

ROOM PARENTING TIPS

Source: Article entitled “Secrets of Successful Room Parents”
September 2005 issue of Family Fun Magazine

Room Parenting 101: Advice from veteran classroom parents

1. Meet with the teacher shortly after you start your role so you can find out what his/her expectations are.
2. Know the school rules you need to follow. (*NOTE:* Your PTA Room Parent Coordinator can assist you with this.)
3. E-mail or call the teacher every two weeks to see if a new need has arisen.
4. To avoid interrupting the teacher while she is working with the students, bring all the supplies you will need to set up for a party—tape, scissors, markers, etc.—with you into the classroom.

Best Icebreaker: Meet the Parents

Arrange a class get-together to start the year off right. E-mail may be convenient but a face-to-face meeting is more personalize.

Best Way to Stay In Touch: Share Photos

Build strong parent bonds by e-mailing pictures.

Recruiting Volunteers: How to get parents to help out willingly

1. When asking for help, be specific. Example: “Can you be at the Valentine’s party from 2:00 to 2:30?”
2. Hand out a detailed description of all volunteer jobs at the start of the year.
3. Offer a range of ways to pitch in, such as donating supplies or doing the prep for a craft project one evening.
4. Use a “week before” reminder system to make sure volunteers remember what they signed up for.
5. Send thank-you notes (either by e-mail or written) after someone has volunteered.

On-line idea for Room Parents

<http://familyfun.go.com/parties/holiday/feature/roomparent-ms/>

This is a special section website created by Family Fun magazine. It includes suggestions for group snacks and treats, party ideas for major holidays and seasons, creative and easy classroom decorations, and arts and crafts activities.

You can read the entire article on-line at

<http://familyfun.go.com/parties/holiday/feature/famf0905roomparentsecrets/>

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Source: Article entitled "Your Role as a Room Parent"
August/September 2006 issue of Our Children, the PTA National Magazine

Establish a friendly working relationship with the teacher by setting up a first meeting. Ask the teacher the following questions to better understand the his/her needs and to help you identify your role:

5. What is the preferred method of communication: e-mail, phone or written notes? If schedules must be changed, what's the procedure?
6. What are the specific tasks that the teacher wants you to do as the Room Parent? (i.e. making phone calls, scheduling volunteers, planning parties, etc.)
7. How should parent volunteers handle behavior concerns in the classroom?
8. Is there a specific time and/or day designated for parent volunteers to come to the classroom?
9. Are there any medical concerns, such as food allergies, among the students? This information will be helpful when planning the class parties.

Traits of the Best Room Parents (as reported by classroom teacher):

1. **ENTHUSIASM:** Showing your enthusiasm sends a message to the children and teacher that you really want to be there.
2. **FLEXIBILITY:** Classroom environments can change very quickly. Understand that the teacher may need to change schedules due to an unforeseen conflict.
3. **COMMITMENT:** Since teachers and children count on parent volunteers, it is important to follow through your commitment.
4. **SENSE OF HUMOR:** Be ready to laugh.
5. **PATIENCE:** When working with children, you will see a wide range of capabilities. Be patient, and report to the teacher any specific struggles or successes.

Parents who are involved in their children's education know that a great way to be supportive is to be active partners with their children's schools and classrooms. Being a room parent provides an opportunity to do this. The time you spend as a room parent will show your child that you value and support his or her education.