



Ideas for Tutoring Parents with Kids in the Amherst Schools

Here is a menu of school-related tasks that parents can explore with the help of a tutor. Go over the list and invite your student to identify any ideas that interest him/her.

About the internet links below: tutors should think ahead of time about whether it is best to show internet resources while the parent is sitting at a computer, or print the info out ahead of time and go over it with the parent on paper.

What would you like to do?

Learn about the school system:

- Arrange for a tour of the child's school, if schedules allow.
- See what's on the school's [website](#) and newsletter (if a current one is posted). See if there are any interesting announcements on the school's "news" page.
- Take a look at this year's Amherst Regional School [calendar](#), or at the specific school's events calendar. See if there are any family/parent events you would like to attend.
- Go over notices and forms that the school sends out. (You should receive these in the mail, or by email, and they are often posted on the school's website as well.)
- Download and read the student handbook
 - *These are long and detailed, but you may be interested in learning more about specific sections, such as the policies concerning attendance, getting to school late, grades, homework or exams.*
- Read the latest notices at the parent/guardian organization's web page (Each school has its own parents' organization; parents of high school students can subscribe for updates by email).
- Look at the breakfast and lunch [menu](#)s for the month. Find out whether your child qualifies for [free lunch](#).
- Learn the school's [policies](#) regarding physical exams, immunizations, and medications at school. Read the guidelines for whether to send a sick child to school or keep the child home.
- Look at the school [bus route](#)/schedule for your neighborhood.
- For parents of Middle and High School students:
 - Go on the school's website to look at the daily schedule, monthly calendar, exam schedules, and attendance policy.
 - Look over the latest issue of [Hurricane Highlights](#), a newsletter put out by the ARHS principal.

- Learn about the school's graduation requirements, how GPA is calculated, and see data on what ARHS students do after they graduate (on ARHS's [school profile page](#).)
- Go over child's class list and schedule. (Parents should have gotten this in the mail or, if they are new, from the registrar.)
- Learn how to use the Power School "[Parent Portal](#)" to check on a child's attendance, grades, test scores, and completion of homework assignments. *(Ask the son or daughter if he/she already has a user name and password to pass on. If not, download and complete the access report form, then the parent must take it to the school office and show a government-issued picture ID. The office will then give a user name and password to allow the parent access to the site.)*

Learn about your child's activities

- Go over any communications you've received (e.g. from child's teacher/counselor/nurse), test results, or latest report card.
- Talk about social networking and why parents need to stay informed about what their children are doing on-line. Determine whether a child maintains a Facebook page and what questions you might have about it.
- For elementary school children: discuss holiday customs and how they may play out in school (e.g. Halloween, Valentine's Day, April Fool's Day, birthdays)

Communicating with the school

- Learn how to write notes to explain an absence, late start, or need for early dismissal. Or practice for leaving a message on the school's absence notification line.
- Work together on filling out paperwork from the school (permission slips, surveys, applications, etc.)
- Work together to write a message, make a phone call to, or arrange a meeting with someone at the school.
- Practice for a meeting with someone in the school by doing a role-play activity.

For parents of older kids:

Understanding and managing the college application process

- Discuss the college application process in general (steps involved, timing, paying for school, etc.).

- Take a look at the ARHS [College and Career Planning Page](#) to learn about college advising services, college visits, college fairs, SAT/ACT testing, financial aid, college applications, and scholarships that ARHS students may be eligible for.
- Research (or arrange to visit) colleges that child is considering applying to.
- Learn about the FAFSA (financial aid) form and go over instructions on how to complete it.

Related materials in the ESL Center’s “Family Reading” section:

- **[From Home to School](#)**

A series of low-level ESL textbooks that integrate parenting and school-related topics. Audio CD’s and teachers’ guides are also available.

- **[Navigating the American School System](#)**

A teacher’s manual and student text designed to give immigrant parents a general overview of the American public school system (topics include: grade ranges, classroom set ups, daily schedules, school staff, etc.) Some of the information is specific to Colorado (where it was developed) but it is easily adapted to local contexts. Also available as a free download at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/ELCivics.htm>

- **[Raising Children in a New Country](#)**

This booklet offers plain language information (with illustrations) for immigrant parents on topics such as child safety, nutrition, school expectations, parental supervision, and discipline. Also available as a free download at:

<http://brycs.org/documents/upload/RaisingChildren-Handbook.pdf>

- **Parent Involvement in Education**

This booklet offers practice in two areas—filling out school forms, and parent-teacher conferences. The two units are available as free downloads at:

- <http://www.reftrans.org/storage/volunteer/volunteer-resources/eslteaching-links/PIE%20Filling%20Out%20School%20Forms.pdf> and
- <http://www.reftrans.org/storage/volunteer/volunteer-resources/eslteaching-links/PIE%20Parent-Teacher%20Meetings%202.pdf>

- **Navigating the Boston Public Schools**

A set of curriculum units with student worksheets designed to give immigrant parents a general overview of the Boston public school system (topics include: report cards, teacher conferences, and supporting children’s learning at home)

Some of the information is specific to Boston but the curriculum is easily adapted to local contexts. Each unit is available as a free download at:
<http://www.englishfornewbostonians.org/resourcesforteachers>