

## **Studying – an important activity**

Studying is essentially a major part of your child's life and if he/she is expected to do well, then a proper Study System must be developed. Education is of paramount importance and the school must work collaboratively with the parents to instill proper study habits.

This is the age of information and around us there is an information revolution that is occurring. Your child will never be short of information, but how he/she deals with this information will determine how successful he/she becomes.

A Study System is simply a system when the child understands how to study. If a proper system is developed, then a student can carry this with him all through his academic growth and development and by extension his life as learning is a life-long experience. One never stops learning. An old saying states, "A person who is tired of learning is tired of living."

## **Listening**

The classroom is the place to learn and the classroom is the place to listen. Listening is one of the most important skills to develop if a student is to do well in school.

A good listener will -:

- Concentrate on what is happening in class
- Not talk in class – you cannot listen if you are talking.

Before class, a student should review the main points of the previous class. In most cases, the homework assignments are structured in such a way that revision is done through these exercises.

- Always insist that your child completes the assignment tasks.
- Make a habit of checking these assignments daily

After a class, a good student must always review and think about what was done in class.

- Have discussions with your child about the things that were done that day. If he can tell you, then it shows that he is a good listener.
- Listening is the key to success.

Do not confuse listening and hearing. You can hear something but not be listening. To listen, you must be thinking. Listening is an active, not passive activity. Parents can play a key role in helping to develop listening skills in their children.

## **Reading**

Another important skill is reading and a good student must develop proper reading skills. Reading goes a long way beyond word recognition. Many parents often confuse word recognition with reading. Very often, parents boast that their children can read when in fact, they can merely recognize words. Some children have the ability to pronounce every word in a short passage, but only if that child can tell you what he has read, then and only then he is considered to be a good reader. The student must read for meaning.

A child becomes a good reader only through practice. Have your child read to you and then discuss with him/her what was read. Allow the child to put things in his/her own words. When a student can read something and then put it into his own words shows a very high level of understanding and intelligence. Encourage this at home.

Every family must have a reading time. Everyday, at a fixed time, the family should sit together for a reading session. Everything else at this time must be put on hold. Read for fifteen minutes (this time can be extended). At the end of the session, each person has five minutes to discuss what was read. By doing such an exercise, the child has the opportunity to read, understand and discuss. Encouragement and assistance are provided by the parents.

If a student practices to read, his reading level would improve and his study time is going to become more productive. Incidentally, this is an excellent idea for family quality time.

## **Vocabulary**

An important part of understanding what is read is vocabulary. Parents can make flash cards (strips of Bristol board approximately 7cm by 12cm). Index cards which are available in most stationery stores can be used.

On these flash cards, parents can write the new and difficult words on one side and the meaning of these words on the other. Children can use the dictionary to find these meanings. Using a dictionary is a good skill to develop in a child.

Every night, spend ten minutes reviewing these words. After a short time, the student learns the words and meanings. The child will now be able to include these words in his everyday vocabulary.

This also helps in spelling, writing (creative writing), speaking and language as a whole.

## Preparing to Study

Here are some tips on preparing to study -:

- Find a good place to study. Ideally a desk is the most appropriate place. There should be nothing on the desk except what is needed specifically for the task that is to be done.
- Good lighting – this means that the place must not be too bright; not too dim.
- Chair – a comfortable chair is needed.
- Books and other supplies – the student should have all the books and supplies that he needs close to where he is studying. This would eliminate the number of times he gets up from his study place.
- Clock – this helps to manage time efficiently. Management of time in studying is very important.
- Eliminate all distractions – this includes television, telephone, radio, loud music etc.
- The student must start immediately when he sits to study. Do not delay.
- Know exactly what you are supposed to do. Each child should have a homework assignment book. Refer to this book to complete assignments and projects.
- A healthy body is a healthy mind. A student must be in good health in order to be successful -
  - eat healthily
  - exercise ( play)
  - get enough sleep.

For maximum effectiveness, a student should study in the same place most of the time.

## A Study System

### 1. Mood

Set a positive mood for study. Study is not a punishment. Do not yell to your child. "Get you books now!"

Parents need to encourage and motivate their children to study. Do not always reprimand.

### 2. Understand

If you child has a problem, do not give him the answers. Discuss, explain, and help him to understand. Very often, discussing and explaining is a time consuming exercise and parents are quick to simply give the answers. But remember, if you give the answer, you are encouraging your child to become dependent. A quality of a good student is independent. Let him/her know that you are there to help him – do not give answers.

3. Recall  
After completing a task (or even during the task), a student should stop and recall and review what he or she has learned – in his/her own words. It is very important to express things in your own words.
4. Digest  
Allow the student to go back to what he/she didn't understand to well. Review the information and then express it in you own words.
5. Expand  
Help the student to make this information interesting. Link it to something that he/she already knows. In most cases, new knowledge is simply an expansion of what has already been learned.
6. Review  
Go over the material that you have completed.

No study system can ever be complete or ideal on its own. It must be related to the context of the student and the environment in which the student operates. Always encourage the student to think productively rather than reproductively. Thinking productively has been linked to many of the geniuses of our time.

### **Additional tips:**

1. Encourage your child to look at a problem in many different ways. Do not limit your thoughts to a single viewpoint.  
Sometimes when something appears difficult and the solution can't come to you right away, leave it for a while and then return to it.
2. Visualize problems by drawing diagrams and making models.
3. Combine ideas – mix the new information with the old. Look for patterns and relationships.
4. Ask probing questions – *why, what if, what would happen if, what else.*
5. Have no fear of failure. Most inventions have been discovered by accidents.

Parents, the biggest and most worthwhile investment you will ever make in your life is the investment you make in your children.