

Parent Engagement



How to help your kids succeed ... talk, talk, talk

One of the best things parents can do to boost academic achievement – according to at least two decades of research – is talk to their kids about school.

Parents have a big influence over a child's work habits, attitudes about learning, and expectations of success, explains Dr. Corter, a professor at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto. "What parents say and do at home does matter, despite appearances to the contrary," he says.

The challenge for parents is to ask questions about school that get more than a grunt or a "fine" from kids. Dr. Corter encourages parents to express genuine curiosity about the child's day, including the child's play time and social experiences. But the typical conversation opener – "How

was school today?" – is often too vague to spark a meaningful exchange, Dr. Corter says.

Instead, parents could try asking for specifics, such as, "What kind of activities did you do in science class today?" and "How did you and your friends figure out how to build such a strong bridge out of Popsicle sticks?"

Stephen Hurley, an educator in Milton, Ontario, says he's shifted his approach with his five-year-old son Luke. Instead of asking, "What did you learn today?" Mr. Hurley says, "We began asking, 'What cool things did you discover today?'"

Dr. Corter cautions against grilling kids about how they did on a test. Focusing on report cards and test results may interfere with a child's motivation to learn, he says.

While setting high standards is important, he says a more balanced approach is to focus on progress by teaching children how to identify and reach steps toward appropriate goals – which may include:

1. Set high (but not unrealistic) expectations for your child.
2. Talk to your child about school.
3. Help your child develop good work habits and positive attitudes about learning.
4. Read with your child at home, in any language, even after your child can read alone.

Sources: *People for Education, 2011*
Globe and Mail, 2012 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/back-to-school/how-to-help-your-kids-succeed-talk-talk-talk/article4524102/?cmpid=rss1>

Stress: Does it affect our children

Young people today are no strangers to stress. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 41% of students say they are feeling constantly under stress. Stress among children is estimated to have increased 45% over the past 30 years. From an early age, kids experience stress from a range of sources. For some, stress goes hand in hand with the pressure to achieve; for others it is prompted by poverty, poor nutrition, or

inadequate health care; for others it may be linked to emotional deprivation or limited educational resources. Whatever the circumstance, any one of these factors can hamper a child's ability to learn without anxiety. Some children often cope with several problems at once and suffer from chronic stress – with consequences that can be disastrous for their learning and their lives.

Mental Health Minute

A wink or a simple high five are great ways to show kids your attention and affection. Kids will learn to feel loved and connected and a sense of self-worth...which in turn helps to lower their stress.

For more information go to:
www.kidshavestresstoo.org



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Digital Citizenship

Don't Stand By, STAND UP!

It is important to teach children to be an "Upstander", not a "Bystander"! If students suspect that someone in school is being cyber-bullied, they become part of the solution by reporting it. It is important for students to tell someone so that adults can take steps to assist all individuals involved to repair the harm and restore the relationship.

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause fear and harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is either a real or a perceived power imbalance. When bullying occurs via an electronic device, (texting, chatting, email, or social site) it is cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is just as (and maybe even more) damaging as physical bullying, because the audience could potentially reach millions. There is no safe place and no escaping the torment. Cyber-bullying runs under the radar of parents and teachers as it occurs in a world where they may have limited access

A student who is the target of cyber-bullying ideally should tell a trusted adult (parent, teacher) or report it online. However many are hesitant to do so for fear of reprisal. That is why it is essential that those who witness cyber-bullying take the initiative to become part of the solution and not a part of the problem.

You can help stop cyber-bullying by encouraging your child to always be respectful with their online postings and protecting their password. Discourage them from allowing friends to take hurtful photos of themselves or others. Suggest that your child stays away from sites that insult other students, and most importantly, when they witness someone being cyber-bullied, report it.

All TLDSB schools have a "Report Bullying" button in the "Students" section of their school website.

You can also call the Kids' Help Line at 1-800-668-6868. Encourage your child to not just stand by; stand up to cyber-bullying.

Online Resources

Here are a list of a few resources to help your children with their learning. These resources have been purchased by the national and provincial government as well as by Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Some of these resources need a password – ask your school for the password and you can download the programs for free!

As always, be aware of the websites your child is visiting. Explore these sites together.

Grolier Online Encyclopedia

<http://go-ontario.grolier.com>

Premier AT software

www.premierathome.com

Premier assistive technology is available to all TLDSB students to download. It is a collection of many assistive tools include the Talking Word Processor and the Universal Reader.

PASSWORD REQUIRED

Sakai Collaborative Learning Environment

<http://cle.tlidsb.on.ca>

All TLDSB students have their own account with a login and password.

