

How to Help Parents Support Their Children in U.S. Schools

As an RT tutor, you can work to educate parents about the U.S. school system and serve as an ambassador between parents and their children's schools.

- **Help parents learn vital school info.** (Like phone number, student's grade and teacher name, etc.)
- **Practice finding the school on a map.**
- **Contact the children's teachers or school** and let them know who you are. (You can use the school contact letter and teacher contact log from your training.)
- **Encourage parents to contact the school.** Have them write a letter and bring it in to the school. This will empower them to feel like they can communicate. (Is there a summer school my child can attend? Can you help me sign up my son for after school programs?)
- **Call schools to find out if there are special events coming up at the school.** The school wants parents to come and visit, but newcomer parents do not always know this.
- **Visit schools with parents.** Can you go with the family to any events at the school?
- **Help parents put together a binder/folder of school paperwork.** They can keep report cards, letters from the school, even a school calendar, organized here.
- **Work with families to create systems for homework.**
- **Encourage students to read aloud to parents**—and encourage parents to do this, as well. You can model this with parents.
- **Connect youth and parents to community resources**—like after school programs, rec centers, food banks, etc, and help them learn to do this for themselves.
- **Make periodic meetings to go over report cards with parents.** You can teach them how to read a report card (really important) and monitor how youth are doing in school. Grades are not the only issue. How many times has the student been absent? How many tardies? What do grades mean, etc.? Where are the hidden aspects, like citizenship grades, etc.?
- **Work on developing key school-related skills:**
 - Practice calling the school to explain an absence.
 - Fill out practice registration forms together
 - Role-play parent teacher conferences. (This is an example of a key “dialogue” we discuss in our adult training.)