



Building parent-school partnerships

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Creating good study and work habits in secondary school

Here are seven healthy and strong study habits that will serve your young person well throughout their school years and their lives.

Natural smarts is not the only factor that will impact on your young person's success at school this year. A positive attitude, a sense of resilience and a willingness to persist and work through difficulties will help. Perhaps more importantly, it's your young person's work and study habits that will have the most potent impact on the marks they receive at the end of the year. It's worth keeping in mind that the study habits they develop in school also impact on their success in life beyond school.

Here are seven ways to develop healthy, strong study skills that will serve your young person well this year and throughout their lives.

1 Establish a thorough homework process

Doing the homework is one thing, but there are many steps in the process before handing an assignment in. Encourage your young person to:

- Write down an assignment when it's given orally
- Ask the teacher clarifying questions if he doesn't understand anything
- Use a planner or some other organiser to plan his or her time
- Place his homework in a designated place as soon as it's finished.

2 Establish a Study Zone at home

Choose a consistent study or homework space that's conducive to working. Encourage your young person to stick to this space. Some young people need absolute quiet when doing homework, while others work better with soft music. Contrary to the opinions of many teens, studies consistently show that loud music and/or TV are highly distracting to students. Don't let your young person develop the habit of working in bed as this will make it difficult to go to sleep. Keep work and sleep spaces separate.

3 Establish a regular study time

The establishment of a consistent and specific time to do home work has been linked to academic success. Help your young person work out the best time for him or her to crack the books – before or after dinner, or both. Encourage your young person to take regular breaks to keep their brain alert. Every hour – or whenever she feels frustrated or angry – she should get up and walk around, get a snack and let her brain recover.

4 Establish a way to stay organised

Getting organised reduces stress levels and improves the chance of success. Consider a colour-coding system to keep assignments organised by selecting a single colour for each class (like science or history). Use that colour for that subject's folder, highlighters,

sticky notes, etc. The colours will not only keep your teen organised but will also enhance his or her recall of the subject.

5 Establish good time management skills

The best way to help your young person organise their time is to use a large wall calendar so they can jot down study, leisure, family and other activities. The visual nature of the wall calendar will enable you as a parent to help them stay on track as well.

6 Eliminate time robbers

Many teens work inefficiently wasting time on mobile devices and other activities. Help your teen recognise time robbers and eliminate them so they can finish homework quickly and have more time to do other things.

7 Conduct a regular extracurricular audit

Take a hard look at your young person's overall time commitments. Help them reprioritise their commitments if much of their time and energy is taken up with a part-time job, extracurricular activities, and their social lives. While it's important that young people have interests outside school, it's equally important that these commitments don't overwhelm or impact negatively on their study.



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