The Road To School Success

Clarksdale Municipal School District

English Learners (EL) Program



Your child's school career is a journey that will take him/her from ABCs and 123s to complex novels and challenging math problems. Here are some helpful ways to fuel his/her journey with focus, organization, motivation, and curiosity.

Focus

Like a driver or a pedestrian, a good student must pay attention. Consider this advice for helping your child concentrate, whether he / she is in class or studying at home.

Play "attention games"

Enjoy games that train your child's brain to focus, such as Simon Says, Mother May I?, and Red Light, Green Light. Another game he /she may like that requires close attention is Cup Swap. Place three cups upside down in a row. While your child watches carefully, put a coin or token under one of the cups, and quickly move the cups around so that they swap places repeatedly. When you stop, have your child tell you which cup has the coin or token under it. Then let your child do a cup swap for you!



Practice Healthy Habits

Help your child develop habits that boost concentration. A good night's sleep (9-11 hours) and a nutritious breakfast get him/her ready to focus in school because he/she won't be distracted by fatigue or growling stomach.

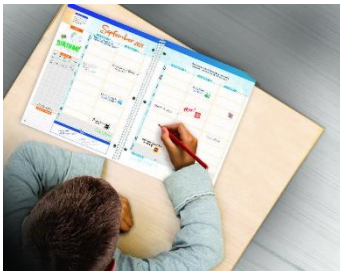
Before he/she does homework, he/she could eat a healthy snack (string cheese and whole-grain crackers or carrot sticks and humus, for example) and "get the wiggles out" by dancing to music or taking a walk with you. Finally, make sure your child works in a distraction-free zone – away from noisy siblings and with electronics turned off.

Organization

A journey that is well planned is more likely to be successful. Try these ideas to help your child manage his/her time and materials.

Create a "road map"

Suggest that your child map out his/her week using a student planner. Or try this idea: Have him/her draw a path on construction paper that begins at one corner and winds to the opposite corner. Nest, he/she should add lines to divide the sheet into five columns and label each with a weekday (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday). He /s he would write homework assignments and other obligations in each space. Examples: "Study Spelling Words." "Make diorama for social studies." Every day after school, review the planner or map together, and talk about when he/she will do each task. He/she can check off each item as it is completed or color in that day's space on the road map.



Manage papers and supplies

Encourage your child to keep his/her backpack and homework area organized. By carrying only what is needed in his/her bag, he/she is less likely to lose important papers. Suggest that he/she clean it out every Friday after school, discarding scrap paper, hanging up artwork, and filing old quizzes. Also, have him/her keep homework supplies in one spot so that he/she is not sidetracked by searching for something like a ruler or colored pencils. Idea: Let him/her fill a baker box with paper, pencils, a calculator, erasers, and other supplies. He/she could store his/her "homework tote" on the desk or carry it to the kitchen table when he/she does homework.

Motivation

The best motivation is self-motivation. Your child can keep chugging along his/her journey through school with these suggestions.

Make decisions

Children tend to be more motivated if they feel like they have a say in what they do or when they do it. Try to give your child choices about when to work or what to read at bedtime. You could ask, "which subject will you study first, science or history?" or "Which book will we read tonight?" If he/she gets to pick the topic for a report or project, encourage him/her to choose one that he/she finds motivating, perhaps something related to a hobby or sport he/she loves. Point out that he/she can even make choices when he/she takes a test – perhaps which questions to answer first or how to approach a math problem.



Work hard

Focusing on your child's efforts rather than his/her intelligence or grades shows that he/she is in the "driver's seat" and in control of his/her performance. Maybe he/she studies hard and does well on a geography test. You might say, "Quizzing yourself a little each day really helped you learn the material!" You will tell him/her exactly what he/she did that led to the success – inspire him/her to repeat the behavior next time.

Curiosity

Sparking your child's curiosity puts him/her on the road to lifelong learning. Consider these tips for inspiring a sense of wonder.

Share discoveries

Create a "Curiosity Zone" to show your child that you can be curious and learn at any age. Hang up a bulletin board or black poster board and place index cards, pushpins, and a pencil nearby. Encourage family members to post interesting facts they discover, such as "Lightning is hotter than the sun" or "It's impossible to divide zero by zero." Your child will be excited to add new facts and to stop by the zone to see what others added. Also, post questions. If someone knows the answer, he/she can write it on the card. Otherwise, suggest that your child research the topic online, in books, or by asking someone who might know the answer.



Explore farther

Look for ways to build on what your child is studying in school. Visit a history museum when he/she studies Colonial times. Check out library books on science topics he/she is exploring, like plants and magnets. If he/she learns about landmarks around the world, suggest that he/she draw pictures of them or use blocks to build models. He/she will ass to his/her background knowledge – and see that chances to learn are all around!



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