

Dr. Dorothy Rich's

10 Basics for PARENTS: Children's Learning

1. **Recognize that you have a significant influence in your child's education:** Educational research and common sense experience indicate that parents are their child's most important teachers. Families can and should trust their own abilities.

2. **Know that education starts back in infancy**, way before the "regular" school years. Take advantage of the early learning years through home-teaching activities that teach and are enjoyable at the same time.

3. **Provide success experiences at home** that help the children see themselves as people who can do, who can accomplish. Both home and school need to provide ways for children to demonstrate their abilities, from the garden to the kitchen to the classroom.

4. **Seek ways to let children, even very young children, know that they are important**, that it really matters that they are around. This builds confidence necessary for school success.

5. **Start compiling and trying ideas for activities to do with children at home.** Choose among them so that they are appropriate to the time, energies and abilities of that particular day, you and your child.

6. **Relax:** know that neither you nor the teacher need be perfect to educate your child well. Remember that no one day or year in school will kill your child's abilities and creativity. Kids are more resilient than we think.

7. **Expect that when your children enter "regular" school that the teacher will be welcoming**, will keep you informed, will ask for your advice, and will use your abilities.

8. **Try to be constructive**, yet as necessary, a critical part of the school family. Expect to ask questions, to talk up at meetings and conferences.

9. **Stop griping about the school across the back fence:** When you have information to share, a complaint or problem, even praise, take it to the school. Try to keep from getting butterflies in your stomach when you go through the school door – you are not the student anymore.

10. **Expect the school to have a guiding philosophy of education:** Expect this philosophy to be communicated to you; expect the school to share with you many ways in which you can supplement your child's education at home so that home and school can work together in educational partnership.