

Tips for Parents

Students and teachers have a lot of responsibility related to school. The students' parents also have a very important role. These tips will help parents. This will help their kids do better at school (without doing the work for them!)

1. Make Sure Your Kids Get Enough Sleep

A child in kindergarten should get 10 hours of sleep each night. Teenagers need almost that much. They need close to nine hours of sleep. Not many teenagers get enough sleep.

Not getting enough sleep can cause many problems. When your child is tired he or she can be grumpy and emotional. There are other problems that aren't as easy to see. Being overtired makes it easier to get sick. Over time, it can lead to depression. It can lead to weight gain and acne. In school, students who are tired have a harder time paying attention. They have a harder time remembering and learning.

School starts early in the morning. Activities, television, and computers can keep students wide awake late at night. The end result? Tired teenagers.

Encourage your teenager to go to sleep around the same time each night. They should get up at about the same time every day. Even on the weekends. Having a sleep schedule will make it easier for the student to get enough sleep.

2. Establish School Night Rules

"We don't allow computers to be on after 9pm," says one father of two middle school students. "Even for homework. The kids know they have to get their computer work done before it gets too late."

Lights from televisions and computer screens mess with brain signals that tell a person to get sleepy. Computers make it possible to be in contact with other people late into the night. They made it possible to watch videos or play games for hours. These things take time away from homework and rest. Set limits and enforce them.



Limit after school activities. Help your teenager choose no more than two activities such as a sport or club. Being too busy leads to stress. Kids need to have some down time on a regular basis. Help them create a manageable schedule. Include time for those favorite activities. Include time for homework. Include time to enjoy being a kid.

Have dinner together as a family at least twice a week. Ask your student about school and about his or her day. Truly listen to the responses.

3. Be Involved at School

Look for chances to help at your student's school. You may help with a fundraiser or carnival once each year. You may help coach a sports team or club for a season. Or you may spend time monthly or weekly to help with tasks at the school. Teachers often want help to do tasks. These tasks may include making photocopies or listening to students read.

Get to know the teachers and school staff. This can be a great way to know how your child is doing in school. It will help you know what your child is supposed to do. You may also get a chance to see how your child gets along with others. Parents are often surprised to see how differently their kids act at school. Kids often behave differently than at home.

Pay extra attention to your child's friends. Your teenager's friends have a huge influence on him or her. Know who your student is spending time with.

4. Help, but Don't Do the Student's Work

If your teenager asks for help with homework, help. You may show them tools that will help

them. "This year my son is doing math that I don't know how to do," says one mom of a high school junior. "I couldn't help him answer the questions. But I did help him find a good on-line tutor. Now he can get his questions answered for his homework."

Teach your child to be responsible. "We wanted our kids to take care of their own business," said one mother. "But we also wanted to help them if they found themselves stuck. Maybe one of our kids left something at home that was needed at school. I would bring it to them. But they would have to pay me \$5 from their allowance. This would pay for my time and for gas. That way they learned to be responsible."

5. Focus on what is Most Important

Not every student gets straight "A's." Not every student is class president. Not every student is captain of the football team. Know that your child is a unique individual. He or she is not just like you. He or she is not just like his or her big brother or sister. He or she is not just like anyone else. Celebrate his or her own successes. Encourage his or her passions. Focus on what is most important – your child.