



Helping Your Child to Finish Well

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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It's the beginning of June and only a few weeks until students will be facing a summer of leisure. For some, it will be the end of their formal academic life. Others will be preparing for exams and still others are at the beginning or middle of their rise in the system.

No matter what grade level they are at, the choices and behaviours of June will have consequences or rewards that can affect the rest of your child's life. The differences between passing and failing, average and excellence are not as large as people think.

As a parent, there are some things that you can help your child do so they end the school year well:

1. **SLEEP** - Tired minds and bodies under-perform. My dad used to say that an hour before midnight was worth two hours after midnight. Warmer weather should not be a reason to extend bed times when there are classes to attend in the morning. Many teenagers have difficulties getting up in the morning because they have spent long hours the night before on social media and internet sites. Help your child to wind down and get into bed at a reasonable hour and everyone will be a lot happier and more productive.
2. **HEALTHY DIET** - A good breakfast does not consist of Jalapeno chips and a Sprite. And skipping breakfast is never a good option. The brain is just like a gas tank. When there is good fuel, the body and the vehicle can function well. Very few children will refuse to eat healthy food that is prepared for them especially if it is shared with someone who they know cares about them.
3. **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT** - Research has indicated that conflict is very detrimental for children. Yelling, arguing and friction in the family can be very negative and lead to depression in children. Silence with underlying tension can be just as bad. Children need peace and encouragement so that they can focus on the things that they need to do and be able to do them well.
4. **ATTENDANCE** - Much of the learning in schools is verbal. When a child is on time and pays attention during class, s/he can earn good marks. Absenteeism is a threat to success and children should therefore never miss school unless they are seriously ill.
5. **KNOWING WHAT IS EXPECTED** - The reason that children are in a school setting is so that they can learn things that they don't already know. If they don't understand directions, think a deadline is not important or believe that their performance doesn't matter, they will likely face disappointment and embarrassment when reality sets in. When children are ignorant about what needs to be done or confused you can contact the teacher or see if the needed information is on the school website.
6. **STUDY** - It only takes a few minutes to review a spelling list or memorize important dates in history. In fact, it is amazing how much a person can learn in only a few days. But year-end study is not about learning new material. It is just reinforcing the learning that has been going on all year. Even a few minutes of focussed study a day can increase a grade by several marks. If you, as a parent, do not feel that you are strong in a subject, find someone who can help your child. Perhaps you have a friend who excels in math, a sister who can review science notes or a grandma who would explain a health or social studies unit.

As a parent you are not completely responsible for the grades that your child earns but I'm sure that you would like your child to do well. Follow the tips in this article and I'm sure that you, your child and the school will be very pleased with the results!