

HELPING YOUTH DEVELOP SKILLS TO SUCCEED IN HIGH SCHOOL (AND BEYOND): TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

As a caregiver, you have many possible ways to help the children in your care acquire the skills they need to succeed in school. From time management, to organization, to study habits, these skills will serve them well in high school and throughout life. The following tips are not exhaustive and should be tailored to each youth, taking into consideration personality, skills, interests, and strengths.

STUDYING

- Provide your child with a comfortable, well-lit spot to study that is free of distractions.
- Help your child keep all study materials (calculator, planner, laptop, books, etc.) in one location.
- Set aside quiet time each day for your child to study, and help your child establish a consistent study schedule.
- Monitor your child's study sessions to make sure your child is on track and not distracted.
- Help your child review and study class material, for example, by asking simple questions or creating practice tests.
- Encourage your student to complete all assignments thoroughly and in a timely manner.
- Remind your student to take notes in class and review the notes at home each night, while the material is still fresh in their mind.
- When there is a lot to study, help your child break down the tasks into smaller chunks.
- Remember that helping with homework, or even just sitting nearby working on your own activity, can be a great bonding experience with your child.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

- Find out how your child keeps track of homework, and then together develop a system your child will want to use. Help your child find the tools that will help them stay organized, for example, binders, folders, assignment book, and planners/calendars.
- Support your child in using a calendar or planner to schedule their time.
 - If necessary, help your child add important dates, special events, family commitments, and other nonnegotiable priorities.

- Encourage your student to keep the planner/calendar up to date with assignment due dates, tests, events, and meetings. Encourage them to check their schedule regularly instead of relying on memory.
- Help your child track larger assignments by working backward from the due date, to break the assignment into manageable tasks.
- Encourage your child to make a daily and/or weekly "to-do" list, crossing off items once completed.
- Help your child keep assignments and class information together in binders, notebooks, or folders.
- Help your child prioritize and schedule what needs to be done (being realistic!) and to stick to a homework and study schedule.

TEST TAKING

- For high-stakes tests (such as midterm, final, or college-entrance exams):
 - Mark tests on **your** calendar to help you remind your child to plan ahead.
 - For several weeks before a test, encourage your child to set aside time each night for study/review.
 - Avoid putting too much emphasis on any single test score; this can make your child feel pressure that will negatively impact performance.
 - Reinforce that, as long as your child worked hard to prepare and did their best, you will be proud of them.
- When your child is struggling with a topic, point out the progress that has been made and encourage your child to continue working.
- The night before a test, encourage your child to review but avoid "cramming," which is rarely effective.
- Praise your children for the work they've done to prepare for a test.
- Plan a treat or outing with your child after the test is completed.
- After a test, talk with your child about the results and how they felt about the test. Talking about testing can help your child process the experience and overcome any related anxiety.

ENGAGING AND MOTIVATING

- Talk with your child about school, so your child knows that their education is important to you.
 - Make this a true conversation and listen carefully. Use this as an opportunity to learn what supports your child may need.
- Motivate your child.
 - Use incentives and rewards, and celebrate your child's successes.
 - Link school lessons to the child's life.

- Link your child's interests to their academics.
- Encourage your child to ask their teachers questions if they don't understand something, as well as to ask for additional help when it is needed.
 - Most teachers are available before or after school, or they might be able to recommend other resources.
 - Encourage your student to plan for a meeting with their teacher or others by writing down their concerns and taking notes while there.

When talking with your child about school, listen carefully to discover what supports they may need.

Is your child ...

- Feeling overwhelmed?
- Having trouble organizing?
- Having problems in a specific class?
- Having difficulty completing homework?
- Not interested in school?
- Not taking the classes that will help them meet their goals?

IN GENERAL

- Send your child to school ready to learn, including providing nutritious breakfasts and helping them get enough sleep on a regular sleep schedule.
- Make sure your child gets to school on time each day. If necessary, prepare clothes and school material a day ahead.
- Expect that your child will attend school regularly.
- Attend back-to-school nights and parent-teacher conferences. Talk with your child's teachers about what your child is working on, where your child is excelling and/or struggling, and activities you and your child can do together at home to support your child's school work.
- Understand your child's school environment and schedule. Visit the school and the school website to learn about the school calendar, testing dates, and information about extracurricular activities.
- Talk with your child's guidance counselor or look on the school website for other parenting tips.

REFERENCES/ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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