

Teach study habits that will last a lifetime



DEVELOPING AN APPROACH to studying that's more than just doing homework is one of the most valuable skills a student can learn. By learning to read for content, listen, take notes and review for exams, students not only will achieve more in school right now but will carry their skills forward to college and careers. Essentially, good study habits underpin a love of learning.

As a professional educator, you share responsibility for helping children develop good study skills and habits. It's important to establish clear, concise guidelines and expectations for submitting work, taking notes and meeting deadlines. With your guidance, students are more likely to

succeed at their studies.

Here are steps you can take to ensure that your students develop habits you'd like to see.

Model good behavior

Have students role-play to learn the right study habits. Remind them their behavior should be the same outside school hours. You might say, "Talking on the phone or watching television are not allowed in this classroom because they are major distractions. I expect the same behavior while you continue your work at home." Communicate this to parents and caregivers as well.

Teach note-taking skills

Like any other skill, taking good notes is a habit that must be

learned. Show students how to listen actively and record key concepts using graphic organizers, highlighters or sticky notes. Encourage students to use the same tools all the time.

Designate a workspace

Whether in class or at home, students should have a desk or table with access to resources. Have students draw a floorplan of the room they'll study in at home, labeling a work area and listing tools they'll use and store nearby. Again, communicate with caregivers that students need dedicated workspace.

Establish a schedule

Students have a daily schedule at school. They know when they work, where they spend each class period and when they break for lunch. Although the school schedule may be more stringent, a home study regimen is equally important. Help caregivers understand the importance of establishing a routine by providing a copy of the homework and assignment calendar by the week or month.

Seek adult support

While in school, students have access to instructors who can

answer any questions they might have. Help parents and caregivers understand that they serve the same function. Like teachers, adults at home can call out spelling words, check math answers, read directions or help with researching a report. Provide parents with ways to ask open-ended questions or give contextual clues instead of doling out answers. For instance, when a child asks how many inches are in a yard, ask what measuring tool they might use to answer that question.

Give feedback

Teaching is a multifaceted process that includes feedback, which should be timely, tied to specific assignments and helpful in monitoring progress. Keep feedback constructive and to the point.

Watch for frustration

Nothing will come of your work if students give up. You need to be mindful that if the task is too long or complicated, it needs to be broken into sections, with breaks in between. Teachers can share information with caregivers about how students handle difficult tasks, including feelings of frustration or anxiety. Let kids know it's healthy to take an occasional break.

Teachers and parents must work together to help children develop good study habits. Communication is paramount. With the support of teachers, many districts have set up Internet-based resources, homework hotlines, calendars and other study tools. Send home a list of the district's approved home help sites. Be clear and consistent in your expectations. Help students understand why they're working at home as well as in school: It's so they can do their best and set themselves up for a great life.



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