

# **SURVIVING THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

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I realize that the title of this article could apply to both parents and children, and perhaps it does. I remember when my son first went to Kindergarten. I wouldn't leave him there without me because I was afraid that he wouldn't cope without a familiar face nearby. The teacher told me to go, so I went down the street and bought a donut to console myself. I came back almost immediately and hovered by the door to make sure he was OK. By the time my daughter got to go to Kindergarten I was ready for it. When it came to the first day of school I said to her, "Mommy is really going to be lonely without you today," while thinking, 'YES!' I had that first childless day at home well planned for a week or two beforehand.

So now your children are at school, how can you best encourage them to make the most of their education? Here are some suggestions. Your kids will be more interested in learning if you have created a stimulating home environment. Spend active time with them. Teach them how to make things at home. Take them to the library. Read to them and listen to their adventures. When you are involved in their play, encourage them to experiment and use their imagination as this stimulates their minds to explore all sorts of possibilities. The children become inquisitive and ask questions. They become more and more fascinated with the world around them and this makes them more interesting people. Positive people who are full of life and have plenty of friends usually have a healthy self-esteem. How can we make our kids interesting to be with?

Be interesting and adventurous yourself. If you are not sure how to go about it, hang around other interesting people and model on them. They say variety is the spice of life. There are far too many boring people around who float along day-to-day letting everything around them control their lives. Take hold of your own direction and, when you do, your kids will usually do the same.

When your kids come home from school, set time aside to talk to them about their day and what they have been learning. If they tell you tales of what the teacher did or didn't do, don't immediately side with your child. Talk to the teacher and see how you can both benefit your child's education. Make sure you have an open line of communication with your kids so they can tell you anything that is concerning them at school or with their friends. If you have been teaching them a strong set of values, this will equip them to make wise decisions when confronted with options, and when they do not have you there to ask. Maturity comes when we learn to take responsibility for our own actions and not blame everyone else. As my husband used to tell his pupils at school, "There are plenty of reasons, but no excuses." If we are accountable, we can teach our kids to be the same and to take the consequences for their poor decisions.

Some subjects are favorites at school and some are not. Kids don't usually like things they are not good at. If possible, get extra help so your child experiences the feeling of success that comes from persevering. This lesson will stand him/her in good stead in later life when things get hard or boring.

Our goal is to give our kids the education and the encouragement to become responsible, self-motivated, self-directed, happy, contributing members of adult society.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.