

The Home & School Connection

Welcome to the first issue of *The Home & School Connection* for parents of students who receive special education services.

Parents often wonder how they can help their children succeed in school. There are two key areas in which a parent can have tremendous influence: fostering a “success” attitude and helping their children develop good work/study skills. Because both are equally important- we have dedicated our first issue of *The Home & School Connection* to suggestions on how to help your child develop a “success” attitude and good work/study habits. We believe that working together parents and teachers can truly “make a difference.”

Michele Mitchell, Executive Director, Special Education and Assessment Services

Why do Teachers Assign Homework?

Homework can help students:

- Review and practice what they have learned
- Get ready for the next day's class
- Learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials, and encyclopedias
- Explore subjects more fully than time permits in the classroom



How to Set Up a Homework Study Center



Deciding where your child should do homework is as important as deciding when it should be done...

Some suggestions to consider:

Lighting- Good lighting is always important, but some children prefer brighter lights. Any child with a study desk should have a desk lamp.

Seating- Good posture *improves concentration*. For optimum attention to homework, a straight back chair at a desk or table is best.

Noise- It is best if a study center is *relatively quiet*. It should be located away from distracting toys, televisions or radios.

Study Materials- Stock the home/study center with pencils, pens, highlighters, erasers, paper, note cards and other supplies. *This helps because it saves time*. If possible, make a small chalkboard or slate that stays in the study area for exercises that are normally done on scratch paper. You can also hang a bulletin board in the study area for posting calendars, important notices, and directions for special projects.

A Computer- A computer is useful for accessing information for reports and projects, completing writing assignments and practicing basic skills. Make sure you have computer supplies handy in the study area.

Reference Materials- Reference materials are a must for a study area. A picture dictionary is ideal for young students. For children above the first grade we suggest a dictionary written at or above your child's level of understanding. Encyclopedias are also useful and can save trips to the library. If you have a computer in your home, consider buying an encyclopedia or dictionary on a CD-ROM.

Your Presence- The younger the child the more likely he will get to work if you are nearby. You don't have to hover, just be close enough to answer questions and provide encouragement. *Parent monitoring of homework/study time increases the likelihood that students will keep up with their assignments.*

Prioritize- Establishing and maintaining good homework habits will send the message that you support your child's education. Make leisure time activities (TV, video games, computer games and listening to music) a privilege that is possible only after homework has been done.

Positive Behavior Support

Every parent and caregiver struggles one time or another with how to set limits on children's behavior. The goal of positive discipline is to teach children to develop safe, socially responsible behavior that respects the feelings and property of others. Children prefer positive attention rather than negative attention, and you can encourage desirable behavior through the following positive techniques.

Make sure your expectations of your child are reasonable.

Model desirable behavior-children learn from example.

Be consistent, but not rigid.

Provide choices and decision-making opportunities whenever possible.

Set rules that convey respect for children - keep their interests in mind.

Always acknowledge children's feelings-especially when you must set a limit on their behavior. How they feel is important.

Be involved in your child's life- spend time with your child

Parenting Resources:

- www.positiveparenting.com/resources

US Department of Education Publication Center

- www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/PARENTS/

Virginia Department of Education's Link for Parents



"12 More Tips for Disciplining Children"

- Hold high expectations
- Set clear and consistent limits
- Enforce limits with consequences
- To get respect-give it
- Be your child's parent first
- Keep your promises
- Demonstrate your love
- Use the power of routines
- Expect your child to test your rules regularly
- Ask questions so you can make an informed decision
- Delay your answer to give yourself time to think
- Make your decision, and then make it work

What you need to know about... High School Graduation

In this issue, we will spotlight the requirements for a Standard Diploma.

Discipline Area	Units of Credit	Number Required to be Verified
English	4	2
Mathematics	3	1
Laboratory Science	3	1
History and Social Sciences	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1	
Electives	6	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	22	6

Did You Know That...?

The Center for Disease Control recommends the following sleep schedules for school- aged children:

3-5 years: 11- 13 hours nightly

5-12 years: 9-11 hours nightly

13-18: 9-11 hours nightly

Establishing and maintaining good sleep habits enables a child to "wind down" or recuperate from his/her day. *Make sure that your child avoids caffeinated beverages and sugary foods in the hours before bedtime.* Also, he/she should avoid stimulating activities (video games, television etc.) just before retiring to bed. Instead, read a story with your child or if your child is older designate bedtime as a "silent reading time" for all family members.

In Virginia, students are required to take Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. A passing score on these tests is the most conventional way to earn a verified credit. However, there are other options for earning verified credits which are outlined in the *High School Course Options* booklet on pages 23-24. If you don't already have a copy of this booklet, you can secure one from your son or daughter's high school counselor.

It's never too soon to discuss high school graduation requirements with your teenager even if he/she is still in middle school. **Remember:** Set the expectation that graduating from high school is a *realizable* goal that can be accomplished with hard work and planning.