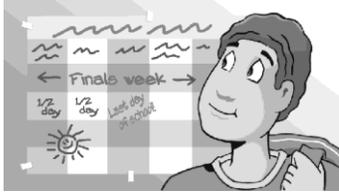


# Parents Still Make the Difference!



## Attendance is critical at the end of the school year!

Every day matters. That means that each school day contains something of value. It was true on the first day of school and it's true now, as classes wind down.

It is critical that your child be in school this time of year. Many events that occur at the end of the school year will play a significant role in how well your child does this year. Your child's passing or failure may even be at stake.

Here are just a few of the reasons your child must be in school:

- Review work. At this time of year, teachers devote class time to reviewing the entire school year. This is to prepare students for testing that covers the whole year. Often students prepare for two tests per class. They must prepare for state exams. Then they must prepare for the final given by their teacher. Being in class for review work is strongly linked to how well your child will do on exams.
- Exams. Your child needs to be in school on test dates. Make up dates for state exams and finals are limited.
- Projects. Some teachers require end-of-year projects. If your child is not in school, she will not be available to hear about due dates and resources for these projects. Nor will she be able to ask teachers for help if she is stuck.

### Make a plan to spend summer time together

The best thing about summer is the opportunity it affords for family time. Make the most of this time--it is fleeting and will be gone before you know it. You can:

- Spend early evenings with your child. If you are at work all day, you may not see your child until the early evening. Involve your child in making dinner. Eat together as a family. Then take a brief walk or do an errand with your child. Make these early evening hours all about you and your child.
- Devote at least one summer weekend just to spending time with your child. If you are fortunate enough to be going on a vacation, this may be the time you can spend. But if not, schedule at least one "staycation" weekend. Plan it in advance and ask your child what he would like to do each day. Grant his wishes as your budget and time allow.
- Stay in touch during the day. If you are at work, call your child every few hours to see how he is and if he needs anything.

### Middle schoolers need structure, supervision over the summer

Summer with a middle school-age child can pose a dilemma. Your child is freed of his usual schedule, and he will likely want plenty of freedom. As a parent, you need to balance his growing desire for independence with your responsibilities to make sure he is safe and cared for.

To make this work:

- Place your child in a structured environment for part of the summer, if possible. It can be a summer program at a kids' center, a day camp through a local government or civic group, or an organized sports program. Research low-cost options.
- Know where your child is. Your child will want to hang out with friends. He should be able to do so, but you need information first. If possible, meet his friends and their parents. When your child is with friends, know whom he is with, what they are doing, how you can reach him, and when he will be home.
- Insist that your child do chores. Your child is at an age when he should be developing responsibility. Now that he doesn't have homework, he should be helping the family. One important way to do this is through age-appropriate tasks. Examples are taking out the trash, putting dishes away, or caring for pets.
- Keep track of media. It is not realistic to expect your child not to use media over the summer, but it should not be the biggest part of his summer. Limit use to certain hours or days.