

PARENTING TIPS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

For elementary school children

Meet the teacher

- Tell teachers how they can contact you during the day or evening.
- Share your hopes & dreams for your children. Ask how you can help your children succeed.
 - Ask how you can volunteer.
 - Ask if you can collect & bring supplies.
- Ask for book recommendations for reading at home.

Conversation builds the brain

- Talk together constantly. In the car, over meals, all the time. Every conversation builds your child's brainpower.
- Remember the power of the dinner table! Children in families who usually eat together are 40% more likely to get mainly A's and B's in school than kids who rarely eat together. Having positive conversations boosts your child's ability to achieve.
 - Take photos of everyday life – looking at photos always starts conversations.
- Read together everywhere you go. Books—yes, but also anything you see in everyday life: signs, cereal boxes, etc.

How much sleep does my child need?

- Ask your teacher how alert your child remains in class. If the teacher reports your child is too tired, he or she needs more sleep.
 - Ask your child's teacher for advice on bedtimes. Don't worry about what "everyone else" does. You're the leader.
- Many parents now stay up late with their children watching TV. But your child needs much more sleep than you, so get them off to bed at the right time.

Turn your home into a learning center

- Reading is power. Read with your child everyday. Model reading for your child---let them see you reading, too.
 - Provide a quiet place for your children to study.
 - Have a set time daily for homework or learning activities when the TV is off.

Get tuned into the power of positive discipline

- Positive discipline provides the structure & skills children need to succeed in school.
- The children in a family practicing positive discipline enjoy higher self-esteem. They feel loved, secure, and have a sense of belonging.
 - Learn more by taking the Parenting Partners workshops at your child's school. Check out www.parentingpartners.com.

For middle and high school youth

Meet the teachers

- Tell teachers how they can contact you during the day or evening. Find out how to contact them by email or phone.
- Find out if your school has an Internet program for tracking your student's progress and communicating with their teachers, such as Power School.
 - Ask if after-school tutoring is available in that teacher's subject.
 - Find out what you should be doing to prepare your child for a college future now!

Stay connected

- When your children were younger they thought you were brilliant, funny, and good-looking. You still are, but you won't be hearing that from your children right now. Don't take rejection personally if your teen reminds you how uncool you have suddenly become. Keep on staying close. Be the parent. It's okay -- you'll be popular again in a few years.
 - They're trying to become more independent, and now they want to shine. Continue verbalizing your love and support.
- Find something positive to say every day. Your teen is constantly being judged in the perpetual popularity contest that is middle and high school. Therefore they need to know they are still popular with dad & mom.
- Keep on being the parent. Stay connected. Stay involved. They may not laugh at your jokes and you may not be cool anymore, but that's okay. Teens need us to act like adults so they can be on stage.

Modeling is everything

- Your teen may hear very few of your words, but they'll see all your actions.

Respect the brain changes

Your preteen and teenager are undergoing enormous changes as the synapses in their brain massively reorganize.

- Read a book on these changes, such as Dr. David Walsh's *Why do they Act that Way?: A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*.
- Use a gentle voice. Teens are undergoing tremendous changes in the hypothalamus section of their brain that regulates their emotions. Their brain is likely giving them the incorrect perception that mom & dad are always angry with them and yelling at them. Therefore we need to be extra calm with our words and friendly with our facial expressions.
- The last part of the brain to reorganize is the prefrontal cortex. That's the seat of judgment that tells them who to trust. Often they simply can't tell who is trustworthy, who is honest, and who really cares about them. So parents need to know their friends and associates, and use our judgment to discern who is trustworthy. Your teen may hate this, but it's our job.
 - Great creativity is generated by the brain changes. Help your teen plug their creativity into the arts, music, forensics, etc.

For everyone

Learn about the 40 Assets

- These are the proven building blocks of success.
- More than 2 million youth grades 6-12 were studied to find these 40 real-life actions that successful youth & their families take to succeed.
 - The information is free. Check out: www.familyleadership.org/assests.html

Talk up their future

- Most children pick up a positive sense of their future from their parents. Remind them often of how much you believe in them.
 - College grads enjoy more opportunities for their future. Talk up their opportunity for college.

Be the positive leader

- Start a Parenting Partners parent leadership group for your school. Contact Family Leadership for help at www.familyleadership.org.

