ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Helping Children Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

September 2025

Moore Public Schools

Encourage frequent reading by showing how enjoyable it can be

Having strong reading skills will make learning every subject easier for your child. Students develop these skills more effectively when they *want* to read, and do it often.

To encourage your child's interest in reading:

- **Offer a choice** of reading material. Whether you are reading aloud or your child is reading independently, let your student choose among fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, etc. on all kinds of topics. Make frequent trips to the library to refresh your selection.
- **Follow the news.** Is there an age-appropriate developing news story that interests your child? Read the latest reports together.
- **Plan a field trip.** Help your child go online and research free or low-cost attractions in your area, such as museums or historic sites. When you visit, ask your child to be your tour guide and share interesting facts.
- **Listen to audiobooks.** Show a reluctant reader how interesting books can be! You can download free audiobooks or record yourself reading aloud. Your child can follow along in a print version while listening.
- **Give reading coupons.** Some might be for 30 minutes of reading with you. Others might be good for a new book.

Use goals to inspire improvement

A new school year is a fresh start for all students. To make the most of it, help your child set some learning goals. Working toward goals helps students stay motivated and learn to focus time and effort efficiently.

To get the ball rolling:

- **Tell your child** about something you have decided to change. "I'm going to get more exercise and cut back on my screen use." Explain that you are making a promise to yourself to achieve this goal.
- **Help your child** brainstorm a goal for improving in school. "Completing your math work was a challenge for you last year. What could you do this year to make that easier?"
- **Help your child** define specific steps to take to meet the goal. "I will practice math facts 10 minutes a day. I will keep trying if a question is hard. I will ask the teacher to explain math that is confusing."
- **Offer support** if your child starts to slip. "Falling short doesn't mean you can't get back on track."

Support your child's success

A supportive home environment contributes to children's ability to do their best in school. To help your elementary schooler thrive in the coming year:

- **Expect your child's best effort,** and focus on learning more than grades.
- **Show enthusiasm for learning** and participate in learning activities together.
- **Express love** for your child by listening, encouraging and being attentive.

Get back into school mode

Adjusting to school-year schedules and priorities after the summer can be a challenge. To make it easier:

- **Create a weekly schedule.** Include time for schoolwork, play, activities and family time.
- **Set bedtimes** and wake times for your child that allow at least nine hours of sleep and plenty of time to get ready.
- **Cut back on passive screen use.** Set device curfews, activity limits and screen-free zones (like the dinner table).

Stay in touch with teachers

Families are partners in education, and communication between you and the teachers will help you work together effectively. When you contact teachers to ask questions or to share information about your child:

- **Discuss your child's strengths,** and be willing to hear about weaknesses and how to address them.
- **Remember that you** and the teacher both want to help your child learn well.
- **Make requests** rather than demands, and give busy teachers time to respond.

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Q&A What can I do to raise my child's self-confidence?

Q: My fourth grader is smart and capable, but doesn't believe that this is true. Instead, my child says things like, "I can never do anything right." How can I help my student go into this school year feeling competent?

A: Schoolwork and social situations tend to get more challenging in the upper elementary years. This can create insecurity and self-doubt in some students. They feel pressure to measure up, and it can be scary when they feel like they are falling short.

To help your child feel capable of doing well in school:

- **Look for activities** where your child can experience success. If sports are your child's thing, encourage practice to improve skills. If your child enjoys reading, suggest starting a book club with friends. In enjoyable activities, your child is also likely to meet kids who share interests.
- **Assign responsibilities at home.** Explain that doing chores helps the whole family, and thank your child for making a valuable contribution. Praise your child for completing tasks without reminders: "You're so responsible."
- **Celebrate accomplishments.** Did your child just do something wonderful? Offer congratulations on the achievement, whether it was earning a good grade on a quiz or figuring out a tricky math problem.

Parent Quiz Are you instilling healthy habits?

One key way you can help your child be alert and focused in school is to reinforce healthy habits at home. Are you helping your child stay fit and well for learning? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

___**1. Do you stick** to a regular school night bedtime for your child and limit weekend changes to one hour later?

___**2. Do you ensure** your child's day starts with breakfast?

___**3. Do you promote** daily exercise and look for fun ways for your child to get active?

___**4. Do you teach** your child to wash hands frequently throughout the day?

___**5. Do you help** your child understand and follow safety rules for playing and interacting with other people?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are establishing daily habits that support school success. For each no, try that idea.*

"There's a very close tie between good health and good education."
—Laura Bush

Writing starts with ideas

Whether your child needs to think of a topic for a paper or an idea for short story, a brainstorming session can help. To jumpstart the process, encourage your child to:

- **Make lists.** Suggest topics like: *Things I love. Things I know a lot about. Things I would like to know more about.*
- **Think about things** in new ways. Ask your child questions like "What would life be like if your eyes were in your feet?"
- **Look around** and write down what sights bring to mind.
- **Write down actions** to add to ideas: *What will happen next? How quickly?*

Source: D.B. Reeves, Ph.D., *Reason to Write: Help Your Child Succeed in School and Life Through Better Reasoning and Clear Communication*, Kaplan Publishing.

Promote conscientiousness

Conscientious students fulfill responsibilities and do their best on schoolwork—and achieve more in school. To help develop *conscientiousness*:

- **Remind your child** not to rush through tasks.
- **Ask your child** to double-check work.
- **Cheer your child on** when the going gets tough. "You can do it! What else can you try?"

Be positive about learning

Here are three important ways to bolster your child's enthusiasm for school this year:

1. **Show that education** matters to you by attending parent-teacher conferences and school meetings for families.
2. **Praise your child's** effort, progress and successes.
3. **Help your child see** how school lessons apply to life outside the classroom.

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