

10. How can parents help?

Parents are an important resource to students who complete exceptional projects. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the heritage project in a number of ways: coach, cheerleader, resource person, spotter, volunteer, etc. Parents are not encouraged to be co-authors, creators or co-producers.

Students need parents as coaches to teach them how to do research, give them timely advice, demonstrate, practice and ask questions which cause the students to reflect on their work.

Students need parents as cheerleaders – to be there for them, support them during the frustrations and to be positive.

Students need parents to be a resource person, someone who knows the community, can answer questions, can transport them, run interference for them, and maybe even be interviewed by them about their life and times.

Students need parents to be spotters when there are safety issues in creating their project. Some projects may require the use of electricity, power tools, A-V equipment, glues and chemicals. Parents should be available to directly supervise students and monitor safety.

Students need parents to volunteer – to drive, to act as an assistant, to help find information, etc. Volunteers are also needed at the school and regional fairs as judges, supervisors and security.

Parents should not take a lead role in selecting the topic for a project, in organizing or planning the research, in finding sources or conducting the research, or in creating the finished product. They should only assist the student in what s/he wants to do and ask questions to encourage the student to think for themselves.