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Tips for Parents: things you can do to help your children succeed in school



For students of all ages

At home:

1. Ask about your children's homework—what it is, when it's due—and check to make sure they do it.
2. Provide a quiet place—with a good light and away from distractions—for your children to do homework.
3. Make sure your children get a good night's sleep each night and eat a healthy, substantial breakfast each morning.
4. Talk to your children about school for at least a few minutes each day to let them know you're interested and you think school is important.
5. Teach your children respect for others and responsibility for their own behavior.
6. Make sure your children get regular health and dental check-ups.
7. Limit children's exposure to TV and video games.
8. Be positive about school. If parents say "I wasn't good at school" or "I really didn't like school," this can turn children away from learning.
9. Check your children's school Web sites regularly to keep informed.

At school:

1. Attend back-to-school nights and parent/teacher nights to meet your children's teachers.
2. If you are concerned about something, meet with your children's teachers promptly, before a minor issue becomes a major problem.
3. If possible, volunteer—regularly or even just occasionally—at your children's schools. You will get to know the school better and show your children that you consider education very important.

For elementary-school students

At home:

1. Read to your children or look at a book with them for at least 5–15 minutes each day.
2. Have books and magazines appropriate for your children's reading level available for them.
3. Use routine household events to teach about numbers and colors—shopping for food, using a recipe, sorting laundry, etc.
4. Give children small rewards for success (either behavior or academic) at school.
5. Praise them when they get good grades or do their homework completely and without complaint.

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6. Take your children to the special programs for youngsters at your local public library.
7. Make sure your child has all necessary childhood immunizations.

At school:

1. Join a parent-teacher organization (PTA or other parent group) and attend meetings.
2. Talk to the teachers to find out what your children will be learning each year.
3. Ask the teachers for suggestions about how you can help your children at home.
4. Make arrangements to visit your children's classrooms at least once during school hours, just to observe. Talk to the teacher later about anything you didn't understand or were concerned about.
5. Ask about after-school programs or extra-help sessions if you think your children could benefit from these.



For middle- and high-school students

At home:

1. Continue to encourage your children to read. Don't let TV, video games, or friends absorb all their free time.
2. Talk to your children about their specific interests related to school—subjects or teachers they like, clubs or extracurricular activities, books they are reading, projects they are working on, etc.
3. Discuss their choice of courses with them so that they are well prepared for different options after high school.
4. Begin discussing with them what they might like to do after they graduate from high school.
5. Know your children's friends, where they live, and, if possible, their parents.
6. If your children work part time, make sure this doesn't interfere with schoolwork or getting a good night's sleep during the week.
7. Continue to celebrate school successes with appropriate rewards. Even though they may seem embarrassed, your children will appreciate your enthusiasm for their good work.



At school:

1. Get a copy of your children's schedules each semester.
2. Find out what guidance is available to your children in choosing a college applying and finding scholarships and loans.
3. Volunteer for school activities—chaperone a school dance or field trip, help with sports events, etc.
4. Serve on school committees that involve parents.



For more ideas and resources for parents, visit the National PTA Web site at www.pta.org.

