

Parent Support = Student Success

Experts agree: Showing support at home for your youngster's education leads to success in school and a good attitude toward learning. Here are important ways you can motivate your child to do well.



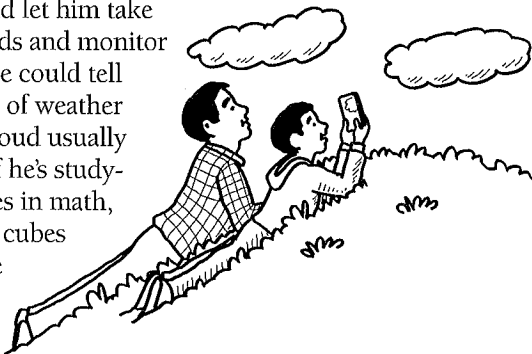
Talk about learning

Check backpacks

Taking an interest in what your youngster is learning at school shows him that you believe education is important. His backpack is full of clues. Go through it together, and look over papers and books he brings home. Focus on learning, while also keeping an eye on grades he's receiving. For example, ask him to read a poem he wrote or to explain how he solved a math problem. *Note:* Be sure to sign any required paperwork, and have him return it to his bag so he can hand it in on time.

Find real-world connections

Whether you're at home or out and about, look for activities that let your child make real-life connections to what he's studying in school. Say he's doing a weather unit in science. Go outside, and let him take photos of clouds and monitor the weather. He could tell you what kind of weather each type of cloud usually indicates. Or if he's studying solid shapes in math, see how many cubes and spheres he can spot on a walk.



Support homework

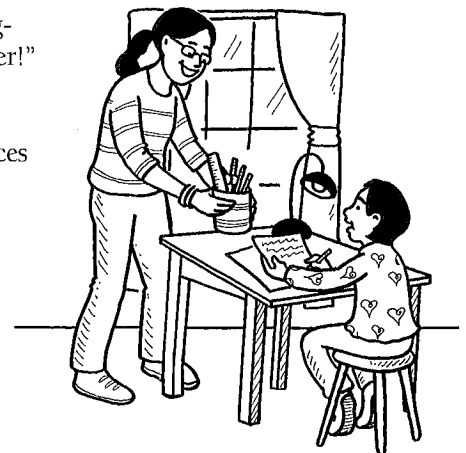
Be a resource

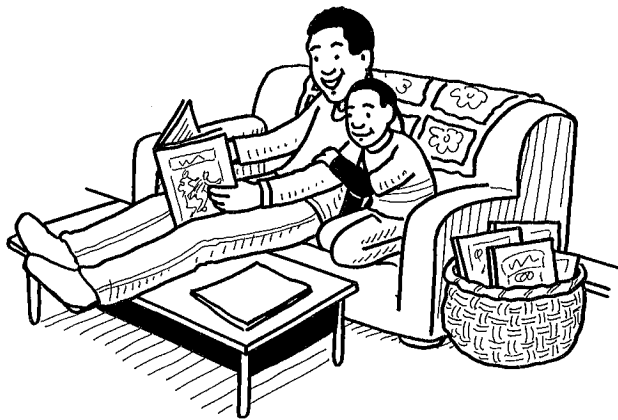
Ask your youngster to explain homework assignments to you. This will help her remember and focus on what to

do—plus, homework is a great springboard for discussions about school. If she gets stuck while she's working, ask questions to get her unstuck, rather than telling her the answers. Try: "Is there an example in your textbook that might give you a clue?" Also, check to make sure her homework is done each day, but don't correct it. Her teacher needs to see mistakes to find out what your child doesn't understand or where she needs extra help. Finally, when she studies for a test, offer to quiz her.

Set the stage

Show the entire family that homework is a priority. Together, find a spot away from distractions like the TV or siblings. It should have good lighting and be stocked with supplies (paper, pencils, calculator, dictionary). Then, let your youngster decorate a sign that says "Homework in progress. Talk to you later!" to post when she's working. *Tip:* Make sure electronic devices are silenced or in another room. If your child uses a device for homework, she should close unrelated windows and apps.





Create routines

Read aloud daily

Reading aloud to your youngster for at least 20 minutes every day is one of the most important keys to his success. Many parents read bedtime stories, but you could also read a wake-up story in the morning, hold a family read-aloud after dinner, and carry books in the car to read on the go. Choose a variety of reading materials, including fiction, nonfiction, children's magazines, and poetry.

Plan a healthy lifestyle

Routines that keep your child healthy also support academic achievement. If he is well rested, he'll be more likely to arrive at school ready to learn, so make sure he gets 9–11 hours of sleep. And good nutrition will give him the energy he needs to focus in class. Have him start each day with a healthy breakfast at home or in school. Regular physical activity—at least an hour a day—promotes good health, too. Take family bike rides, shoot baskets together at a playground, and set an example by regularly exercising yourself.

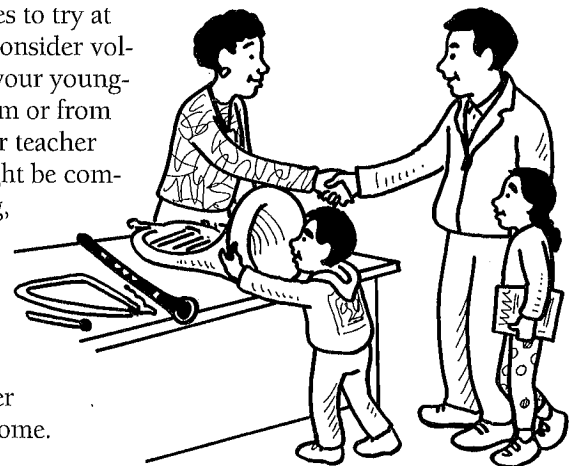
Communicate with the school

Stay in contact

Parent-teacher conferences allow you to sit down one-on-one with the teacher and talk about how to support your child's education. You can stay in touch between conferences, too, by sending notes or emails. If you have a concern about your youngster, ask for a time to meet or talk on the phone. *Tip:* It's nice to contact the teacher when things are going well, too. Sending a note about a classroom activity your child enjoyed or a positive comment she made about school is a good way to maintain a strong relationship.

Participate in events

Attend literacy nights, PTA or PTO meetings, math fairs, and special events to get to know school staff and learn information that can help you help your youngster. Introduce yourself to the media specialist, the school counselor, and the music teacher. Take notes about activities to try at home. Also, consider volunteering in your youngster's classroom or from home. Tell her teacher what you might be comfortable doing, such as reading one-on-one with students or making learning center materials at home.



The power of expectations

Children pick up on what parents expect from them—and they're likely to rise to the occasion. Try these suggestions for setting and communicating high, but reasonable, expectations for your youngster.

- **State your expectations.** You can be direct ("I expect you to finish homework before you get screen time") or indirect ("When you graduate from high school and go to college..."). Communicate your expectations regularly so your child knows them.

- **Be realistic.** Your youngster will be more apt to meet expectations if they're within her reach. Say several of her report



card grades dropped. It may be more reasonable to expect her to bring them up by one letter grade rather than two.

- **Make attendance a priority.** Let your child know that you expect her to attend school all day, every day, unless she's sick or there's a family emergency. Show her that you value attendance by scheduling vacations and, when possible, medical appointments outside of school hours.

Note: If you have more than one child, try to communicate high expectations suited to each of them.

Home & School CONNECTION®