



Just for Parents

As summer comes to a close, we've focused this issue of *Just for Parents* on heading back to school. Prepare for a successful year ahead by getting off to a good start. This issue provides tips for getting organized, ways to get involved in your child's education, and information about what exactly your child should be learning this year.

Gerard Robinson, Commissioner of Education

Get the new school year off to a great start!

Sharpen your pencils! School-time is fast approaching. Start out right by getting organized!

At Home

- Establish a daily routine for meals, homework, play time, family time and bedtime.
- Set up a quiet area for homework. Younger children need easy access to parents.
- Schedule doctor, dental and eye exams. Make sure your child has the proper vaccinations. Discuss any mental or emotional issues with your child's physician.

- Review school information. Go over conduct guidelines, dress codes and other school rules with your child.
- Expect good grades and good behavior.
- Encourage your child to do their best. Be enthusiastic.

At School

- Visit the school with your child to locate classrooms, lunchroom, media center, lockers, etc.
- Meet the teacher(s). Find out how they



prefer to communicate with parents (email, telephone, notes...).

- Meet other school professionals and identify those who may be a resource for your child.
- Review your child's text books and talk with them about what's ahead.
- Make the most of parent-teacher conferences by organizing discussion issues beforehand.

For more information on getting your child off to a successful year ahead, visit the following website:

[School Family - Back to School Tips](#)

The Bureau of Family & Community Outreach offers a number of services and programs to parents and guardians.

Click on a link below to learn more!

- [Parent Involvement](#)
- [Faith and Community Based Initiatives](#)
- [Office of Safe Schools](#)
- [Dropout Prevention](#)
- [Volunteer and Recognition Programs](#)
- [21st Century Community Learning Centers](#)

Bureau of Family & Community Outreach

(850) 245-0847

Visit The Florida Department of Education online: www.fldoe.org



Join DOE's online Parent Community. Sign up today!

[Just For Parents Website](#)

What should my child be learning this year?

From Kindergarten through 12th grade, students must master specific skill-sets.

In reading, for example, first graders must be able to ask and answer questions about key details in text that they have read. In math, first graders must be able to add and subtract up to the number 20.

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) currently uses a mix of standards to determine



what skills children must master in each grade level. However, by the year 2014-15, the DOE will adopt what is called “Common Core State Standards,” for all grades. Our next issue of *Just for Parents* will offer a full expose’ on this initiative.

To find out what skills your child must acquire by the end of this school year, click on the following links:

[Success Measures](#)

[Florida State Standards](#)

For a glimpse of the *national* Common Core Standards into which DOE will be transitioning over the next few years, click here:

[Common Core Standards](#)

How to Choose a Quality Afterschool Program

If you're like many families, one or both parents work full time and simply cannot pick up their child when the school day ends. If this is you, consider enrolling your child in an afterschool program.

Afterschool programs offer hands-on, fun, enrichment activities for children during



after school hours.

So how do you choose a quality afterschool program that is right for your child? First, check with your school district to see what programs

they offer. Contact information for your local school district can be found at the following site:

[Florida School District Contact Information](#)

Seven characteristics to look for in a quality afterschool program include the following:

1. Solid programming, with a mission, philosophy, and goals
2. Qualified administrators and instructors
3. Good communication and interaction among youth, families and staff
4. Developmentally appropriate social, recreational, and educational opportunities
5. Developmentally appropriate environments that enhance safety, and foster health and nutrition

6. Safe, developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor environments

7. Opportunities for family involvement and partnerships

If your child attends a Title I school, find out if this school has a free 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool program. To find a list of 21st CCLC programs, click on the following website:

[Florida's 21st CCLC](#)

[For more information about quality afterschool programs visit:](#)

[Florida Afterschool Network](#)

[Afterschool Alliance](#)

[Florida Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs](#)



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Get Involved!

When parents get involved in their children's education, what happens? Research shows that such children are more likely to:

- get higher grades
- behave better
- have better social skills
- adapt well to school

How do you get involved? Just making sure your child is well-nourished, well-rested, on time to school, and has his/her homework completed, goes a long way to ensure success.

What is parent involvement? It can be simple:

- Ask your child to tell you something they learned that day
- Read with your child
- Go over homework together



- Visit museums, science centers, or historical sites

If you're able to do more, consider the following:

- Volunteer in your child's classroom (a great way to strengthen your relationship with teachers and classmates)
- Chaperone a school field trip
- Volunteer to be a leader for a school club
- Join one of the school's parent groups like the PTA, PTO, or School Advisory Council



Your school's parent-teacher groups can help you find ways to get involved that fit both your schedule and your interests.

For more information about getting involved in your children's education, click on the links below:

[School Family - Involved Parent](#)

[DOE - Parental Involvement](#)

[DOE - Sparkplugs - Parental Involvement Exemplary Practices](#)



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