

Preparing Your Children for School

Part 2 – Communication, Homework, Meaningful Praise, and Expectations

(Compiled from various professional articles and counseling experience. Exact sources are unknown)

As the first day of school approaches, try to visit the school, teacher, and other school personnel with your child. Talk to your youngster about topics related to school. Children need the opportunity to express their concerns. As the year progresses, talk with your children about what is happening at school, listen to their experiences each day, and learn about their concerns.

Parents have an important role to play in helping their youngsters with homework. Acting as a coach, help your kids learn how to do their homework successfully, but don't do it for them. Check their homework. Make sure it is completed. Provide a place in your home where homework can be done with limited interference. Help your youngster learn time-management skills by helping them establish a time for homework, a time for chores, a time for TV, a time for hanging with friends, a time to go to bed, and a time to start a new day. Teaching them time management is different from personally establishing the schedule for your child.

You will have many opportunities throughout the year to encourage, reinforce, and express interest in your child. "Being there" is one of them. Attending the open house, the parent-teacher conference, the game, the concert, the play; all send messages of parental care and support. Reinforcing your child's school successes is crucial but need not be monetary. The best reinforcement is meaningful praise.

Expectations are important – expectations of the school and teachers, and those of the parent, and those of the student. One of the difficulties faced by students who have been labeled as slow is that many of their teachers and sometimes their parents have lower expectations. The lack of expectations frequently cuts students off from higher math, science, and literature. On the other hand, there is a fine line between realistic expectations and being too demanding – too much pressure to succeed can lead to high levels of stress and other problems, which will often impede a student's success.

