

Education

Home/School Connection

What can I do at home to support my child's learning?

Learning can happen everywhere. There are many ways you can encourage learning at home and set a positive path of lifelong learning for your child.

- **Create a learning environment at home.**
 - Play board games, card games and appropriate video games together. This helps your child practice reading, counting, listening and taking turns.
 - Involve your child in household chores. Reading a list or chart of chores can help develop organizational skills and a sense of responsibility.
 - Prepare simple meals together. This will help your child learn to measure, read instructions, develop motor skills and learn about healthy food choices.
 - Read with your child. Discuss what you read.
 - Go for a walk. Talk about the things you see and interesting events in your neighbourhood.
- **Ensure your child is ready for each school day** – It is easier for children to focus if they have had enough sleep and a healthy breakfast, snacks and lunch.



- **Show your positive outlook towards education and school work** – Your positive outlook can affect your child’s thoughts about their own learning and school experiences. You can show enthusiasm for learning everyday by:
 - reading the newspaper, recipes, project instructions, magazines and books
 - locating places mentioned on television or in the news
 - looking up unfamiliar words and sharing their meaning
 - discussing events that happen in your community
 - listening to and sharing stories
- **Talk with your child about his or her school day** – Ask your child what he or she learned that day. What activity did they enjoy the most? The least? Why?
- **Set up positive homework practices:**
 - **Schedule a suitable homework time** – Develop a routine with a consistent homework time each day.
 - **Set up a homework space** – Find a quiet, well-lit area. Have supplies available in the space.
 - **Remove distractions** – The homework space should be free of distractions such as cell phones, texting devices, video games and television.
 - **Take breaks** – Breaks can increase attention.
 - **Set up a family calendar** – Post project due dates, extra-curricular activities and other events. Talk about the steps required to complete projects, as well as the time and items (books, supplies) needed.
 - **Discuss with your children what they have learned** – Describing what they have learned can help reinforce the information. It also provides the opportunity to ask questions about things they are uncertain or curious about.
- **Communicate with the school team regularly** – It is very helpful for the school team to know about important changes in your child’s life that could affect their learning and school experience.



I know communication is important. What should I keep in mind?

Communication between home and school can take place in a variety of ways — in person, over the phone, through written notes and email. Ask your child's teacher how he or she would prefer you to ask questions and provide updates about your child. Let the teacher know how you prefer to receive information and requests. Sometimes, a conversation — either on the phone or face-to-face — may be the most appropriate way to share information or discuss a sensitive issue.

- **Get to know your child's teacher and school team** – When your child enters a new school, ask who will be part of your child's school team. If you are attending a meeting, ask for introductions and for members to talk about their roles.
- **Share information** – It is very helpful for the school team to know about important changes in your child's life that could affect their learning and school experience. Sharing information with the school can help teachers adjust your child's programming and decide if more, or different, strategies or supports may be needed for your child.

Important information to share includes:

- successful learning and behaviour support techniques that you are using at home
- changes in the home that might cause emotional reactions
- assessment results and/or diagnoses
- changes in medical status
- ongoing goals for your child that you are supporting at home

If you provide new information on issues that affect your child's learning or functioning, ask the teacher or principal to share the information with other members of your child's school team, as appropriate.



- **Discuss unique circumstances** – You may wish to talk with school staff about unique situations and how they will be handled at school. For example, if your child has frequent or prolonged absences for illness or medical treatments, talk about how you and your child would like this information to be shared with the class. Develop a plan to deal with such things as missed school work, low stamina and re-establishing connections with classmates.

It is important to communicate often, but it is also important to communicate well.



What if I have a concern about something that is happening at school?

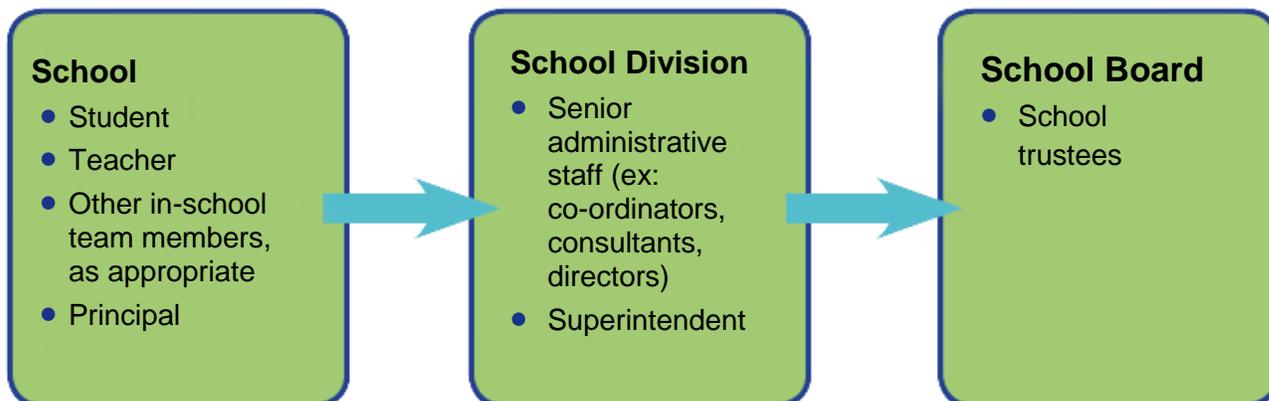
Educators, parents, and others work together every day to create safe, respectful, positive schools where each student has the opportunity to do his or her best. Everyone co-operates to make this happen. Even in the most positive school environment, though, disagreements or misunderstandings may come up.

If you have a concern about something that is happening at school, it is important to know who to contact and when to contact them. Start with the person who has the most direct involvement with the situation. If your concern cannot be resolved at this level, then the next person in the line of communication may be contacted, and so on. For example, if you are concerned about a situation that has to do with your child's classroom, you should first contact your child's teacher. If the situation cannot be resolved with the teacher, find out if there is anyone else who should be contacted before contacting the principal.



Educators are teachers, principals, clinicians, and other professionals who work in a school.

Most schools and school divisions in Manitoba follow a line of communication similar to the one below:



Every parent, student, teacher and administrator has unique insight into school matters. Each person's contribution is valuable. Educators are professionals with training and experience. Their conduct is guided by professional codes of practice. Parents know their own child better than anyone. When shared, this knowledge can be a valuable resource in student-related school issues.

For more information

- ***Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families, and Communities*** provides information on problem solving in the school system. It is available on the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem_solving/pdf/complete_document.pdf
- ***Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families, and Communities*** is a brochure that provides a brief overview of the information that is available in the handbook. It is available on the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem_solving/pdf/DR_Pamphlet.pdf

How can I be involved in my child's school?

There are many ways you can be involved in your child's school. Volunteering can benefit both your child and the school. You may get to know school staff through this experience. Your commitment can range from a one-time event to regular volunteering. Each school may have different opportunities and guidelines for involvement. Talk with school staff about options in your child's school. Possibilities might include:

- volunteering in the classroom
- helping supervise field trips
- sharing skills with the class such as building a bookshelf or sewing pillows for the reading area
- talking with the students about your career
- helping with extra-curricular activities such as sports, arts and crafts, chess, science, environment, landscaping, debating, language, photography, drama
- helping co-ordinate school projects such as newsletters
- participating on parent advisory council or committees
- helping with fundraising events

For more information

- ***School Partnerships: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities*** is available on the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/school_partnerships/pdf/School_Partnerships_Complete.pdf

