

JULY 2015 Education

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Ensure a great semester

by Michelle Sagalyn

School will be back in session before you know it. As such, is important to make sure your child gets off to a good start because this could have impact over their entire academic year.

To support your child, Successful Study Skills 4 Students recommends four ways you can make sure your student has a great first semester.

Set goals

Before school starts, sit down with your child and talk about their goals for the semester. You might be surprised at how seriously they take the challenge. The goal doesn't have to be big either — much can be accomplished with little steps, which supports the bigger mission of giving your child confidence with the sense of accomplish that come from achieving the goal.

For example, the goal might be to finish and hand-in all homework on time, use a planner or calendar for all assignments, and

take notes on all test book readings. Setting realistic goals will motivate your child to do well because they'll have something concrete to shoot for.

The most important element is to make sure that your child is active in planning and thinking about what goals they set for themselves.

Check notes

Make sure your child is taking good notes in school. This is easy to check — you can ask to see their notes when they come home. Good and thorough notes will not only give your child a better understanding of the material for long term, but also will also significantly increase test and quiz results.

Homework

Another way to ensure success is to make sure your child is doing their homework. Homework usually is an important component of the final semester's grade, so it is

important to make sure your child does their homework and turns it in.

Homework is also a great way for your child to start to assume independence and responsibility. Especially for a middle school student, the best way for you to assist in your student's homework is to make sure they establish a routine and have a quiet, distraction free place to do their work, which we discuss below.

Get a study space

It is very important for your child to have a quiet distraction-free space to study and do homework. This means, no television, no texting, no online time — unless it is strictly for homework purposes.

If your child has a cell phone, you might consider holding on to it until their homework is finished. Make sure your child has all the supplies needed before they sit down to do homework. If your student does homework in a public place, such as the kitchen

or dining room, set the tone through example by not talking on the phone or watching TV near your child.

Your child can have a great semester with the right support and motivation. Every child wants to succeed; they just need the tools, skills, and determination to achieve their goals.

About S4

Successful Study Skills 4 Students (S4) provides students with the tools, strategies, and study skills needed to build successful academic careers. By teaching logical, easy-to-implement study skills, S4 helps students establish and build habits for a foundation for learning and academic success.

Information: S4StudySkills.com or 203-418-2003.

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Signs a tutor might be necessary

School is not always easy, and some students struggle as they transition from grade to grade. As students get older, some who may have experienced smooth sailing as youngsters may find they need some extra help grasping the material as coursework becomes more complicated.

Those who need some extra clarification and reinforcement may first turn to their parents. But parents may not be familiar with certain subjects or capable of explaining certain concepts in terms kids can understand. In such situations, tutors can prove to be valuable resources to get kids back on the right academic track.

One-on-one attention from a tutor can benefit all types of learners. Students who discover newfound success under the guidance of a tutor may have more self-confidence in the classroom. Parents wondering if a tutor can help their children may want to consider the following indicators that students may need tutors.

Consistently falling grades: Tutors may be necessary for students whose grades are gradually on the decline. First speak with your child's teachers, who may recommend tutors who specialize in certain subjects.

Confusion in and out of the classroom: Some kids struggle to grasp certain concepts, and such confusion can sometimes be remedied with the kind of intense study available in tutoring sessions.

Low confidence: Some kids' confidence wanes when their grades suffer. Kids whose grades have been on the decline may feel a sense of defeat even before they take a test or work on an assignment. Tutors can help restore confidence by creating small victories that slowly build up to larger successes.

Indifference to coursework: No student will be captivated by every subject he or she studies, but there should be some subjects that students find engaging. Students battling indifference toward their coursework may benefit from a dynamic tutor who can present subject matter in new ways and revive students' interest.

Students who are struggling in the classroom may need some extra help outside the classroom, and many tutors are adept at reviving interest in subjects kids are studying at school. Some teachers may recommend certain tutors, while others may do some tutoring work themselves.



Kids get a casual classroom setting during tutoring at S4.



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