachers, even to criticism of your child's work or behaviour
- asking questions, especially if you don't understand or agree with something
- trying to take away from the meeting some positive steps that you, your child and the teachers can take to help your child succeed

Taking advantage of museums and galleries

A fun day out for the family can also be a great learning opportunity. Museums and galleries can help bring your child's school work to life.

These websites can help you plan your visits:

- Culture 24 - search for specific kinds of exhibits by place, date or subject at 3,000 museums, galleries and heritage attractions
- Gallery finder - search for galleries, art museums and art centres by geographic region with each listing featuring a description of exhibits and information on education programmes for children