

### Supporting Our Teens and Their Schools

**N**o matter where our children attend school, when the home and school are partners, children learn best. Here are some ways to support your child's school.

**Focus on the positive.** Teachers and school administrators have dreams, goals, concerns and feelings like all other human beings. They are also professional educators, dedicated to furthering the development of children. Speak of teachers and school staff in a positive way, learn their names, become personally acquainted with them, and pray for them by name in private and at family worship.

**Get involved.** Don't assume that "no news is good news." Take time to find out what's going on at school. Ask for appointments with teachers, even if there are no major concerns. Many times the only contact parents have with teachers is when they criticize. See if there are ways you can contribute to the school—as a room parent, as a field trip supervisor, by providing specific supplies, or by using your professional skills.

**Read everything that comes from the school.** Invest time in understanding what each email, call, or letter is about. If a form must be completed, return the information immediately. Treat the school's requests as you would a work assignment.

**Mark your calendar.** Keep track of events in your appointment calendar, on your cell phone. Moms and Dads, consider school appointments as serious as work meetings.

**Don't bear false witness.** Often statements made about school include gossip and even lies about teachers and staff. By agreeing with others, including your child, you may foster a negative attitude. Remember every situation has both facts and feelings. Check out the facts before you come to any conclusions. Help others relate the facts and their feelings to the appropriate people. Help build bridges instead of barriers.

**Honor your child's efforts.** We carefully post young children's artwork and early writing assignments. Some use a bulletin board or the refrigerator. As they get older, stay in touch with what they are doing as well. Continue to honor their efforts verbally. Set special assignments or projects aside in a memory box or large envelope.

**Consider your own expectations.** Parents need to encourage children to reach their own potential. But sometimes parents push "A's" because it looks good for them. Explain to your child why he should work to his potential and why good grades are important; don't just spend time nagging him. Work with your daughter to reach goals that are measurable and meaningful for her.

**Take homework seriously.** It is your responsibility to provide the physical and emotional environment for your child to do their homework - even though it is the child's responsibility to do the work. Guard against late nights and unexpected appointments which add to their stress level and negatively impact homework deadlines.

**Attend parent-teacher conferences.** If at all possible, both parents should attend. Be on time and be aware of those waiting after you. Remember that you and your child's teachers are colleagues in your child's education.

**Keep in touch.** If your child is away at boarding school, be sure he receives something in the mail (or via e-mail) every week. Send care packages. Let your child know that you pray for him/her at a certain time every day. Your teen may not acknowledge that your weekly contacts are important, but keep in touch because of your commitment to your child.

**Celebrate!** Find ways to celebrate the personhood of your child. Some families eat out once a month, others celebrate by rewarding good grades. If your son is away at boarding school, remind him that you miss him being there for Sabbath and other celebrations. Have a small gift on her bed when she comes home. Plan to celebrate, in even small ways, on a regular basis.

**Remember, you are your child's most important teacher.** Even though teachers and others at school have a tremendous impact, your child is still looking to you. He or she needs your support and consistent love—whether in preschool, elementary school, home school, academy, or college.

#### Adventist Education in North America: Did you know?

Not only do students who attend Adventist schools achieve half a grade level higher in all subjects than predicated based on their ability scores, but they also gain the benefits of Adventist education shown by other research—strong spiritual lives and healthy lifestyle choices. Cognitive Genesis Report, Year Two, [cognitivegenesis.org](http://cognitivegenesis.org)



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