Room Parent Tips

It takes some work to achieve being an effective room parent but here are tips on how to be one:

* The first thing you should do is to get to know the teacher of your child’s class.  Show your respect for the teacher by always letting him/her take charge of the class.  Your job is to support the teacher and not be the teacher so be sure to listen to the teacher first before privately making polite suggestions.  You and your child's teacher should jive together perfectly for the sake of the children.  You should ask the teacher what you could do instead of giving yourself tasks that are not in the teacher’s curriculum or agenda.
* Being a room parent means you will always need to stay on top of what the teacher asks you.  As a volunteer room parent, you should willingly admit that you are not a superhero and you cannot do everything on your own.  You should get to know the other parents in the class.  When other parents offer their help, accept it graciously and keep a good friendly relationship with every parent of the class.  It is not a sign of failure if you ask another parent to co-parent the class with you, it is a sign that you know your limits.
* To be on top of things and be organized, ask the other parents for their contact information.  It will be easier for you to organize an activity or an event if you know where to reach them.  Remember never to abuse your power.  Remember when communicating with parents through email, always use blind copy (bcc) and keep information confidential. You should contact them only when necessary.  Do not use the phone numbers as a gossip grapevine or calling for no reason at all.  It is good to be friendly but some parents are working parents and they are extremely busy.
* It is best to be clear when you ask for help.  Be specific with your requests, but don't be demanding or inflexible either.  Always send a follow-up email that lists who has volunteered for what.  Send out an email every couple of days until everything has been covered.  When asking for money, be tactful and realize that not everyone may remember to or be able to donate money.  Most importantly, **THANK THE PARENTS**, they are busy moms and dads that have to take time out of their usual routines to buy these special items or donate their time and money!!  The following is a sample of an email to classroom parents:

Parents,

 Our Winter Party is coming up and we need parents to volunteer supplies and their time.  We will be having the children assemble and decorate gingerbread houses and serving cookies and hot cocoa.  Here is a list of the supplies we will need:

Graham crackers (each child needs to bring 1 box)

Hot glue (20 tubes)

Icing (each child needs to bring 1 filled sandwich size Ziploc bag)

Various decorative types of candies (each child needs to bring 2 bags)

Hot cocoa (enough to serve 40)

Sugar cookies (40)

Table decorations (confetti or table toppers)

Plastic tablecloths (4)

Large plates for the houses (20)

Small plates for the cookies (40)

Napkins (40)

Paper towels (2 rolls)

Plastic knives (20)

Small Styrofoam cups (40)

We will need at least one parent per table to help setup beforehand, manage the activity, and clean up afterwards.  We will need one parent present to take photos of the event and submit them to the yearbook team.  We will also need a couple of parents to volunteer to pre-assemble the gingerbread houses and bring them to school on the morning of the party.

Please reply to this email to let me know that you received it and indicate what you plan to bring and if you can help out with throwing the party, taking photos, or putting together houses.  We will need the supplies for the houses by no later than the Friday before the party.  Thanks in advance for your time and effort, this is sure to be a great time for the children, they look forward to it every year!!

Cheers,

Jane Doe

555-1212