

# Service-Learning Tip Sheet

## Parents' Guide

### What is service-learning?

Service-learning is a teaching method that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their schools and communities through a process that is carefully integrated with established learning objectives. It emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving; takes on real issues such as hunger, homelessness, and diversity; and values people of all ages as citizens with talents to offer.

### What are the benefits of service-learning for my child?

Research shows that:

- Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge; for example, participation in service-learning was associated with better grades and higher scores on a state test of basic skills.
- Students who participate in service-learning are more engaged in their studies and more motivated to learn. Service-learning also is associated with increased student attendance.
- Service-learning has a positive effect on personal development, and is associated with reduced likelihood of youths engaging in “risky” behaviors.
- Service-learning provides an avenue for youths to become active, positive contributors to society.

(Billig, Shelley, “Research on K-12 School-Based Service-Learning: The Evidence Builds,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 2000.)



### As a parent, how can I initiate or support service-learning at my child's school?

- Ask your child's principal if service-learning is happening at your school.
- Discuss service-learning with influential bodies such as your school board, PTO, or site council, and ask for their support.
- Offer to assist with service-learning projects in your child's class, such as making logistical arrangements or making outreach phone calls to local community organizations.
- Gather service-learning resources to share with your school by contacting the National Youth Leadership Council, which can provide customized training, books, videos, and technical assistance.

*For more information on service-learning, visit NYLC at [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org), call (651) 631-3672, or write [nylcinfo@nylc.org](mailto:nylcinfo@nylc.org).*

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