



Study Smart Guide

These recommendations are the result of the experience of many educators, researchers and parents who have found these recommendations a pathway to successful learners. As our children grow up their lives have become filled with a growing array of competing demands for time, attention, and interests which interfere with and generate difficulties in meeting academic demands. Much of this is attributed to a lack of routine and parental attention to academic details of the day, as well as, child and parent fatigue. Hopefully, this document will provide useful guide to overcome these barriers toward academic success.

What do you do if your plan begins to fail? This guide hopefully enables you to analyze where the plan is failing, and why. This gives you an opportunity to start again from that point.

Objective:

The guide is intended to invest parents and children in the enterprise of learning. The objective is to provide a guide for parents in planning a systematic learning management plan implemented through the year. This guide should provide an understanding of where to start, what needs to be done and how to get to the objective learning success with minimal frustration, anxiety and associated difficulties which impact the child's capacity to learn efficiently, effectively and independently.

Using the study smart principles should lessen the struggles over school work, because it is a comfortable and understandable scaffolding that everyone can understand and follow. As you and your child use the system, and school becomes more successful, the struggle lessens because competence in school trumps the struggle.

Emotional support is critical to learning and personal growth. Our children need to know that they have your unconditional love and affection regardless of their success or failure in school. Learning is dramatically and silently impacted when our children think that they have disappointed us in some way. School is just one aspect of a child's world, it is not separate from everything else; it influences everything else. Family dynamics [relationships between mom & dad, among brothers and sisters across extended family]



need to be positive and encouraging all the time.

Parenting is a very hard and serious life's work. There are no manuals to guide us. Hopefully this brief will help you along the road. Try to remember the uniqueness of each child, speed is not important, slow and easy nurturing is critical. Love need not be tough to be successful. Like every pathway, there are puddles along the way, just keep on trying and success will follow.

Recommendations

Step 1:

1. Review with your child last school year successes and shortfalls. Make a list.
 - a. Reflect on the way the school year went [what went right, what went wrong, what was done to fix any problems? What other points of interest should be considered?
 - b. Ask your child to make list of 5 items from their perspective for discussion.
 - c. From the review choose not more than 5 of your items and 5 of your child's items to discuss to reach a common understanding of how things went, why they went that way and what to do about it [this discussion needs to be voiced in very supportive and helping mode terms that your child has a part in. It is a discussion not a lecture].
2. Decide from your discussion on goals for the school year.
 - a. 3 academic goals
 - b. 2 social goals
 - c. 1 extra curricular goal
 - d. Agree on priorities among the goals.
3. Determine the barriers to reaching the goals [Examples]
 - a. Too many activities
 - b. No routines for getting things done
 - c. Eating and sleeping issues
 - d. Reading Practice
 - e. Mathematics understandings
 - f. Physical/ medical issues [glasses, hearing etc.]
 - g. Emotional Issues & behavior



4. Decide on what needs to be included to achieve the goals
 - a. Home Learning Environments
 - b. School expectations
 - c. Routines
5. *Build a plan for meeting the goals* [Study Smart Plan]
 - a. Establish and agree on Benchmarks to measure progress toward meeting the goals
 - b. Set review dates to discuss progress [about once a month is good.]
 - c. Decide action to take when benchmarks are not achieved [always positive steps]
 - d. At the end of each school year, return to step one.

Step 2 THE STUDY SMART PLAN: [The Routine]

1. A Consistent Place for studying only.

The quality of the study environment is not limited to home. It can be anywhere, but the characteristics remain constant

 - Plenty of lighting [100 watt bulb minimum]
 - Plenty of room to spread things out
 - Quiet: [no music, no TV, no phones-no interruptions]
 - A consistent time of day: [same time same place every day]
 - Have all required equipment at hand:[paper, pencils/pens/erasers/research devices etc.]
2. Breakfast is critical, dinner is critical, nutritious snacks are important
3. Consistent sleep is very important minimum of 8 hours daily is recommended
4. Parents' routines: Before Studying
 - Ask about what went on in school daily
 - Look at the assignments in the book for the day and week
 - Discuss what needs to be done today, what needs to be done pt and so forth.[Usually, the subject that is most difficult for a child to learn should be addressed 1st when your child is most alert, before your child becomes tired]
 - Look at long term projects and set a plan for breaking it down into manageable segments so things can proceed in an orderly manner... no cramming.
 - Check to see that all necessary equipment is at hand; ask your child if there are any special tools needed to complete homework.



- **START ON TIME/ END ON TIME...EVERY TIME** School nights are Sunday through Thursday. Friday and Saturday are free. Sunday evening, make sure that homework is ready for the next day. Do not do homework on Friday or Saturday, Proximity to the school day is important. On vacations, the day before school re-opens is the day to review work for the school day.

DURING STUDYING:

- In the lower grades sitting with your child during homework is very supportive and encouraging to your child.
- Help your child learn, but do not do their work for them.
- In the middle grades stay around for a few minutes to ensure that the homework is started.
- **DO NOT ALLOW** any interruptions during the study time.
- Ask to see the assigned work.
- Ask questions about the work in the assignments.
- Ask how your child checked their homework.
- Ask your child to explain the answers how did they arrive at the answer. You will see thinking patterns here.
- Be sure that your child's work is neat and organized in a logical [orderly] manner. The orderliness indicates clarity of thinking and helps your child to review the work later.

AFTER STUDYING: Getting the homework to and from school in some semblance of order is the routine that completes the circle.

- Buy a set of expandable folders multi-colored, see through works pretty well.
- Make one folder for each subject.
- As your child completes the homework, and you have checked to see that it is complete. Place the completed homework in the appropriate folder in the backpack that your child takes to school. The backpack becomes very important for this purpose. When your child goes to school they are confident that their work is in their color coded folder.
- At the end of each week, remove the week's work and put it in a folder at home [same color, marked "Home- subject area"]. When time arrives to study for large tests, you have all the previous tests and homework and other items to help your child remember what went on the way to the test.
- Save the home folders by marking period for the school year. At the end of



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the year your preparation for the next year of school can include a review of this year's work by subject, less guessing.

FINAL NOTE: This system is an outline. Each family circumstance is different. Adapt the system to your circumstances. The routine is important however you configure it.