Seven Strategies for Keeping Your Child’s Reading Progress on Track

You’re proud of your children for learning to read! But now that they have accomplished this feat, how can you support them? Remember that reading skills must be developed and maintained. The older your children get, the more they’ll depend on them for learning.

To support your children’s education and keep reading progress on track:

Relax. Let your children select reading material they like. They don’t have to limit themselves to books. They can read comics, magazines, video game instructions and recipes.

Make connections. When you plan a trip, find books related to the location. Or have them read about historical events that happened near your home.

Build excitement. Make reading irresistible. Let your children stay up 15 minutes later to read in bed. Or let them build a fort and read inside by flashlight.

Role-play. Turn favorite books into family plays or movies. Add props and costumes.

Join (or start) a book club. Get friends together for book-related discussions, activities and snacks.

Set a timer. If your children resist reading, a timer might help. Say, “Read to me for three minutes. When the timer beeps, you can stop.” Add a minute every few days.

Read aloud. Try reading your children more advanced books. When parents read, kids enjoy more challenging words and stories.

Reduce Frustration by Keeping Your Discipline Technique Simple

There’s no way around it: your children are going to misbehave—and it’s going to be frustrating! You can’t change that, but you can control your expectations and responses. That’s why the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages parents to:

Be realistic about children’s abilities. If you demand too much from your child, you’ll both be disappointed. Make a few simple rules they can understand. Match them to their age and maturity-level. Then expect a reasonable amount of cooperation.

Mean what you say. Think carefully before you state a rule, promise or consequence. Is it fair? Will you really follow through? Once you’ve made a good decision, stick to it! Kids make better choices when they can count on what parents say.

Consider your children’s feelings. Kids appreciate parents’ understanding. It helps them behave. Say, “I know you’re disappointed that you can’t have a sleepover. Maybe another night.”

Be forgiving. No child—or parent—is perfect. If you do something you regret, such as yell at your child, discuss it when you’re calm. Apologize and say what you’ll do differently next time. Then keep your word! Teach your child that everyone can learn from mistakes.
Do You Handle School Problems in Positive Ways?

No parent likes hearing that their child has a problem at school. But your reaction can make the difference between helping to solve the problem and standing in the way of a solution.

Answer yes or no to each question below to find out if you are helping address school issues positively:

1. Do you listen to the teacher when she contacts you before you start explaining away your child’s behavior? Being defensive doesn’t build cooperation.

2. Do you wait to discuss the issue with your child until you can do so calmly and without anger?

3. Do you involve your child in developing a solution to the problem?

4. Do you let the teacher know how you plan to handle the problem?

5. Do you stay in touch with the teacher and the school to see if your solution is working?

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are trying to solve problems in positive ways. For each no answer, try that idea.

Five Test-Taking Tips Can Lead to Test Success

Regardless of how well your children know the material for a test, they will do better if they know some basic test-taking strategies. Your children should:

Ask questions. If they don’t understand the directions or a question, they should ask the teacher for clarification.

Manage their time. Tell them to look over the questions and answer the easy ones first. If they get stuck on an especially hard question, they should move on and come back to that question when they are finished with everything else.

Use the process of elimination when answering multiple choice questions. They should cross off answers they know can’t be right. Then they can focus on the ones that are left.

Be neat. Their handwriting should be clear and their mistakes should be erased completely.

Use extra time to review their answers and check for careless mistakes.

“Few things help a child more than to place responsibility on him, and let him know he is trusted.”

—Booker T. Washington