

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Helping to Develop Effective Study Habits in Your Child

The right study habits can make learning easier, improve marks and generally make school life more pleasant for your child.

Although it's never too late to begin, the very best time to help your child acquire good study habits is before he or she really needs them. A child who discovers the joy of learning early will never find schoolwork quite as tedious as the student who is forced into learning at home merely because the school demands it.

Start Young

Before your child reaches the homework years, begin to set aside a quiet area and a quiet time every afternoon or evening for reading, drawing and other learning opportunities.

- Organize the area with pens, pencils, rulers, erasers, pencil sharpeners and paper.
- Set an example to your child by using the same time yourself each day to read, complete household paperwork or do work from the office.
- Begin to collect reference books that could be useful for subjects like geography, nature, science, history or art. Review the books with your child.
- Expose your child to subjects like art, history and science by watching educational TV programs together or by visiting art galleries and museums. Remind your child that he or she will soon be learning about these subjects in school.
- Help your child to organize school supplies. Help him or her to keep pens and paper tidy in a shoebox or plastic container. Help to clear out your child's school bag every week and throw out discarded papers.
- Show your child that you take school seriously. Talk about it positively.
- Set aside a notebook or a small pin-board for school reminders.

Smart Homework Habits

When your child begins to receive regular homework, establish a consistent routine including a set time for doing homework and a homework area.

- Be firm and consistent about homework rules. For example, if you decide on no TV or phone calls until homework is completed, stick with it.
- Be flexible about your child's preference for where he or she does homework. Many children really do study better when they are stretched out on a couch or bed, listening to their favorite CD through headphones.
- Be supportive and encourage your child. Bring him or her a healthy snack when he or she is studying.
- Help your child get organized.
- Encourage your child to use a small notebook for taking notes in class. Notes are less likely to be lost if they are kept in one place.
- Keep homework supplies organized in a shoebox or plastic container. Make sure there are plenty of spare pens, pencils and paper.

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- Keep supplies ready for special projects—scissors, poster board, glue, tape, presentation folders, and old magazines.
- Encourage your child to talk about his or her homework and other school issues.

Studying for Exams

If your child is at an age where exams are part of his or her school curriculum, consider the following tips to encourage effective studying:

- When your child receives his or her exam schedule, help to write out a study schedule around it. Be sure time is allotted for frequent breaks.
- Some children find that blank postcards or cue cards can be useful for writing down key facts for testing purposes.
- Help to test your child on what he has learned. Some children also find it is useful to get together with a friend to test each other.
- Remind your child that exams are their opportunity to show how much they know.
- Try to ensure that your child has a good breakfast, including a protein food, on exam mornings. If your child resists, remind him or her that the brain functions better with proper nutrition.

Special Notes for Teenagers

Constantly reinforce the value of learning with your teenager. Point out that it remains valuable later in life even if the teenager doesn't follow an academic path.

Many teenagers have problems coping with the new challenge of multiple major assignments due each term, rather than nightly prescribed homework. Help your teenager organize and prioritize these assignments in advance. Buy a calendar and help him/her to organize a schedule—starting with the due date and working backwards with a realistic schedule/plan.

Watch that your teen's schedule is not overly packed with part-time employment or extra curricular activities. Reinforce the value of good eating and sleeping habits to help the brain function at its best.

Establishing effective studying early on can help your child to embrace education in a more positive way. Consider the advice in this article to encourage learning and make the process more fun for your child. For additional advice and resources, consult with your child's teachers and principal.