



Helping Hands Christian Learning Center

"Let Us Make a Difference in Your Child's Life"

The Importance of Community for Young Children

More and more research is being conducted every day that gives us a clearer picture of how young children learn. We now know more about what children need in order to grow emotionally and intellectually. For example, research shows that active, physical, and cognitively stimulating play is necessary for optimal brain growth and development.

Research has also proven what common sense tells us: children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships. These relationships must provide love and nurturance, security, responsive interaction, and encouragement for exploration. A child's first experience with this kind of relationship is at home with a loving family.

When you entrust your child to the care of early childhood professionals, you not only want your child to be safe and to learn, you also want your child to be accepted and valued, to feel she belongs in the school community. This is important, of course, but what families often do not understand is how important it is for you to be a part of the school community. Children feel more confident and comfortable at school when they feel their families are a part of the community as well.

What are some ways that your family can be members of your school community? First and foremost, work with the school director and your child's teacher to build and maintain a trusting, open, and honest relationship. Through working together, keeping the lines of communication open, and listening to each other's perspectives and expertise, you can ensure that your child has the best educational experience possible.

There are lots of other ways to be a part of the community and be involved in the life of the school. **Try some of these ideas:**



- Chaperone a class field trip
- Share a special interest or talent, like singing or gardening with your child's class (or the whole school community)
- Teach children a skill you have, like sewing or playing an instrument
- Help out in your child's class for an hour or two whenever you can. You could read with children, play games with them, or help them with special projects
- Donate objects from home to your child's classroom
- Offer to share your occupation and the "tools of the trade" with your child's class. Even though you may think that your job is not very interesting, children will be fascinated. Whether you are a secretary, a doctor, a postal worker, or a mechanic, children will be very interested in what you do and in the tools and equipment you use to do your job.

Remember that however you can be involved, whatever you can do, your child will benefit if you are an active member of the school community.