

Parents Make the Difference!



Develop strategies to get this school year off to a good start

The start of a new school year is the perfect time to develop strategies to help your child have a successful year. Here are four strategies to try:

1. Schedule a regular time and place for doing homework. On days when your child doesn't have homework, she can read a book or prepare for an upcoming test.
2. Set limits on screen time. There's a link between how well kids do in school--especially in reading--and how much time they spend in front of a screen. So set limits on the amount of TV your child can watch and the time she can spend playing video games. If there is a TV or a computer in your child's room, move it to where you can have more control over what she watches.
3. Reestablish your routines for bedtime and mealtime. Over the summer months, these may have relaxed a bit. Remind your child that she will do better in school if she is not over-tired. Set a bedtime that allows time for reading before it's time for lights-out.
4. Choose quality, not quantity, for after-school activities. Too much scheduled time is stressful for kids and families. Help your child choose one or two things she really enjoys. This will leave her time for school work, family activities and unscheduled play--all of which are things children need.

Four strategies help your child take responsibility for learning

While your child is a student, learning is his job. To do it well, he has to be an active learner--one who takes action instead of just listening. For example, he needs to:

1. Arrive prepared. It's not enough just to show up for school. It's also important to get a good night's sleep, eat a nutritious breakfast and bring necessities.
2. Participate in discussions. Your child should ask questions, make comments and exchange ideas with others. It's especially useful to speak up if something is confusing to him.
3. Stay organized. Help your child create a system for organizing papers, assignments and other materials. Also have him collect a few friends' phone numbers. If he's missing an assignment, he can call someone for it.
4. Be persistent. School can be tough, and doing well takes work. Support your child as he tackles assignments and reviews for tests. Show confidence that his efforts will pay off!

Promote effective study habits for a successful school year

Homework can be a major source of conflict for parents and kids. But even if study time goes well in your family, it's important to make sure you're covering the basics. Take small, simple steps that promote cooperation and good study habits.

Remember to:

- Choose a regular time and place for studying. It should be somewhere quiet with no TV or similar distractions. Pick a comfortable spot and stock it with necessities. Kids study better, and with fewer complaints, when they follow a routine.
- Allow free time first. Some kids need to blow off steam after school by exercising or chatting. Many also head straight for a snack or drink. Keep healthy options available that will energize your child for work and play.
- Encourage organization. Productive studying starts with a to-do list. Older elementary school students should make one each day.
- Postpone screen time. Watching TV and playing video games are privileges that often take away from priorities, including homework, reading and socializing. Save all screen time for after homework and studying.
- Pay attention. Homework time is a chance for you to learn about your child. Does she excel at reading? Struggle with multiplication? Have trouble with spelling? Work with her teacher to build on her strengths and overcome challenges.
- Be supportive. Don't do your child's homework for her. But do stay nearby to supervise. It's okay to answer questions and guide your child through problems. But if you feel she needs too much help in an area, talk with her teacher.