

El Dorado Hills Telegraph
June 2011

A Parent Perspective

This week I was talking with a parent of two children, ages two and four. Both she and her husband work full time outside of the home. Busy as they are, they have made it a normal, natural part of their routine to build in time to work in their children's preschool classrooms. Whether it is washing the tables, cutting out letters to put on the bulletin board, playing games, singing songs or telling stories, they have decided this is an important contribution they are able to make to their children's pre-school experience.

By elementary school, we often see the engagement dwindle. Parents begin to see their role more as coach for T-ball, and less as teachers. Although the schoolwork becomes increasingly challenging, it continues to be important for parents to stay connected with the school, continuing to build the very important partnership that is developing.

Our schools definitely see the value of keeping parents engaged. With class sizes rising, it's becoming more and more difficult to provide the one-on-one learning opportunity that is so important for so many of our students. Students need the practice of reading aloud or memorizing the multiplication tables. Who better to support the practice of learning than a parent at home or a parent volunteer in the classroom?

The current budget situation has definitely given us lemons. It isn't what we expected or what we wanted, but it is what we have for right now. How can we make the

best of what is? My suggestion is to continue to stay connected with your children while at home and make every possible effort to partner with their school, offering your time and talent in whatever way you feel most comfortable. Together, we absolutely can make the very best lemonade ever created!

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