



HELPING PARENTS LEARN
WITH
THEIR CHILDREN



ASSOCIATION OF YUKON SCHOOL
COUNCILS, BOARDS & COMMITTEES

www.ayscbc.org

★ ★ PARENTS' ROLE IS KEY ★ ★

PARENTS.....

1. Keep your expectations for your children high and your love for them even higher.
2. Do your very best to model the skills, attitudes and character you want to see in your children.
3. Help your children to speak about *their* dreams (not *your* dreams for them) and encourage them to follow their hearts.
4. Make sure their teachers know your children's dreams.
5. Help them with the question, "Who (anywhere in the world) needs what you love to do?"
6. Help connect them with anyone in the community who can help them explore their dreams and identify stepping stone career opportunities.

The best reason for being meaningfully involved with your child's school and learning is that it shows them that you place value on education.



QUICK TIPS FOR PARENTS...

- ☑ Make sure your child gets an adequate amount of rest
- ☑ Provide healthy meals and snacks
- ☑ Read with your child, share stories together every day
- ☑ Speak to your child in your First Nations language
- ☑ Always ask and check for notes and homework from school
- ☑ Help your child organize their work, putting work in binders, etc.
- ☑ Support them in doing their homework by:
 - providing a quiet , well lit space to complete homework with no distractions like TV
 - checking that your child understands the homework and completes it
 - signing homework books or agendas when needed
 - becoming familiar with your specific school's support systems, their homework webpage, free tutoring, learning assistance possibilities
- ☑ Ensure your child attends school regularly and on time
- ☑ Get to know your child's teachers and the principal and talk to them often
- ☑ Attend all parent/teacher interviews
- ☑ Ensure that your child's teacher has important information about changes in your child's life (eg. health issues, illness, death of family member, pets, divorce, separations, etc)
- ☑ If your child needs extra help, make sure this is brought to the teacher's attention
- ☑ Spend time at the school when possible, especially helping with activities and events
- ☑ Enjoy what the school has to offer to the community (family fun, adult learning, library, performances and more)

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME?

What you do at home can have an important influence on your child's interest and achievement in school. Here are some suggestions of ways that parents can support their children's learning:

★ ***Have a regular daily family routine.*** Have children empty backpacks to find school notes and homework. Help them organize their school work. Provide time and a quiet place for study and homework with no distractions like TV. Have children and parents share responsibility for household chores. Be consistent about times to get up and times to go to bed. Have dinner together regularly. These all help to set a secure, dependable home environment that is so important for children.

★ ***Monitor out of school activities.*** Set limits on TV (amount of time and types of programs), electronic games and computer use. Make sure children have supervised care and ensure they are taking part in positive after-school activities as this is crucial to your children's safety and well-being. Encourage outdoor play.

★ ***Model the value of learning and hard work.*** As a parent, you can be an excellent role model by listening to and talking with your children regularly, by reading at home, by going to the library and by demonstrating that working hard and taking responsibility are important.

★ ***Have high and realistic expectations.*** Children benefit when parents and teachers set goals that are right for their age, their level of maturity, and can make use of each child's special skills, interests and talents. By sharing your children's successes with family and friends, you can also boost their self-confidence.

★ ***Encourage your children's development in school.*** As a parent, you can inspire and support your children by showing interest in their progress in school, helping them with homework, talking about the importance of having a good education, talking about possible career paths, and staying in touch with your children's teachers and school staff.

★ ***Read and write regularly.*** Children are more successful with learning to read and write when they see their parents reading and writing regularly. You can also read with your children, listen to your children read, talk about what is being read, tell stories and write letters together.

★ ***Use community resources for family needs.*** Have your children participate in community programs, such as sports, art, First Nations General Assemblies, etc. Introduce them to others who are good role models. Use your community services and resources when needed as this can help children and their families to be strong, healthy and involved in lifelong learning.

HINT-----

Sometimes when we ask our children: *“How was school today?”* we often get a quick *“Okay”* answer which doesn’t tell us much. Here are a few different ways to find out how your child is doing and feeling about school. Try asking something like:

“Can you tell me about something you did at school today?”

“What was the best thing that happened at school today?”

“What was the toughest thing that happened at school today?”

“What was the math test like?”

“How did your presentation go?”



MEETING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

From time to time there will be meetings called by teachers, parents, principals or other school support staff. Meetings may be held for a variety of reasons.

They can provide a chance to:

- talk about your child's progress in school;
- plan and review your child's educational plan;
- prepare for a transition to a new class, grade or school;
- resolve an issue or concern about your child.

Sometimes meetings might make you feel anxious, especially when it is about your child. Remember that you have a special understanding of your child, and it is important that teachers and support staff learn from you, how to best work with your child. It is also important for you to hear the perspective of the teacher so that together you can plan to have the best learning opportunities for your child.

You can ask questions and bring forward any concerns you have or your child has. **Keep in mind that the outcome of such meetings can be very positive and helpful to your child's learning. The focus should always be on what is best for your child.**

Consider inviting a person along who can support you, be another listener and perhaps take notes if you don't want to do so, especially if you are concerned about serious issues that could be difficult to discuss. You can ask if staff will meet with you outside of the school, at the First Nation office, your home or some other place where you might be more comfortable.

Before the meeting.....

~ Make sure you understand the purpose of the meeting. If you ask for the meeting, tell others you will be meeting with, why you want to speak with them. If the meeting has been organized by someone else, ask for an agenda and ask if any decisions are to be made. If so, ask what decisions these will be about.

~ Think about what questions you might have and consider writing these down to take with you. This may help you to stay focussed and can be a good reminder.

~ Find out who will be attending the meeting and what role they will play.

~ When possible and desired, have both parents attend the meeting. This may mean the meeting time will have to be adjusted to be workable for all involved.

At the meeting.....

~ If you do not understand some of the information presented by school staff or others in the meeting, ask them to go over it again. Ask questions to make sure you understand what is being said. Ask them to speak simply and to not use language and expressions that are difficult to follow.

~ Be patient but also assertive and clear about what your child needs, and also about what you as a parent need. Always aim to find good solutions to challenges. Focus on what you **do** want, rather than on what you don't want. Be open to learning.

~ Review any decisions that were made during the meeting before you leave. Do not feel you need to agree with anything you are not clear or sure about. Take extra time if you need it. Agree to meet again if needed. Do not feel rushed.

~ Ask for minutes of the meeting if someone is taking them. It is also a good practice to take your own notes too.

~ Make sure you understand what will happen next. Make sure you know who is responsible for any actions to be taken. Set another time to review and monitor progress.

~ Make sure that everyone agrees to respect confidentiality.

After the meeting....

~ Think about whether you are satisfied with the information you were given at the meeting and about any decisions made.

~ Think about how you are feeling about the meeting. If you are not feeling okay about it, try to talk to a support person about your feelings. Remember to respect the agreement about treating confidential information properly.

~ Go over the notes you have. If you do not understand something, contact someone who was at the meeting and ask them to explain it again for you.

~ Make sure you are clear about what happens next. If you are unsure about this, call and ask for the information again.

~ It may be advisable for you to write a letter to those who were at the meeting to outline your understanding of any decisions that were made, to state whether you agree with them or not and what your understanding is of what will happen next. Keep a copy of the letter.

It is important that you ask as many questions as you need to through the whole meeting process, from planning to completion. Make sure you have the information you need to feel informed.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

It is important to have good communication with your child's teachers and the school principal. Through being in contact with each other, some concerns or worries can be dealt with and possible difficulties addressed before they become problems. Ideally, school staff and parents should get to know each other early in the school year.

If a concern does arise, it is best to begin by trying to deal with it at the school level first.

Here are a few general suggestions if a concern does come up:

- Listen carefully to your child. Try to understand all points of view. Why do you think the people involved behaved the way they did? What were their reasons? Try to set aside any strong feelings at this time and think the situation through.
- Think about whether your child can handle the situation. Decide if your support is needed. Do not step in unless you believe it is necessary. Problem solving is an important skill for your child to learn.
- Think carefully about any concerns you have. Keep an open mind about the possible reasons for the responses of others who are involved. Hearing from the others may clarify a situation.

If you think you should act upon a concern, it is advisable to speak with the member of staff who is most closely involved with your child, their teacher first. Refer to the suggestions above in the section on "Meeting with School Staff", they can be helpful in this process. Remember to keep note of the phone calls you make and meetings that take place and make copies of letters you send.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution with the teacher, let that person know how you feel. At this point, the next step is to ask to meet with the principal. If the concern is still not resolved, you may need to meet with the school's superintendent. You will need to contact him/her through the Yukon Department of Education.

Don't forget to consider bringing a support person with you to any or all of these meetings, if you feel this will help you to understand and be understood. A School Council member, CELC, or First Nation Education Director can fulfill this role if you want them to. Most importantly, find someone you are comfortable with.

Education Appeal Tribunal

If you have a major concern that is not adequately dealt with through the process described above, the matter can be brought forward to the Education Appeal Tribunal. This body provides an appeal process for decisions and non-decisions that significantly affect the education, health or safety of a student within the education system. Further information is available through your School Council and the school's Superintendent.

KNOWING HOW YOUR CHILD IS DOING IN SCHOOL

Teachers use a variety of methods to determine how well each student is learning. “Assessment” is the term often used for the gathering of information from assignments, daily classroom work, presentations, projects, observation and tests.

In addition to regular classroom tests, occasionally there are other tests that Yukon students write such as the Yukon Achievement Tests (YATs). The results are used to not only see how well individual students are learning, but also to determine where teaching methods or programs may need to be changed. Currently grades 3, 6 and 9 write YATs every year. In the secondary grades, there are B.C. Provincial exams that students write as part of the course requirements and Graduation program.

At certain times in the school year, there will be reporting periods—this is when report cards are sent out with notes about your children’s progress and any grades they have achieved in their courses. Parents and teachers should talk on an informal basis during the year as well, especially if there is a concern or significant change in the student’s progress.

Parent and teacher interviews and ‘three way conferences’ (student, parent, teacher all meeting together) are usually scheduled during report card times. This is a common practice in Yukon schools and it provides an opportunity to learn about a student’s progress, their strengths and any areas for improvement. It allows parents and students to ask questions and receive valuable information. It’s important for you to attend parent/teacher interviews and ‘three way conferences’ even if your child is doing well.

It is important to know that you should not wait for a reporting period to discuss concerns you or your student may have. The earlier a situation can be addressed, the better the chances of helping your child to be a successful learner.



SOME GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK TEACHERS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

1. Is my child meeting expectations for his/her grade level?
2. Does my child complete assignments well and on time?
3. Does my child attend classes regularly?
4. What are my child's strengths and challenges in specific subject areas?
5. Is my child involved in any other programming besides regular classroom activities?
6. Is my child getting along well with other students in the class and school?
7. Are there extra-curricular programs or services available to my child?
8. Is there information I can provide as a parent that will help my child's learning?
9. How can I support my child's learning at home?

ABBREVIATIONS

There are many abbreviations used in education, shortened forms of words, terms, and job titles-- some of them are listed below to assist you in understanding what they stand for:

ADM-Assistant Deputy Minister

ALT-Aboriginal Language Teacher

ATIPP-Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (Act)

AYSA-Association of Yukon School Administrators

AYSCBC-Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees

BCPE - B.C. Provincial Exams

CDC-Child Development Centre

CEAY-Catholic Education Association of Yukon

CELC-Community Education Liaison Coordinator

DM-Deputy Minister

EA-Educational Assistant

EDI-Early Development Indicators

ESD-English as a second dialect

ELL – English Language Learner

ESL-English as a Second Language

ESW-Education Support Worker

FFL-French First Language

FNPP-First Nations Programs and Partnerships

FSA-Foundational Skills Assessment

FSL-French Second Language

FTE-Full-Time Equivalent (staffing term)

IEP-Individualized Education Plan

ILC-Individual Learning Centre/Independent Learning Centre

IRP-Integrated Resource Package (curriculum/teaching materials)

IT-Information Technology

K-Kindergarten

K4-Early entry Kindergarten programming for 4 and 5 year olds

LA-Learning Assistant

LPI-Language Proficiency Index
PIT-Program Implementation Teacher
PSB-Public Schools Branch
PD-Professional Development
PT-Physical Therapist
OT-Occupational Therapist
RR-Reading Recovery
RT-Remedial Tutor
SBT-School Based Team
SFA-Student Financial Assistance
SGP-School Growth Plan
SLP-Speech and Language Pathologist
SRP-Shared Resource Program
STEP-Student Training and Employment Program
TAL-Technology Assisted Learning
YAT-Yukon Achievement Test
YFNEAC-Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee
YSIS-Yukon Student Information System
YTA-Yukon Teachers' Association

HOW TO CONTACT PEOPLE

YUKON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1000 Lewes Boulevard
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
Reception 667-5141 (Whitehorse) or toll free 1 800 661-0408 ext. 5141 www.education.gov.yk.ca

First Nations Programs and Partnerships

456-6752 <http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/firstnations/index.html>

Technology Assisted Learning (Distance Learning)

Coordinator 667-5871 http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/technology_assisted_learning.html

Curriculum <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/curriculum.html>

Primary Coordinator 667-5186
Intermediate Coordinator 667-8167
Secondary Coordinator 667-5679

Special Programs

667-8000 <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/specialprograms/index.html>

Student Transportation

667-5127 <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/schoolbus/index.html>

Home Schooling

667-5607 http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/home_education.html

Student Finance

667-5929 <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/sfa/index.html>

Apprenticeship Training

667-5298 <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/apprenticeship/training.html>

School Council Liaison

667-8226 http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/school_councils.html

Gadzoosdaa Residence

667-8067 or 667-5495 www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/gadzoosdaa

Yukon Reading Recovery Centre

456-6134 http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/reading_recovery.html

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SERVICES

667-5780 or 667-5406

ASSOCIATION OF YUKON SCHOOL COUNCILS, BOARDS & COMMITTEES (AYSCBC)

633-2692 www.ayscbc.org

BRINGING YOUTH TOWARDS EQUALITY (B.Y.T.E.)

667-7975 www.yukonyouth.com

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

456-8182 <http://www.cdcyukon.com/>

COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS (CYFN)

Education Department 393-9243 www.cyfn.ca

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME SOCIETY OF YUKON (F.A.S.S.Y.)

393-4948

FOOD FOR LEARNING SOCIETY

393-6902

HOME EDUCATORS SOCIETY

633-2420

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF YUKON

668-5167 www.nald.ca/day/

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES (YTG)

667-8864 <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/index.php>

YUKON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

668-6777 www.yta.yk.ca

YUKON COLLEGE

668-8800 Main switchboard (Whse) <http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/>
1 800 661-0504 Outside Whitehorse

**YUKON FRANCOPHONE SCHOOL BOARD/
COMMISSION SCHOLAIRE FRANCOPHONE DU YUKON**

667-8680 <http://www.csfy.ca/fr/>

YUKON CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

668-5884

YUKON LEARN

668-6280 www.yukonlearn.com

YUKON ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LIVING (Y.A.C.L.)

667-4606

Graduation Planning

<http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/psb/graduation.html>

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/grad2004.htm>

Some Scholarship and Grants and Bursaries Websites

www.yukonfoundation.com Yukon Foundation

www.studentawards.com Student Awards for bursaries and scholarships

www.scholarshipscanada.com Scholarships Canada bursaries and scholarships

www.schoolfinder.com Scholarships searchable by school name

www.ayn.ca Aboriginal youth Network

www.naaf.ca National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/edu/ense_e.html INAC Post-Secondary Student Support Program

Canada Student Loans Program

<http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/sfa/loans.html>



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