

Steps to a smart start

With a little planning, you can make going back-to- school simple and stress-free.

As the lazy days of summer slip away, it will soon be time to put away the beach chairs and corner lemonade stands and prepare for going back-to-school. Here are some tips to make the transition easier.

Adjust to the new routine

Ease into the school-year schedule. Getting back into the school routine can be a challenge for everyone in the family. To make the adjustment easier, start early.

GreatSchools tips:

- Start a family calendar in a common area where each family member can write down his or her activities.
- A few weeks before school starts, move bedtime back to an earlier time.
- Put a positive spin on going back-to-school. Talk about the fun things your child will learn, the old friends he'll see and the new friends he'll/she'll make.
- If your child is anxious about starting the next grade, reassure him/her that other children have these feelings too.
- Don't make plans for big trips right before the start of school.
- Establish school-day schedules for homework, TV, baths and bedtime.
- Arrange play dates with friends from school to re-establish connections that may have been dropped for the summer, or to create new ones.

Source: GreatSchool.net

Fresno County Office of Education
Parent Services Center (PSC)



1684 W. Shaw Ave., Suite #101
Fresno, California 93711

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Highlights of the New School Year

On August 17, 2009, Kirk Elementary School kicked off the new academic school year with First Day of School Holiday Celebration. Parents and students rushed into the school cafeteria to meet teachers and to listen to the school principal's message. Teachers and school staff were introduced as well as expectations laid out for the academic year.



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What is "First Day of School Holiday Celebration?"

Schools have creative ways to start their new school year. Kirk Elementary School of Fresno Unified School District took an interesting approach to kick off their new school year on August 17, 2009. It is a positive way for schools to involve parents and the community in welcoming our students to a new school year. The First Day of School Holiday Celebration is a powerful way to:

- Get everyone started off on the right foot for the new school year
- Give an opportunity for community members to support schools and families
- Offer opportunities for schools to enlist families as partners with the school

Kirk Elementary began this event at 7:30 am, with continental breakfast for parents and guests followed by a short rally in the school cafeteria. Finally, Kirk teachers escorted their students to the classroom to begin instruction. It was a great way to start the school year!

Useful Tips for Parents Involvement

Ten easy ways to help your child's school

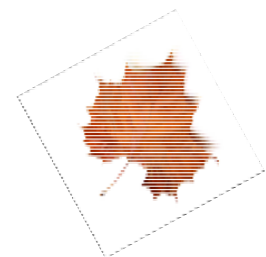
Volunteering your time or donating equipment can make a big difference at your school. Find out what you can offer.

Have you ever thought about all the people and processes that work together to make a school a healthy, stable environment for learning? Teachers and administrators work tirelessly to provide students with a strong education, sense of discipline, and respect for knowledge. But schools function best when they belong to communities of interested, involved individuals and families.

You can bring a lot to a school with of your energy, time, ideas, or donations. Here are some ways to get started using your skills and resources to help your local school.

1. **Join the club.** The PTA, home and school club, or school site council are key organizations. Being a part of any of these groups will also help to connect you with other parents and community members. Call the school secretary for contact information.
2. **Attend school board meetings.** You will have the opportunity to provide your input as well as get an inside view on how the school board makes decisions that affect your community's schools.
3. **Give a boost to a school club.** In the era of "no extras" in education, your school's enrichment programs can probably use a little help. If your child is involved with any clubs or activities at school, call the person in charge of the group and see if you can help with transportation, supplies, or planning.
4. **Get technical.** If you have strong computer skills, such as web site creation or network administration, see if your school needs help setting up a computer system or maintaining or upgrading the equipment they already have.
5. **Share your time and talents.** Teachers often need parent volunteers to help with small-group activities, reading to children, or correcting papers. Are you a fabulous chef or a craft whiz? Volunteer to give students a classroom demonstration of how to make an exotic dish or a creative holiday gift.
6. **Organize a workplace tour.** Do you work for a company that would be an interesting place for a field trip? Suggest a class visit to your office.
7. **Start a cleanup crew.** Are crushed soda cans and scrap paper the primary decor on campus? Why not designate one Saturday in the spring "School Cleanup Day"? Include parents, students, teachers, and any community members who want to help. Participants will feel a sense of ownership and will be less likely to ignore litter in the future.
8. **Nurture your green thumb.** Have you noticed that the school grounds could use some work? Talk to the principal or PTA about gathering a group of parents to plant trees or flowers in a few spots around the school.
9. **Be in the driver's seat.** Teachers often need parents to drive or chaperone on school field trips.
10. **Volunteer at the school library.** Most schools, short on funds to hire librarians, rely on parent help to keep the library open for students. Offer to check out or shelve books, assist students, or donate money to buy books for the library.

Source: GreatSchool.net



Parent Involvement

Parent-Teacher Conference: Making the Most of Your Parent-Teacher Conference

Parents can help their child succeed in school. When you show strong interest in your child's education, he or she is likely to have a positive attitude toward learning, feel proud of achievement, and enjoy school more. Attending a parent-teacher conference is a great way to show your child you care.

The first parent-teacher conference of the school year provides a great opportunity for you and your child's teacher to share insights and information about him or her. At this meeting, you can develop a relationship with the teacher and present yourself as a team partner in your child's education. Since most teachers schedule 30 minutes or less for each conference, planning ahead can help you maximize the experience.

Conference time will be limited, so be well-prepared. The following are some tips:

1. **Review your child's schoolwork** and progress report. Look for special talents, as well as areas of difficulty.
2. **Talk to your child ahead of time** about what your child would like you to discuss with the teacher.
3. **Note anything that may affect your child's behavior**, a change in routine, a divorce, the death of a close relative or pet, etc.
4. **Make a list of questions or concerns** you want to bring up. Don't rely on memory.
5. **Write to the teacher** a week or two before the conference.
6. **Arrange for both parents to attend, if possible.** You'll want to give the teacher your full attention. Set up another time if you can't meet with the teacher on the day scheduled.

The more you build partnership with your child's teacher, the more you can help your child at home.

Ongoing & Upcoming Events in Fresno County Schools

SAVE THE DATE!

28th Annual Regional Migrant Parent Conference

"Parent Participation, Student Success"

When: Saturday, September 26, 2009

Time: 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Place: Radisson Hotel & Conference Center
2233 Ventura Street; Fresno, CA 93721

For more information, please contact:

Norma Leal: nleal@fcoe.org or (559)497-3835 or

Nancy Santos: nsantos@fcoe.org or (559)497-3864

SCHEDULED TRAININGS/WORKSHOPS FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER, 2009

CLOVIS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clovis Elementary
10/22/09....California School Standards/Report Card

FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Aynsworth Elementary
09/09/09....Parent-Teacher-Conference
09/16/09....Family Literacy (Reading)
Lane Elementary
09/04/09....Parent-Teacher Conference
09/11/09.... Family Literacy (Reading)
Lowell Elementary
09/08/09....Family Literacy (Reading)
Turner Elementary
09/25/09....Parent-Teacher Conference/Report Card
09/29/09....Cultural Awareness

SELMA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Eric White Elementary
09/08/09....Parent-Teacher Conferences
10/06/09....API/AYP

WEST FRESNO SCHOOL DISTRICT

West Fresno Elementary
09/16/09....Family Literacy
10/10/09....PASSPort to Success