

Volunteering in Elementary School

What's in It for Me?

By Ann Ulmschneider

*“Volunteers work for free, but not for nothing.” – Barbara Johnson,
Volunteer Resource Advisor, Topeka Kansas Schools.*

What are the rewards of volunteering? What makes it worthwhile to take time out of busy schedules to help out at school?

Parents have reported the following benefits from their volunteer experiences:

∂ **Firsthand Knowledge About the School:**

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to meet teachers and observe what happens at school. You can then evaluate what your child says (and what other parents tell you) based on your own impressions.

∂ **A Sense of Belonging:**

Volunteering connects you to the place where your child spends many hours of each day.

∂ **Increased Confidence:**

You can feel more confident in advocating for your child when you feel a personal link to the school.

∂ **Social Opportunities:**

Volunteers meet other parents and make new friends. Sometimes it's difficult to get to know people in your neighborhood. Your child's friends may not live close by. Volunteering gives you a chance to meet parents who have children in the same grade!

∂ **Skill Development:**

Many parents gain experience in building databases, editing publications, fundraising and managing projects through volunteering. It can be both satisfying and financially lucrative to develop marketable skills!

∂ **A Sense of Achievement:**

Volunteering can produce tangible rewards, such as watching a child you tutor grasp a math concept or seeing the new computers purchased with grocery receipts. It can also produce intangible rewards, such as the satisfaction of setting a goal and meeting it.

∂ **Appreciation From Your Child:**

Children like to see visible signs that you care. They enjoy seeing you relate to school staff members. It helps them link home and school.

∂ **Reinforcing the Importance of School:**

By spending time of school activities, you are letting students know that school is important – you want them to work hard and achieve success!

∂ **Helping Students Perform Better Academically:**

Volunteers may start out wanting to help their own children, but soon discover that they are helping other people's children as well.

Source: FCPS Parenting Education Center Archive, Shared for Noncommercial use.