

IMPROVING STUDY HABITS



Unfortunately, children are not born with the study habits needed for them to succeed in school. They must learn them. Very often children begin school without the skills they need to do well. Here are some things that parents can do to prepare their children for school as well as to improve their study habits.

***Start early.** Although it is not recommended to begin formally teaching children before they start school, parents can begin to set a good example for their children long before they start school. This can be done by encouraging learning. Parents should try to read to their children daily. Reading skills are very important for success in school.

Reading to children helps them develop a love for reading. Parents should provide plenty of interesting books for their children, too. Finally, parents can set a good example by reading often themselves.

Parents should try to encourage their children's natural curiosity about the world. Parents can do this by talking to their children, by listening to their children, and by answering their questions. Parents should also try to expose their children to as many exciting, stimulating things as possible.

***Get involved.** Parents should take an interest in their children's education by joining the PTA or by becoming involved in other school activities. If parents believe their children's education is important enough for their involvement and attention, their children will take an interest, too. It is a good idea for parents to get to know and communicate with their children's teachers. Parents should give their children lots of encouragement, too. They should talk to their children about what they're doing in school. This will help to reinforce what they're learning.

Once the Homework Begins...

Once children reach the grades where homework and tests are part of the curriculum, there are many things parents can do to encourage good study habits.

***Set a schedule.** Parents should decide with their children what time each day homework is to be done. While children are in the lower grades, one hour a day will probably be enough. As homework and responsibilities increase, more time will be needed. It is important that children take part in these decisions. Children need to know that they are able to make decisions about their studying. Once children and parents have decided on a schedule, they should stick to it. If there is no homework to be done on a given day, parents can have their children use this time as quiet time to read or work on long term projects. It's important for children to get used to studying every day.

***Provide a study area.** Parents should provide a quiet, comfortable area for their children to study in. It's a good idea that studying be done in the same place every day. Parents should make sure their children have the supplies they need (for example, paper, pencils, a pencil sharpener). Sometimes children's

bedrooms are not the best place to study. There are often lots of distractions in children's rooms.

***Help your children get organized.** Parents should give their children a calendar on which to record assignments and to check them off when they're completed. Parents can also show their children how to keep their work and materials organized and how to prioritize assignments.

***Provide reinforcement.** Parents should praise their children for working hard and completing assignments. Parents should keep in mind, though, that homework is not always fun. Don't expect perfection.

***Offer help.** Parents should be available to answer any questions that might come up. They should try to provide information without actually doing the homework for their children.

***Give children the responsibility for their own homework.** Parents cannot force their children to study. Nagging and threatening don't work. Children need to know that they are responsible for doing their homework and for studying. Parents should give their children the responsibility, and let them suffer

the consequences if they, for example, fail to turn in an assignment. The parents' role is to provide support.

***If the schedule is not working, try a different one.** If the plan parents and their children have come up with is not working, they should change it. Perhaps two shorter study periods per day will be easier to take than one long one. Perhaps an early evening study time will work better than one immediately after school. Parents and their children should work with the routine until they come up with one that works.

Remember, children must learn that they are responsible for their own learning. Parents can make the difference by giving their children the tools to do so.



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