

# BACK TO SCHOOL TIME

by Brian Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Record-breaking temperatures have brought droughts to large areas of the States, so our kids have probably had to be inside more or otherwise suffer from heat stroke. That means parents have had to be very creative during this year's vacation time. Normally we associate 'cabin fever' with winter, but this year it may apply to summer as well. Swimming pools and air conditioning have never looked so inviting. Hot temperatures are renowned for people having 'shorter wicks' than normal, so I hope that sibling rivalry or parental meltdown hasn't been unbearable!

When school starts, what teachers would like is for parents to make a record-breaking attempt to forge positive relationships with them. Only then can your child be helped to the maximum. Currently, Finland has the most successful public education in the world. When asked why, the answer given was parental involvement. There's more to it than that, but this was seen as the key factor to having a better education system. Our educational achievement in the USA does not rank in the top 20 amongst the developed nations of the world, so we have a long way to go.

If your school is technically up with the play you should be given the teacher's email address so that you can keep in regular communication. Give the teacher your email address, too. Actual appearances or volunteering one or more days a semester would help your understanding of what environment your child is experiencing, the hard work put in by the teacher, the excitement children experience in learning and you will establish a better relationship with your child's educator. You should make it essential that you attend Report Card appointments and evening presentations offered by the school.

Attending events tells your child that you are interested in their learning and their personal development. Your absence grieves your child and they begin to believe that education can't be that important. Attending sporting events that involve your child at school or in the community says that you care. If you want positive relationships with your children right through to the day they leave home be integrally involved in their activities.

It is very clear to me that the further up the grades a child goes there is less parent involvement than in previous years. Why this is so, I don't know, but it is necessary for you to continue to be there, even if your child feels awkward about your presence as sometimes happens in early to middle adolescence.

Celebrate the beginning of school with some exciting event and psych your child up so that they feel really good about this year and ensure that they will start with a good attitude. Determine to be more attentive to your child's

education this year. Even if they say they have no homework make half an hour the minimum. Have them recognize sight words, recite multiplication tables, learn a short spelling list and read. There is never an occasion where there is absolutely no learning for them to do. Use siblings where possible to assist, but try to set aside that half hour where you can provide unhindered help, too.

If you have any concerns about your child's progress or their behavior, get on to it quickly. Always hear the teacher's information before jumping to conclusions. I have had many experiences where parents have 'waded in' on a teacher after hearing their child's story without seeking the truth, which means listening to two or more reports. With the new evaluation systems being implemented in many States teachers and principals are under more stress than ever. When we discipline our children well that means the school doesn't have to take over the role that is a parental expectation. When a teacher doesn't have to deal with children's negative behavior and attitudes more learning can occur in the classroom.

The Apostle Paul's message to young Timothy was, "Study to show yourself approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Let this verse be the aim you have for your children throughout this school year. Don't neglect your own education and try to establish a positive learning environment in your home. Happy fall semester.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.