

# Why Parents Should Be Engaged in Healthy Schools Elementary Schools

Families are important to the success and well-being of students; parents hold a key role in the promotion of a school culture that supports encouraging relationships, positive discipline practices, and caring adults.

*Parent engagement in healthy schools* can be defined as parents along with school staff and public health working in partnership to enhance education, child development, the physical well-being and nutritional health of children at school and at home.

## **Parent Engagement in healthy schools takes many types of forms:**

**Volunteering**- This involves volunteering at the school and in the community, activities could include supporting the breakfast club, assisting with extracurricular activities such as; school teams or clubs. One important way parents can contribute to healthy schools is by serving as a member of the school council or the Home and School Association.

**Helping at Home** - This involves reading together, supporting the completion of homework, packing healthy lunches, promoting family activities that support learning such as; visiting the local library or museum.

**Communication** – This involves having regular conversations with school staff, attending and supporting school events.

**Parent Leadership** – This involves parents as leaders promoting a healthy culture, supporting health policies and practices, safe schools, and serving on school committees such as:

- Healthy Schools Committee
- Active and Safe Routes to Schools- Walking School Bus
- Safe Schools - Bullying Prevention
- School Council, Home and School Association

**Parenting Supports** – This includes attending and participating at school events that promote positive parenting skills and being physically active. Often the school council or the Home and School Association will host parent information workshops, interactive sessions or bring guest speakers for parents.

## **Local Links for Parents**

Please contact the school health nurse for additional information and resources.

## **Web Resources for Parents**

Healthy Schools – Ontario Ministry of Education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/howhelp/healthySchools.html>

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition

<http://ontariohealthyschools.com/>

Healthy Schools Canada

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/child-enfant/school-ecole/index-eng.php>

## **Web Links for Parents**

Healthy Schools

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/qandaHSRP.html>

OPHEA – Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities

<http://www.ophea.net/schoolandhome>

Source:

Epstein, Joyce and others, (2008). School, Family and Community Partnerships; Your Handbook for Action. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.

Date Created: December 21, 2012 CYPT