



A guide for parents and carers

Communicating with school — helping children and young people learn

The difference you can make

Children and young people learn every day and everywhere, at home, at school and in the community.

When parents and schools work together, children and young people are more likely to do better at school.

You can help your child to be a confident and enthusiastic learner. You can encourage them to believe they will do well at school. You can let them know that trying hard and doing their best is what matters.

Get to know your child's teachers

Teachers work hard to make sure you are kept up to date with what your child is learning.

They can offer ways for you to connect with them so you can get to know each other and create a shared vision for your child's learning success.

There are many ways for you to get to know and stay connected to your child's teachers. Here are some ideas for primary school and secondary school.

Primary school — get to know the teacher

In primary schools, children generally have one teacher most of the time.

- Find out the names of your child's teacher, the principal and other key staff.
- Meet with your child's teacher and get to know them. Help the teacher learn about your family.
- Talk about your goals and aspirations for your child.
- Tell the teacher what helps your child learn. Share what they're good at, and the things they love to do and learn.
- Ask about the best way to get in contact if you have questions, and let them know how you prefer to be contacted
- Stay in contact. You could meet in person, chat by email and phone, or use an app.

Secondary school — get to know the teachers

In secondary school, children usually have more than one teacher. So, the approach is a bit different.

- Attend welcome nights and parent information nights.
- Come to parent-teacher interviews.
- Ask about the best way to get in contact if you have questions, and let them know how you prefer to be contacted.
- Access the school's handbook.

- Participate in parent workshops.
- Go to performances, concerts and sporting events your child is involved in. If you can, go along even if your child is only thinking about getting involved.

Find out what's happening in the classroom

Primary school — in the classroom

There are a few ways you can find out what your child is learning.

- Find out if the school provides a curriculum outline or learning plans for your child's class.
- See if there is a weekly timetable you can use at home.
- Ask your child's teacher to outline what your child is learning and why. Check if they can share this with all the parents.

Secondary school — in the classroom

In secondary school, a lot of information is generally in the school handbook. Some secondary schools use apps to map lessons and homework. This information will help when you talk to your child about school.

- Ask your child's teacher about learning goals — for the class and for your child.
- Ask how you will know if your child is on track.
- Find out if the school has a contact person for parents.
- Keep in contact, don't wait for a parent-teacher interview if you have a question or concern
- Contact the home group or care group teacher. They have an overview of your child's learning.
- Get familiar with your school's leadership structure. They might have a year-level manager or sub-school coordinator.

You can work with the school to come up with a plan.

Ask how you can help, what the school will do, and how you can keep track of progress.





Be part of your school community

Being part of your child's school community is one way to show your child you value their education.

There are many other ways to contribute. Attending a couple of events at the school each year can mean a lot. It shows your child that you value their education and successes. Consider bringing along grandparents, aunts, uncles and other important family and friends to share in these events.

Tips for getting involved

Volunteer

Ask your school or a teacher how you can volunteer. Contributing to the school doesn't always require being able to be at the school during the day. Some ideas are:

- help with school clubs
- coach sport
- join a working bee
- reading help
- art activities
- help keep the classroom organised
- tell stories about your culture.

Go to school meetings and events

Attend concerts, plays, assemblies, meetings, and other activities. You can become familiar with your child's school community and find out what is happening.

Join a governing council

Being part of the school's governing council can be a valuable experience. You will meet other parents and help to shape the future plans for the school.

Join in social activities

Social activities with other parents and families can be a good way to be part of the school community.

Find out more

[Talk to your school or preschool](#) about how you can be more involved

www.education.sa.gov.au/parentengagement – find out what parent engagement resources are available

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/parent-information/> – information on what all Australian students learn as they progress in their learning at school

www.learningpotential.gov.au – ideas and activities to support learning from birth to Year 12

www.raisingchildren.net.au - information to help parents and carers make decisions about parenting their children.

About this information

This information is adapted from a series made in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The ACT Education and Training Directorate developed the series in partnership with:

- the non-profit Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)
- representatives of ACT independent, and Catholic schools and parent organisations.

The series is Creative Commons. It is based on international research and consultation with teachers and parents.