



Tips for Involved Parents from Gwinnett County Public Schools

Be There is a national movement that inspires parents to become more involved in their children's education. Teachable moments are everywhere. Be your child's favorite teacher. Connect in meaningful ways and your simple actions will reap immense rewards at home, play, and school!

You don't have to be PTA president to be involved at your child's school...

It takes the whole community to support a school. While we couldn't do without the hard work of PTA officers and other active parents who spend a lot of time working at school, planning events, and attending meetings, that doesn't mean that's the only way to be involved at your child's school. Every school has opportunities to fit your time, your talents, and your comfort level. So, consider these suggestions as a starting point. There are literally hundreds of other ways you can help. Whether you can spare an hour now and then or every Monday morning and Wednesday after school, you can be a valuable asset to your child's school. Ask your child's teacher or call the school office for more suggestions.

Work with students.

Sometimes, having an extra set of hands and an extra pair of eyes and ears in the classroom can be a big help to a teacher during circle time or when working with small groups of students. While you aren't a certified teacher, with a bit of training, you can effectively work with small groups of students or make a presentation. Here are some options:

- Read with a student, or listen to a student read.
- Help a student with his writing.



- **Tutor a student** in math, reading, or another subject area.
- **Play learning games** with students.
- **Teach a lesson to a class**, especially if you have expertise in an subject about which the children are learning. A history buff? Share your collection of Civil War memorabilia. A master gardener? Offer to work with the class in the outdoor classroom.
- **Tell a class about your job.** Ask the school counselor if you can help with any career day events. Ask your child's teacher if your work ties in with the curriculum during the year and offer to make a presentation.
- **Mentor a student** during the school year.
- **Help students measure themselves** for class height chart. Create class charts and graphs.
- **Teach a game** to students.
- **Chaperone a class field trip or help with special classroom activities or schoolwide events**, such as Field Day.

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You don't have to be PTA president to be involved at your child's school *(Continued)*



Help in the classroom.

Not sure you have the patience (or stamina) to work with children? Not to worry... there's still plenty to do in the classroom. Try lending a hand with these suggestions:

- Cut out laminated materials, stencils, letters... whatever is needed for classroom activities, centers, or bulletin boards.
- Put up or take down bulletin boards. Artistic? Offer to do a themed bulletin board for an upcoming unit.
- Run photocopies and assemble packets for classroom centers and student work.
- Put together class books of student writing.
- Label class materials, file papers, tear out workbook pages, or make words for word walls.
- Separate math manipulatives or put together board games for the class.
- Help prepare the classroom at the beginning of the year or pack up materials at the end of the year. Provide boxes for packing. Organize class cupboards.

Help around the school.

Maybe your child's classroom has helpers already or you have children in different grade levels and would like to help students of all ages. Consider these opportunities:

- **Use your expertise— from work or a hobby— to help the school.** Build a reading loft. Landscape the entry. One parent suggests starting a group of active dads to pitch in whenever and wherever needed.
- **Help in the Media Center...** checking out books, shelving materials, entering books into the computer.
- **Help in the Art room...** cleaning brushes, preparing materials, mounting pictures.

Help from home.

Not everyone's schedule allows time during the school day, but don't let that keep you from being involved.

- **Many projects are things you can do at home.** Ask your child's teacher how you can help.
- **Volunteer to help with the PTA newsletter.**
- **Offer to make contacts with local companies and neighborhood shops** to develop school business partnerships or to provide support for an event.
- **Provide goodies from home** when the PTA is sponsoring a staff appreciation lunch or other event.

Participate in the life of the school.

Know that when we talk about being "involved" at the school, we're also talking about attending school activities and events, like these, whenever you can:

- **Have lunch or breakfast at the school with your child occasionally.** You can spend some time with your child and his or her classmates and you'll get a nutritious and tasty meal, too!
- **Attend activities or events that are held at alternate times,** such as weekends or evenings, if you can't come to the school during the day.
- **Offer to translate** for a parent night or class program if you speak another language.
- **Participate in school surveys, focus groups, and other opportunities to give feedback.** Your school wants families to be involved in improvement efforts.
- **Be familiar with the Local School Plans for Improvement** at your child's school. Read the school's accountability report and other important documents.
- **Keep up with what's going on at the school so you can attend** class programs, awards nights, PTA meetings, fun runs, carnivals, heritage nights and international celebrations, science fair, math night, literacy celebrations, special family programs, curriculum nights, parent-teacher conferences, field day, performances, academic competitions, sporting events, club activities, school socials, game nights, fundraisers, clean-up days. **And the list goes on...**



Together, we will be there for our students—
Gwinnett County Public Schools and YOU!

Make the ordinary extraordinary!

437 Old Peachtree Road, NW, Suwanee, GA 30024-2978 • 678-301-6000 • www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

*Tips submitted by teachers and parents
from Annistown Elementary, Benefield Elementary,
Chattahoochee Elementary, and Chesney Elementary.*