

Introduction

The support and guidance you provide at home can make all the difference in how successful your child is in school. Here are 10 useful suggestions that can be implemented.

1. Establish routines

“Routine is to a child what walls are to a house; it gives boundaries and dimensions to his life. Routine gives a feeling of security.” – Rudolf Dreikurs

You can provide this foundation at home by: Assigning daily chores, schedule regular time for play, homework, study time and sports, establish a regular mealtime and bedtime.

2. Help your child organize for learning and develop positive work habits

Ensure that your child has all necessary materials/stationary needed for his work. Have a regular, quiet, well-lit place to do homework. When your child has completed his work for the day, have him straighten up his workspace and get organized for the next day.

3. Place Priority on Homework

There is no such thing as “no homework”. Even if no homework is given from school, your child can review his most difficult subjects or do extra reading.

How to Study:

- Protect your child’s study time – limit distractions (no TV, phone calls, no interruptions from you)
- Offer advice if your child needs help, but resist the impulse to do his homework for him.
- Challenge your child to a game of “Beat the Clock” if he dawdles while doing homework. Find out from your child’s teacher how long homework should take, set the timer (by adding 5 minutes longer) and challenge your child to finish before the timer goes off.

4. Look at Learning Styles

Most children prefer one of these three learning styles:

a. Visual learners

Visual Learners learn best when they look at graphics. They prefer charts, tables, maps. Here are some tips: Make a map that has all important information highlighted, draw pictures to illustrate math problems, create flash cards to study vocabulary words or history facts, etc.

b. Auditory learners

Auditory learners learn mainly through their ears. These approaches can help an auditory learner: Read important lessons out loud. Make up poems, rhymes or other verbal memory cues. Practice spelling words out loud.

c. Kinesthetic learners

Kinesthetic learners have difficulty sitting still. Move around while studying. Rather than sitting, read while standing up. Act out an important lesson from history. Use the index finger to focus the eyes while reading a textbook.

5. Help your child get the most out of what he reads

After reading a task/passage/book ask your child to restate what he has just read in his own words. After task completion ask your child to review his work.

6. Use strategies that help with memorization

- Learn from the general to the specific
- Make it meaningful (make a connection between what he's studying to something he already knows)
- Use mental pictures
- Break long lists into shorter lists to memorize facts/new spelling words etc and start in different places each time
- Use mnemonics

7. Help your child develop good listening skills

Show your child that you are interested in what he has to say. Turn off the TV, put down the newspaper or phone and pay attention to him.

- Model patient listening
- Let your child know that it is ok to ask for clarification
- Use family conversations to teach your child to express his ideas and to listen to others
- Ask your child to repeat instructions
- Play games that build listening skills (ie. "I am going on a trip and I am taking an.... apple; an apple and a banana; an apple, a banana and a hat....etc; "repeat the beat" (rhythmical sequences)

8. Help your child develop classroom note-taking skills

Whatever a teacher writes on the board your child should write down too. Teach your child to listen carefully for certain words and phrases used by his teacher, such as "the main idea", "an important point", "something to keep in mind" – these words probably mean that this information is important and might appear on tests.

9. Help your child build thinking skills

- Ask questions (say thinks like "I wonder why that happened")
- Encourage your child to find facts that back up his opinion
- Ask questions about schoolwork
- Think out aloud so your child can learn how you solve problems

10. Encourage your child to set goals

- Make sure his goals are specific (ie. "I'd like to raise my math average to 70 percent this term.")
- Help your child break each goal into a series of smaller, more achievable goals. Show him that goals are reached one step at a time. Praise him or his progress each step of the way.