



Parent Line

September 2009

How do parents make a difference? Leading researchers have found that student characteristics—home environment, background knowledge, and motivation—account for 80% of the variance in student achievement. So what can a parent do to help their child succeed?

Home Environment: Try to keep a routine that supports learning. Does your child have books and materials? Does your older child or teenager have a



quiet place to do homework? With my children, I let them stay up past their bed time as long as they were reading books in bed. They are now very good readers! What do you do to help your child learn?

Background Knowledge: Model curiosity and learning by showing your child or youth that you don't know the answer to everything—show them how you

learn more by searching out answers! Share cooking, gardening, balancing bank accounts, filling up the gas tank and calculating how many miles per gallon your car is getting, everything. Make each moment a teachable moment! For more information, go to www.bethere.org.

Motivation: How do you react when you fail or succeed or when your child fails or succeeds? Where you place credit can impact motivation. Praise your child for successes and celebrate when you have a chance to learn through failure. Share stories about how you learned more sometimes by failing, solving the problem, and then eventually getting to the right solution.



State Accountability Systems

How is your school doing?

Each year, schools set goals for their students and report their results to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). NDE provides a yearly "State of the Schools Report" on their website, which can be found at:

<http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/Main/Home.aspx>

Schools that do not achieve their student performance goals for two years in a row provide information to parents about extra learning opportunities for students that would benefit from extra help (supplemental education services) or school choice, where this fits. For more information, talk with your building principal, go to www.NebraskaPIRC.org, or go to the US Dept. of Education website for frequently asked questions on school choice and supplemental education services,

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/schools/choice/choice.html>.

Great Resources for Parents

100 Ways to Help Your Child & School Succeed (National PTA)

http://www.pta.org/100Ways_brochure-en.pdf (English) or http://www.pta.org/100ways_brochure-sp.pdf (Spanish)

More Tips for Parents

On the Nebraska PIRC website,

www.NebraskaPIRC.org, there are sections for parents of very young children, preschoolers, younger

elementary students, upper elementary students, and middle/high school students. For parents of children with disabilities, go to www.PTI-Nebraska.org. For help with college planning, go to www.EducationQuest.org.



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