

ACTION INFORMATION SHEET

A Parent's Vision and High Expectations are Powerful

Your vision and high expectations of your child's future are powerful – and research shows that they impact your child's school achievement. From the time your child begins school until he or she graduates from high school, your expectations and your belief in the importance of education can motivate your child to fulfill his or her dreams. Parents who expect their children to finish high school and attend college or a vocational program communicate that belief in many ways. Studies show that parents who do this give their children an advantage at school.

This particular form of parent involvement influences your child to believe in the power of education. The vision and expectations you have for your child's schooling can be expressed in many ways.

You are providing high expectations and helping your child succeed when you:

Communicate Hopes and Expectations

It's important to discuss your hopes and dreams for your child's education early and regularly with him or her, and even kindergarten isn't too early to start! These conversations let your child know that education is important to your family. You give your child a goal to aim for when you:

- Ask about and listen to your child's thoughts on the future
- Share your hopes for education after high school
- State your belief in your child's ability to achieve career or vocational training

Your hopes and expectations are the foundation for achieving goals and the most powerful influence on your child's school performance. Expect your child to:

- Give school his best effort and attendance
- Follow through on her responsibilities, like completing homework, turning it in on time, and studying for tests
- Pursue education beyond high school

Connect School to Life

Knowing what your child is studying in school helps focus your conversation of future goals. It keeps your child looking forward. You help build the bridge of "from here to there" when you:

- Connect school subjects to current events, personal interests, or career goals through conversation with your child
- Connect school subjects to your child's activities, hobbies, and places your child goes
- Share your own personal successes and challenges with school

Build Study Skills and Strategies

Children in middle school begin to take ownership of the goals, beliefs, and motivations they've been taught at home. Help them reinforce the skills they need to make academic progress in school and beyond. You do this when you:

- Make homework and studying a priority at home
- Help your child learn to break down long or difficult assignments into easier and more manageable pieces
- Keep reading time high and screen time low outside of school (screen time includes video games, computer games, social media, TV, and even cell phone games!)
- Help your child learn how to manage time for studies, outside activities, and household/job responsibilities
- Say "You can do it!" Tell your child you believe he or she is capable of doing the school work and then praise any progress.
- Help your child learn how to find school help, such as staying after school to work with a teacher

Help Your Child Plan for the Future

The academic choices children make starting in middle school can impact their transition to college and vocational training. That's why your guidance and help with planning are key to your child's future success.

You can help your child plan for the future when you:

- Know the classes your child needs to earn a high school diploma and make sure he or she takes them
- Learn about high school classes that your child must take to be eligible for postsecondary programs and encourage him or her to take them
- Understand the admission process for entering a postsecondary program, such as college or vocational training

Frequently Asked Questions

Parent's Question: I want to support my son and help with homework, but now that he's in middle school, I don't feel like I know how. How can I stay involved?

You remain key to your child's success in school, even when schools and subjects change, and even if you aren't an expert in algebra or one of the other subjects. That's because your expectations will motivate your child and give him confidence and fuel for his dreams. Regularly share the "big picture" with him: your hopes for him and your confidence in his ability. To help him reach his goals, give him some day-to-day rules and tools to use. Expect him to attend school every day, do his assigned work, and try his best. Look at how he spends time, do things together that connect what he's learning in school and real life, support healthy friendships and activities, and help him learn to manage time, too. Let him know when you see him making progress.