

## Two Ways Parents Can Make A Difference. . . Daily

Your home may not be a classroom, but it is still a powerful learning place. One of the most important things you can do as a parent or guardian is to express (in words and actions) confidence in your child's ability to succeed everyday in school and in life. Positive messages have a way of becoming realized

### **Encouraging children costs nothing and yet reaps big rewards.**

Remember to:

- Concentrate on the positive; avoid using discouraging words or actions.
- Recognize your child's efforts, not just his or her accomplishments.
- Build self-esteem and feelings of adequacy by using positive phrases such as—  
“I can tell you worked very hard on that.”  
“You're getting much better at that.”  
“I appreciate what you did.”  
“You really handled that situation well.”
- Have faith in your child. Don't be afraid to give your child increasing responsibility and independence.
- Discourage competition (in all forms) between brothers and sisters.
- Respect your child by treating him or her with the dignity you would a friend.

**Another important way you can make a daily difference in the life of your children is by spending some quality time with them.** Busy parents—especially those who are working—have a limited amount of time to spend with their children. Spending time with your child, no matter what the age, is extremely important, but research suggests it is the *quality* of the time spent, not the *quantity* of time that is important. Communicating with your child encourages him or her to express ideas, improve vocabulary and develop thinking skills—all of which are important for success in school and in life

**Quality time** can occur at any time or any place. The quality of the time you already spend together can be enhanced by talking with and listening to your child. Driving in the car or riding the bus, strolling through the neighborhood or going for an ice cream after dinner are all good opportunities for talking together. And don't forget that cleaning the kitchen, doing the laundry, and washing the dishes provide opportunities for communicating with each other and staying connected. Children of all ages enjoy having your full attention at bedtime to read or talk together. Reading together offers many ways of conversing about really important issues that may never be discussed otherwise.

After all, being an effective parent is not about *saving* time—it is about *investing* time. Our children need daily encouragement and quality time with us in order for them to develop into people of quality.