



Arts education provides essential skills and knowledge that contribute to the overall education and well-being of all children. Research demonstrates that an arts-rich education positively impacts student attendance and behavior, improves academic performance, and is a key factor in keeping students on track to graduate.

You can play an important role in ensuring the arts are an integral part of your child's education. In fact, parents working together with teachers and school administrators not only help their own children, they empower the entire school community. Below are helpful tips to get you started building a high-quality arts education program at your child's school.

TIP 1 GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

Find out what arts programming and resources are offered in your child's school. Talk to your child and his or her teachers. Look on bulletin boards, in auditoriums, and on the walls for evidence of the arts. See if your district collects arts-related data that you can review. As you learn more, answer these key questions:

- ✓ Are there arts teachers on staff? How many and in which arts disciplines?
- ✓ Do all students at all grade levels receive arts instruction? If not, why?
- ✓ Are there arts studios, music rooms, or other dedicated arts spaces?
- ✓ Are there arts field trips and partnerships at each grade level?



TIP 2 KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT ARTS EDUCATION

In addition to understanding what goes on in your school, it's useful to know the regulations governing arts instruction as well as the benefits of arts education. You will strengthen your case by highlighting:

STUDIES FROM THE FIELD: Be familiar with the key research in support of arts education. Many of these studies are cited in this toolkit, and can be found at artsedtoolkit.org/research.

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES: How have the arts changed a child's life or a school's atmosphere? Find real-life examples from your child's school or those nearby.

STATE & LOCAL LAW: Become familiar with instructional requirements for arts education by visiting your state and local education department websites.

- ▶ **To build your case, create a one-page handout that highlights key facts and stories. Be prepared to discuss these with parents, teachers, school leaders, elected officials, and others.**

TIP 3 ENGAGE WITH OTHER PARENTS

Collaboration among parents, teachers, and school and community leaders can create a powerful constituency to advocate for the arts. Join the Parent Association or PTA. Try one or more of these ideas:

- ✓ Get an arts line inserted into the PTA/PA budget and/or ask them to support arts partnerships, field trips to museums and performances, or supplies and resources for the classroom.
- ✓ Form an arts committee with other parents to look for opportunities to build a strong arts program. A committed team with a focus on arts education can accomplish a lot.
- ✓ Encourage parent attendance at student performances or exhibitions by distributing notices in backpacks, setting up robo-call reminders, and emailing parents.
- ✓ Look for parents or teachers who can volunteer to help with scenery for the school play, design flyers, or talk to students about careers in the arts.