

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Your child needs you to be interested and involved in his/her academic progress. Using these tips will help make sure that your child succeeds in school.

Show Interest. Attend all open houses and parent conferences. Know when each grading period ends, and make sure that you will see all report cards as soon as they come out. If you do not see a report card, call the school and request a copy. *Do not just assume that someone will call you if there is a problem.*

Recognize extra effort and improvement and show interest in your child's work. Make it a point to acknowledge each academic success, even if it is only a good grade on a quiz or homework assignment.

Discuss classes and set goals. Sit down with your child at the beginning of each grading period and help him/her set realistic academic goals. Your child will better understand what your expectations are, and having goals will give your child something positive to work towards.

At the beginning of the grading period, Kate and her parents decided that she should be able to earn A's in Math, English, Art, PE, and Social Studies. Since Kate finds Spanish and Science more difficult, they decided that they would be happy with B's in these two subjects.

You can, of course, offer rewards if goals are met and/or consequences if they are not. Rewards are particularly good when you want to encourage a change in effort or behavior. (Eventually, doing well will be its own reward.) Consequences are most effective when they are reasonable and logical. For example, a reasonable and logical consequence for routinely being late to school might be an earlier bedtime. *Never take away a positive activity (sports, school plays, music lessons, or scouting) as a consequence.*

Listen. Talk to your child about what is happening in school and be a good listener.

Be available to help. Be available to help with homework, but do not give more help than is wanted. Your child may not ask again. Keep in mind that it is your child's responsibility to be organized, to get homework done and to prepare for tests.

Encourage school involvement. Studies show that students who are involved in school-related activities have greater academic success and they enjoy school more. Encourage your child to be involved in one or more school activities.

Monitor activities and jobs. Make sure that your child is not spending too much time on social networking sites, watching television, texting, playing video games or talking on the phone. If your child has a job, make sure that he/she is not working too late or too many hours.

Be aware of what not to do.

- Do not nag about school or grades. Your child will tune you out.
- Do not allow your child to miss school unless he/she is truly ill. You will send a message that school is not important.
- Do not criticize a teacher in front of your child. Your child will only lose respect for that teacher.
- Do not make your child's failures (or successes) your own. Your child may see getting poor grades as a way to rebel.
- Do not have unrealistic expectations. If your child feels that your expectations can not be met, he/she may not even bother to try.

Work with your school. Know that teachers, counselors and principals are there to help your child get the best education possible. A health problem, death in the family, or divorce can affect your child's attitude and/or performance in school. If such a circumstance should arise, contact the principal or counselor and explain the situation.

If you have a concern that relates to a specific teacher or class, contact the teacher. For other questions and concerns, contact your child's counselor. Be sure to express any concerns that you have in a constructive, respectful manner.

If your child is not doing well in school, find out why. Most students who do not do well in school feel like failures. They are frustrated, discouraged and sometimes angry. The **"I do not care"** attitude they often display is a defense mechanism. It is important for these students to know that their parents have not given up on them. They also need to know that their parents are interested, supportive, and willing to take the time to help them be more successful in school.

Students who are not doing well in school usually have problems in one or more of the following areas:

Attendance: It is extremely important for students to be in school every day. Unless a child is truly ill, he/she needs to be in school.

Appropriateness of courses: We cannot expect students to get good grades if they are in the wrong classes. If any of your child's courses are too difficult or too easy, call your child's counselor.

Accountability: It is human nature to be tempted to "slack off" when we are not held accountable. How seriously would most workers take their jobs if they knew their bosses would never know how hard they were working or find out how many days they missed?

Your child needs to know that you will be monitoring his/her academic progress throughout the year and those successes will be recognized and poor performances noticed. Your child also needs to know that you will be consistent in your interest.

Alcohol/Drug Abuse: Students who abuse alcohol or drugs are often distracted to the point where their school performance is affected. If you know or suspect that your child is drinking or using drugs, talk to him/her about it. If you need information or advice, talk to your doctor or to your child's counselor. They can help.

If you believe that there are other reasons for your child not doing well in school, make an appointment to see your child's counselor. Recognizing that there is a problem is the first, and most important, step in finding a solution.