

# INSIGHTS

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## Engage in your child's education through volunteering

By fully engaging in the life of your child's school you'll enjoy a richer school experience and help your kids to succeed as well.

We all want our kids to be active participants in all that their school has to offer.

Modern schools offer kids a great deal in terms of electives, clubs and other participatory activities. Some kids stand on the edges and don't quite join in, while others immerse themselves in all that a school offers. It's the latter group that tends to get the most out of their educational experience.

Similarly, there are many opportunities available for parents to engage in the life of their children's school ranging from assisting in the classroom through to helping out at weekend working bees.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that parent volunteering in school activities is on the decline. Many schools can't even muster enough parents to person their canteen on a daily basis, forcing them to employ commercial interests to run the tuck shop. Busy lifestyles, attitudinal change towards volunteering and lack of connectedness have been blamed for this decline.

There are some compelling reasons why you should maximise your engagement in your child's school-life.



**1. You help your child succeed at school.** The positive correlation between a parent's school engagement and a child's success at school has been repeatedly found in studies across the globe. Positive participation demonstrates to children that you value learning as well as their school. Kids of all ages copy their parents' views so your positive involvement in both school and learning is catching. In short, if you want to maximise your child's chances of success then engage as fully as possible in the life of your child's school.

**2. You learn what happens at school.** Let's face it, some kids are conversational clams so it's hard finding out about their day at school. By helping out in the class, going on an excursion or helping to maintain their school gardens you find out for yourself how modern schools operate.

**3. Your school will value your contribution.** The recent flurry of capital expenditure in school buildings may suggest that there is plenty of money around for education. Nothing could be further from the truth. Schools in all sectors run on tight budgets and rely on volunteer assistance inside and outside the classroom. In many cases, if volunteers don't do a job, it won't be done. It's that simple.






**4. You will feel more connected to your community.** Social researchers have noted that children's schools offer many people their first connection to their town or suburb. Mobility is a feature of Australian families with many parents moving vast distances from where they grew up and away from their extended family and peers. Whether you are an urban dweller, a regional city resident or live in a small country town, your child's school offers an entry into a wide social circle.

**5. Volunteering is good for your mental health and well-being.** Mental health professionals point to volunteering as an important way to maintain good mental health. Not only does volunteering prevent social isolation but it offers the chance to get a feeling of satisfaction from helping out that money just can't buy.

If you'd like to help out at your child's school but you aren't sure where to start then consult your child's teacher, year level co-ordinator or senior staff. They'll point you in the right direction.

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