



## Resource 2

# Twelve Things Parents Should Know and Expect from Schools

In order for parents to become strong advocates for their children and equal partners in the decision making process they need to know how they can help. According to KSA-Plus Communications (September 2004), there are twelve things parents should know about and expect from their schools.

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| <p>1. Your involvement matters a lot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child is more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher level programs, be promoted and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills and graduate and go to college.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>2. You can be involved in many ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By establishing a learning environment at home for the whole family.</li> <li>By volunteering at school and taking part in school activities that promote education.</li> <li>By being an advocate for your child and others by urging state and local leaders to establish stronger programs and higher achievement standards.</li> <li>By being a decision-maker through taking part in decisions about programs, staffing and policies.</li> </ul> |
| <p>3. The children need you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that American students are not doing as well in school as they should.</li> <li>Less than one-third are doing well in reading, writing, math, science and other critical subjects.</li> <li>Skills needed for success in the 21st century demand that we hold higher expectations for our students.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>4. The schools need you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the major challenges facing schools today is the lack of parent involvement.</li> <li>Parent involvement is needed in a variety of areas.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>5. You should be told clearly what the learning standards are in each grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and students need to know, at the start of the school year, what is being taught in all subjects.</li> <li>Parents need to know how learning will be assessed so they can understand how to help their children.</li> <li>Parents should have access to New Mexico Content Standards just as teachers and administrators do.</li> </ul>   |

<p>6. You should be told about the school’s safety standards and discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students need to feel safe in order to learn.</li> <li>• Parents should know what the school’s safety and discipline standards are, how problems are handled, and what the school is doing to ensure safety standards are upheld.</li> </ul>
<p>7. You should be informed on a regular basis how your child and your child’s school are doing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School districts are required to publish parent-friendly report cards every year that show both how students are performing, as well as how the school is performing as a whole.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Middle and high school parents should be told what steps should be taken for your child to apply for college.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle school is not too early to begin thinking about what kind of courses your child should be taking if he or she wants to go to college.</li> </ul>
<p>9. You should know your options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> has many requirements that schools must meet in order to be in compliance. Ask for this information and ask questions about it.</li> </ul>
<p>10. You should be able to get answers to your important questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do I know my child is safe?</li> <li>• What is my child expected to know and be able to do in reading, writing, math and other subjects?</li> <li>• How is learning measured?</li> <li>• What will the school do to help if my child is behind?</li> <li>• What can I do to help?</li> </ul>
<p>11. You should be treated with respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators are hired to work for you and your children.</li> <li>• You have the right to be treated as equal an partner in your child’s education.</li> </ul>
<p>12. You’re more likely to get what you want for your child if you work with other parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, “Let’s have a meeting”.</li> <li>• If ten parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, “We’d better listen”.</li> <li>• If twenty-five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, “Our dear friends...”.</li> <li>• If fifty parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, “This is a powerful organization”.</li> </ul>

Source: KSA Plus Communications, September 2004  
<http://www.parents.ksaplus.com/>