



## GETTING INVOLVED

Parent involvement is a key predictor of both a school's success and the success of each student. You may already be braced to help with homework. You'll discover, however, that your opportunities to be involved go beyond spelling drills, multiplication tables, and running out to the corner drugstore for posterboard at 9 p.m. the day before an assignment is due.

If you're a parent or guardian who works full-time, it might seem overwhelming or impossible to make more time for school involvement around your job and other obligations. Knowing that parents have varying amounts of flexibility in their days, schools make opportunities available for all different schedules.

### Helping out

**Volunteering in the classroom.** You'll find that, especially with younger children, you'll be invited to participate in regular classroom activities.

Sometimes, you may be free just to visit, have lunch with your child, or read to the class, for example. Special activity days, like class holiday parties and field trips, often require help from parents to setup, clean up, or chaperone. Check with your school on its policies and procedures for participating in the classroom; you probably will need to check in at the front desk to let the staff know who you are and whom you are visiting.

**Parent-teacher organizations.** You probably grew up calling it "the PTA" and knew it had regular meetings to raise money and share information. PTOs, the generic name for parent-teacher organizations, include state and local chapters of the National PTA, a nonprofit advocacy association. PTOs bring together people with a common interest in the success of their community school to share information or raise funds for a particular goal.

**Homework.** You may have heard horror stories from other parents about excessive homework, even in the younger grades. The

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National PTA and National Education Association both support a “10-minute rule” that says children should have 10 minutes of homework per day for each school grade. Whether your experience follows that guideline depends on your child, his or her teacher, and the school.

*Homework Tips for Parents* (available at [www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/homework/homeworktips.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/homework/homeworktips.pdf)) from the U.S. Department of Education gives general homework tips and describes how you can best help your child with his or her reading and math homework.

## Having a say

**Advisory councils and committees.** A school or district sometimes will invite parents and citizens to participate in an advisory capacity for specific needs or general district issues: school boundaries, student safety, or even naming new schools.

**School board meetings.** Your school district’s board of trustees usually meets once a month to establish policies and goals for its schools. In large districts, meetings may be more frequent. Community members are almost always able to attend these meetings; exceptions may occur during the time in the meeting when the board has to discuss a personnel or student issue. Learn more about school boards at [mytexaspublicschool.org/system/leadership/school\\_board.html](http://mytexaspublicschool.org/system/leadership/school_board.html).

The school board is legally required to post its meeting agenda publicly 72 hours before the meeting takes place. It also will post minutes afterwards. You usually can find these documents on your district’s Web site. Many communities also broadcast school board meetings on local access television or on line.

## Where to learn about opportunities

Your school and PTO will likely keep you informed—through notes and letters sent home and newsletters—of opportunities to get involved. You also may want to get in the habit of visiting your district’s Web site or following it on Twitter.



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