

Ways to Improve Education at the Primary Level

By Dr/ [Barbara Dunlap](#)

One of the most effective ways to improve primary education is to adapt it to meet children's needs. As much as possible, teachers, other school staff and parents should broaden their educational methods to reach kids' different personalities, temperaments, interests and learning styles. The days are long past---if they ever really existed---when one-size-fits-all learning worked for an entire classroom of [children](#). Adapting the schoolwork to the kids helps them stay engaged and excited about school.

Learning Styles

Educators need to be aware of different learning styles, which are often categorized as visual, auditory and kinesthetic/tactile. Every student has areas of relative strength and weakness, and they deserve to use their strong points to learn new concepts. Teachers should present materials in multiple ways so the children have more chances at success. For instance, with an addition problem, visual and tactile learners benefit from handling objects such as blocks, while auditory learners should hear the numbers aloud.

At home, parents can reinforce school learning by reviewing lessons and helping their children with homework. Again, it makes sense to present material the way the child learns best--if Jack loves to hear things aloud, work that way; if Jill likes to touch and hold things, try to include manipulative when possible.

Recruit Volunteers

Especially with large class sizes, schools face an uphill challenge to offer students the individual help they need. Pairing students with older children and/or inviting volunteers into the classroom are great ways to address that problem. Although it takes time to train the volunteers, the students---and therefore the teacher---benefit from more direct attention and guidance.

Teachers and volunteer coordinators can seek volunteers in many ways---for example, through churches, service organizations such as Rotary, and local high schools. (Before they can graduate, high school students often have to put in a certain number of community service hours.)

Volunteering is also a great way for parents to connect to their child's school---and to see how the child learns and interacts in the classroom. Also, primary-school kids usually love having mom or dad come visit.

Follow Kids' Interests

Children learn best when they're excited about a subject, so it's smart to design lessons around their interests. If a teacher is assigning a biography leave the choice of subject matter open to each student. A Civil War buff will delve more deeply into the subject and produce greater results if the report can be about Robert E. Lee rather than a pre-assigned topic----say, Florence Nightingale or George Washington.

Out in the World

Another way to engage children is to connect their education to the real world. Take more field trips if possible---for instance, visit a lava field instead of just talking about it in class. If a trip isn't possible, invite a geologist in for a visit. A professional's excitement about any field of study can be contagious to young students.