



# Caring Adult Network

## Parents As Learning Partners

Parents do so much! Recent [research](#) has identified a number of different critical roles that parents and other caring adults can play to support a child’s STEM learning. The Digital Youth Divas program has been designed to support girls using these practices.

What roles to you play in your child’s STEM learning? In this activity, mark the roles you play frequently with a sticker or a check. Any patterns? Remember, all of the roles are important, and no one plays all the roles all the time!

	Role & Description	Specific Examples
Teaching and Learning	<b>Teacher.</b> Parent teaches child a new STEM skill or concept. Parent possesses more knowledge about subject than does child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You show your child how to use the scanner.</li> <li>You show your child why one of their homework problems is incorrect.</li> </ul>
	<b>Learner.</b> Parent learns new STEM skills or content from child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child shows you a new way to do long division while going over homework.</li> <li>Your child introduces you to shortcuts on the computer browser that allows you search more easily.</li> </ul>
	<b>Collaborator.</b> Parent works with child on a project. Project is a shared learning experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with your child to create a robot using a book you got out of the library together.</li> <li>Looking online to figure out how to increase the memory in your computer together, and figuring it out.</li> </ul>
	<b>Non-technical consultant.</b> Parent provides information/ advice to child on non-STEM issues such as business, art, or project management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While your child is working on stitching with conductive thread for an e-fashion project, you help her with your sewing expertise.</li> <li>You help your child plan out their science project.</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Barron, B., Martin, C.K., Takeuchi, L., Fithian, R. (2009). Parents as Learning Partners in the Development of Technological Fluency. *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 1(2), 55-77.

Looking and Responding	<p><b>Audience.</b> Parent looks at what child is making and doing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking at a bracelet that your child has created while she was bored over the weekend.</li> <li>Going online to look at your child's science project posted to their school website.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Encourager.</b> Parent uses positive language to support youth confidence and continued participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urging your child to return to robotics camp even though they found it frustrating the previous week.</li> <li>Telling your child how great their science project has turned out and how proud you are of them.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Prompter.</b> Parent provides prompts, questions, and/or offer specific feedback to further child's thinking or work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking your child to explain how they got their answer or how they made something.</li> <li>Suggesting something additional they could add to something they have created to make it even better.</li> </ul>
Connecting to Opportunities	<p><b>Promoter.</b> Parent showcases and shares child's work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showing your friends the video project your child made.</li> <li>Posting your child's work and accomplishments to your social media sites.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Learning broker.</b> Parent seeks learning opportunities for child by networking, searching the Internet, talking to other parents, and using other sources of information. Signs child up and provides necessary support for endeavor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking online for summer camps at the Botanical Gardens because your child is interested in plants.</li> <li>Having your child email your sister (who is an accountant), with math homework questions.</li> <li>When the pastor at your church tells you they are looking to build a new website, you tell him about your child's website building talents.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Resource provider.</b> Parent provides resources (books, software, accounts, etc.) to support child's STEM learning. Resources can be owned by parent or purchased for child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lending your child your <i>Building a Website: for Dummies</i> book.</li> <li>Buying your child a microscope.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Employer.</b> Parent asks for child assistance in STEM-related activity, for pay or not.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking your child to set up a new printer for your home.</li> <li>Paying your child to help you with data entry for a work project you have.</li> </ul>

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