Here's what I think …

By Ty Ankrom
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I've been in education my entire career and have raised three children with my wife, Dacia. And now that all of my grandchildren are in school, I am reliving what that means.

I listen to my "kids" speak of their children's experiences in eighth grade, third grade and kindergarten and remember Dacia and I having the same questions, fears, expectations and doubts more than 20 years ago.

The U.S. Department of Education has put together a list of tips, categorized by month, for parents to help their children succeed in school.

For example, a tip for September is to reach out to your child's teacher. That tip is then reinforced in October's list with a suggestion to connect with the teacher. "Many schools schedule parent-teacher conferences in October and November. Attending this meeting should be a priority for all parents and guardians."

Other tips tie into observances, such as connecting a November tip with the National PTA's Healthy Lifestyles Month, encouraging children to research African-American history in February, promoting reading as part of Read Across America Day in March and math for April's Math Awareness Month.

Did last year's polar vortex have you scrambling last year? A January tip recommends having a winter-weather plan ready, knowing who you can call on to help with child care in case of a snow day or sickness.

And should Pickaway County get hit with another hard winter, shake off the cabin fever in March by planting a garden. Get tips for doing so at schoolgardenwizard.org.

In May, observe National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Consider getting pedometers for children and their parents to count their steps for the month and have the children record it at home or make a chart for the classroom.

From September to June, there's no shortage of tips. Get the full list at www.ed.gov/parents/countdown-success and share with the parents of your students.

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