

# How to Help Young People Establish Effective Study Habits

By Heidi Serven

One of the values that most parents share is the desire to give their children a quality education. While choosing the best schools and providing your child with the best resources to help accomplish this are responsible decisions, parent's who take an active role in their children's learning will help them to succeed, not only in school, but in life.

**Be a Learning Leader** – There are many ways that parents can play an active role in their children's education. Telling your children how important a good education is, is one way to share your values on education and learning, another more important way is to show them.

- Reading to your kids and with them when they are old enough will help to introduce them to a world of endless learning and hopefully instill a love of books. As your child grows allow them to pick out books that most interest them.
- Talk about what's happening at school, in your local community and the world. Encourage your child to ask questions and exchange ideas. If your child asks questions that you don't know the answer to be honest and help them research the answer through a trip to the library or searching on the internet.
- Introduce your kids to new ideas and activities to show them that learning can be fun. A science lesson can be accomplished through a nature walk in your own backyard or a trip to a park. Teach them about history, by visiting the local historical museum. While on vacation, take time to introduce your children to new places and different cultural experiences.

**Get Involved in your Child's Education** – By taking an interest in your child's education you are showing them that it is important. Your child is more apt to be interested and excited in learning if you have a good attitude about their school and are respectful of their educators.

- Read the information your child brings home so that you know what's going at your child's school or in their classroom.
- Keep an open line of communication with your children's teachers and regularly attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Volunteer to help out on school functions, get involved in the PTO, or school board to ensure that your voice is heard.
- Encourage your child to become involved in extracurricular activities.
- Attend school events with your children. Make it a family event when possible.

**Set Limits and Establish Guidelines** – Parents should talk to their children and make expectations clear on completing homework and involvement in extracurricular

activities. In setting standards, be sure to be realistic and remember that strengths and weaknesses vary by individual. Don't compare your children or encourage competition between them.

- Establish a routine and expectations for completing homework. Allow your child to be part of this process, so that studies can be completed when your child is at his or her best in terms of effectiveness and attentiveness. This should be at a consistent time each day.
- Set limits such as no television, video games or talking on the phone during study time.
- Help your child determine their study style. Do they prefer complete quiet or some outside noise such as quiet music? Some families chose to have all children in the household have study/quiet time at the same time.
- Each child should have his or her own space to study, preferably a place that's quiet with minimal disruptions. Make sure the area has adequate lightening for reading and a table or desk for writing and a comfortable chair.
- Help your child to organize his or her things, provide the proper supplies and resources to promote an effective and efficient learning environment. Help your child set up an assignment board or project planner to keep track of homework assignments and deadlines. This can be done on paper or kept track of on the computer.
- Be available during homework time to help your child. Talk about school projects and review homework assignments regularly to show your interest. Do not do your child's homework or correct mistakes for them.

**Encourage & Evaluate** – Get involved and continue to stay involved in your children's academics. As they get older or continue to achieve, don't assume that they don't need your help or support. Because you have laid the foundation for school success early on it is important to continue the momentum, by

- Being consistent with all of your children.
- Involve them in the decision making whenever possible.
- Don't change expectations or rules without discussing it with your child.
  - Recognize and acknowledge your children's academic successes with lots of praise.
  - Offer encouragement and suggestions for areas of improvement. Suggest a tutor or ask about extra credit opportunities.
  - Ensure adherence to the rules and make adjustments if things are not working out well for your child.

Being involved in your child's education is a commitment that takes time and consistency. By being a good role model, setting up environments that are conducive to learning, setting guidelines and establishing rules parents are helping their children develop long-term study habits to promote a lifetime of learning.