

Catholic School Parent Involvement Options

There has been a lot of interest recently in exploring how parents can be more involved in their child's education. Their involvement is seen as a strong component of the child's success. But parents find themselves chronically short of time and have been asking for alternatives. The following table offers some suggestions.

Whether you can offer time, expertise, occasional assistance or regular participation there are numerous options. Regardless of which suggestions you may adopt, by being more involved in your child's education and development you will gain a better understanding of what they are learning/experiencing and it will give you a greater opportunity to act as a role model/mentor for your child.

The table is split into 5 categories based on whether you are SERVING your own child directly or indirectly through a broader group. All of the cases will offer you worthwhile opportunities to get involved in your child's education.

(Please note that some of the ideas presented in the following table may be more appropriate to either secondary or primary school situations.)

Ideas for Parent Involvement in their Child's Education		
Serving	Areas	Ideas/Examples
The Community	Acting as a role model in helping the less fortunate.	Organize a group of your children's friends to help at the food bank, seniors residence, downtown mission, etc.
	Participating in church ministries	Encourage your child to participate in altar serving, choirs or other church activities.
	Assisting neighbours	Show your child how they can help elderly neighbours.
The School	School Advisory Council	Serve on Council, or sub committees, or as a school representative to Parents organizations.
		Attend council meetings and offer your thoughts, ideas, opinions and when necessary, criticisms, towards improving your child's educational experience.
		Suggest, lead or help out with fundraising activities.
		Suggest, lead or help out with school events (e.g. fun days, family events, etc.).
		Assisting with regular school events (Pizza lunches, BBQs, dances, etc.).
		Lead or assist with a subcommittee (e.g. Curriculum/School Performance, Health and Safety, Fundraising, Recognition, Parent Involvement, Communications, etc.).
		Assist with communication efforts (mailings, databases, flyers, etc.) between parents and the school.
	Volunteer	School staff are always receptive to offers of short or long term offers of volunteer time.
	Coaching	Help organize a sporting event (e.g. swim meet, hockey tournament, etc.).
	Programs	Offer to lead or support special programs (e.g. character development, anti-bullying, Remembrance Day, etc.).
	Clubs	Lead a club activity (e.g. drama, chess, debating, etc.).
	Social Awareness	Help with social awareness activities/clubs.
Events	Personally attend school events enthusiastically (e.g. family skating night, bingo night, concerts, etc.).	
Your Child's and Other Classes	Career Days	Inform the school of your unique career or background and offer to participate in presentations were it would be beneficial.
	Projects requiring specific expertise	Inform the school of your unique career or background and offer to participate in school projects.
	Trips	Offer to go on school trips as a subject matter expert or as a chaperone.
	Presentations	Offer to assist with presentations, projects or other activities as a subject matter expert or other role.
Own Child	Use the Student Planner/Agenda Daily	Encourage daily use of Student Agenda/Planner for recording work, planning its completion, completion of work and communication with the teachers. It is probably the single most important routine that a student can adopt to make them well organized and to communicate to teachers and parents any issues that may be developing.
	Homework	Review agenda for homework and assist your child in planning their work. Minimize distractions.
	Class Participation	Encourage your child to participate in class and provide complete and reasoned answers.
	Tests/Exams	Assist your child in preparing for test and exams by suggesting times, routines, space and good study habits.
		Review tests to see if your child is learning from their mistakes. Mistakes are a learning opportunity.
		Review tests to see if your child is being sufficiently challenged (Do they rarely get anything wrong?).
	Communicate with the teachers	Attend meet the teacher and parent interview nights or communicate with your child's teacher on a regular basis via the Student Agenda, telephone meetings, etc.
Address Issues Quickly	Let the teachers know if you have an evolving concern. Don't let it go too far before asking for assistance.	
Daily Routines	Help child prepare for school with proper meals, sleep and other routines that are conducive to focusing on their work.	