

A Checklist of Ideas for Busy Parents

Nowadays, when everyone is so busy we may forget what things are important and necessary to do, and what things can be postponed until later. However, no matter how busy you are, the importance of spending quality time with your child cannot be overestimated. Investing personal time and effort in your child will yield many long-term benefits for both of you. When you think about it, effective parenting is really about investing time, not saving time. The following checklist of ideas takes less than thirty minutes a day—and it just may be the best half hour you could possibly spend to help your child learn and grow.

- Read to your child—at least twenty minutes a day. Keep lots of books or magazines around. Use books recorded on tape. Children of parents who read to them earn higher grades. Most (64%) say they earn mostly A's or B's in school. Kids whose parents didn't read to them say they mostly earn B's or lower. *
- Help your child organize their work area. Make sure they have pencils, markers, crayons, glue sticks, a dictionary and any other materials they need to complete their assignments.
- Review homework assignments to make sure your child has completed their homework. Talk to their teacher right away if the homework seems too hard or too easy for your child.
- Find out what's going on in school. Let your child know that you will ask questions everyday about what they learned each day at school. Read the school or classroom newsletter to learn more about school events.
- Play word games or listening games such as "Simon Says" with your child to increase vocabulary and memory skills. Ask your child's teacher or the librarian for fun ideas.
- Regulate your children's TV viewing time. Instead of just letting them watch television for fun and relaxation, have them read a good book, play a fun board game or have lots of free-play time.
- Get to know your child's teacher. Write a personal note or introduce yourself in person. Share with the teacher your child's feelings about school and any special needs or interests they have.
- Talk as a family about everyday happenings. Whether it's from the front page of the daily newspaper, or something you observed or read, help your child see their place in the larger world. Listen carefully to your children, and they will learn how to listen to others.

Try as many of these ideas as you can on a daily basis. Over time, some of these will become a regular habit in your family and you'll notice the difference!

*Source: "Reading Makes a Difference," The Shell Poll, 1999. [Http://www.countonshell.com/shell_poll.html](http://www.countonshell.com/shell_poll.html)