

A Parent's Guide to Good Study Habits



1. Regular Time: It is important for you to set up a regular study time for your student and to try and be strict about maintaining it. This will help your child establish a routine for studying, which is a key to good homework habits. Routines develop into good habits, and if you help your child stick to this routine, you will soon notice that he/she automatically uses that time as study time. You could use an alarm clock, oven timer, etc. to remind when study time begins or ends (Braithwaite). Also, if your child is often done with his/her schoolwork, try to make this a regular time to read together or work on basic skills like math.

2. Regular Place: Having a regular place to study will also help you and your child establish a routine for good study habits. Probably the most important thing to keep in mind when choosing a study spot is to *keep it away from distractions*, like the *television*. Another idea to consider is, although the bedroom can be a fine place for studying, it is probably best not to do it actually on the bed. Since the bed is a place for sleeping, doing homework there *could* interfere with your child's sleeping routine.



2. Regular Procedure: Establish a regular procedure for your child to follow during study time. This could look something like the one below, but don't be afraid to try your own ideas as well. Different schedules and practices work well with different students depending on their strengths, interests, age, etc. Create a study time that works well for your individual child. Some guidelines and a sample plan are listed below:



10 minutes- Do something together with your child: read a book, do a puzzle, etc. If possible, allow him/her to choose the activity. Try some games he/she learned at school and don't be afraid to make up games of your own. Enjoy this time together.

5 minutes- if your student has a particular homework assignment to work on, begin by pre-reading the assignment and/or reading the directions. Talk about what the main ideas of the homework seem to be, based on this pre-reading. Kids Can Learn, Inc. suggests that you "...guide the homework tasks with a series of simple direct questions:

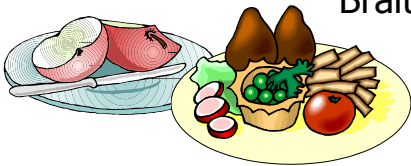


- What is the assignment?
- What is the problem to be worked out?
- How can figure out the answer?
- What do you have to do first?
- Do you want me to listen (to reading)?
- Do you want me to read what you have written?
- Do you want me to check your knowledge (for example, in spelling)?"

(Kids Can Learn! www.kidscanlearn.com)

10-15 minutes- Do the assignment, reading, etc. If your child has a difficult assignment, do the assignment together, using the above questions as a guide. If your child seems to have grasped the assignment and as a good idea of how to approach it, go ahead and let him/her do it alone. To help develop independence, encourage your child to use some sort of mark, like a question mark, to identify problem areas for you to go over together.

5 minutes- Break/Study Snacks-- Brain research has discovered connections between what we eat and how we learn. The following information was taken from an article by Deborah Joy Braithwaite featured at www.family.disney.com: *Getting a child into good eating habits during*



homework sessions is essential. Fast foods, snack bars and carbonated drinks are full of taste enhancers, artificial colorings, caffeine, salt, saturated fats and refined sugars. They do provide a quick burst of energy; however, it is a false energy boost and is quickly followed by lethargy. Children seem to be natural nibblers and like to eat small amounts of food often. Nibbling the right food every 90 minutes keeps the blood sugar high to energize the brain for thinking and learning. During a study session, fill them up on fruit and raw vegetables (an apple or banana, slice of



cheese, handful of peanuts, carrots, or celery.) Raw foods of any sort increase the rate at which the brain cells use oxygen, so that thinking and learning is easier and better. There is an abundance of evidence in medicine, education and sport to show that drinking plenty of water is essential for optimal performance. The message is 'if you don't drink enough you can't always think enough!'"

10 minutes- Review the completed assignment/reading with the child. Work on any problem areas, again asking questions that encourage him/her to find the answer on his/her own. For every mistake that you point out, try to point out two successes. In the *Kids Can Learn!* Article, the writer offers this suggestion:



"Help your child believe in his or her ability to succeed. When you praise work completed successfully, you are showing your child that he or she can do well in school. Success builds confidence. This can be achieved in many ways, for example, if you write a word such as when and your child reads it as what, don't say "wrong." Instead, say the word aloud and ask your child to repeat it after you. After the word is repeated, praise your child and move on."

Talk about how the assignment/reading/activity, etc. went that night. Note things the child had success with and areas that are still a problem. It may be helpful for the two of you to keep a journal noting what you discuss each night and comparing this to similar assignments in the future.

Finally, as a last, five minute task for yourself and/or with your child, work on writing a note at least once a week to the teacher. Was there something from the assignment that you didn't understand? Were the directions unclear to you? Did you feel the assignment somehow didn't achieve what it was supposed to? Instead of feeling frustrated, especially when you first start this study process, communicate your frustrations with the teacher. Did you feel this assignment was especially effective? Would you like more assignments like this to work on with your student? Communicate these ideas as well with the teacher.



Now, make a commitment to making study time a part of your routine!