



Parenting - My Child is Failing in School!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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We are in the last few weeks before the end of the school year and it isn't too late to help your child finish well!

It's difficult to find a spelling test with a large red "F" in the backpack or hear from a teacher that your child is not passing math but, as a parent, you are responsible. Oh, I've heard lots of parents abdicate from the process claiming "It's not my responsibility. I've told the child what to do and if he fails, then he's the one who suffers". Sorry, but I just don't agree.

The reason God put children in families is because they aren't able to make all the good choices without support. You might not like being a parent but you are one and with that comes responsibility. It is not all up to the school system - that's why your child has homework!

If you want your child to do well in school then you need to do a few things:

1. Make sure they have enough rest. Establish a bedtime and enforce it consistently. (A few minutes after the bedtime routine is completed, check to make sure the light is out and the child is actually asleep - not playing with their computer).
2. Serve breakfast! Sprite and Jalapeno chips will not fire the brain any more than sugar in a gas tank will move your vehicle!
3. Be on time. When a child is late for school s/he is really behind and set up for ridicule from the other students. The most important part of every class is the first 5 minutes and the last 5 minutes as that is when the teacher talks about the important things that will happen.
4. Send a nutritious lunch to school with the child. S/he might state they don't need one but when hunger pangs hit they will appreciate it and not be tempted to look for fast food.
5. Establish an after school routine. Doing homework is easier if there is a place for it to be done (not lounging on a couch) at a table with proper lighting and tools (pencils, rulers, erasers etc.)
6. Limit use of technology. Computers, iPods, televisions and other technological devices can be distractions. It is better to offer time using them as rewards for completed work rather than as "part of life" and then take them away with an argument.
7. Allow power working to complete homework. Research has shown that working in 10 minute intervals is much more effective than hour-long marathons. Set a timer for 10 minutes and challenge the child to see how much can be done before it rings. Then set the timer for another 10 minutes during which time the child can do anything s/he chooses. The next 10 minutes is power working followed by activities of choice. You will find that this method gets the work done in less time than arguing would take.
8. Offer encouragement. When you look over the shoulder of a child that says "I care about you". Even if there is only one correct answer on the page - comment on that one and then help with the others.

9. Meet with the teachers. It is sad to arrive at Parent Night and realize that the teachers are all polished up and ready but the parents didn't show up. If you can't make the appointed time, schedule a private interview time. Teachers LOVE to help and will be happy that you will meet with them.

10. Get honest about the situation. You need to know exactly where the child is having problems. Is it division, reading comprehension, participation or attitude?

11. Hire an expert. You may not be able to do the math but you can find someone who can do the tutoring. Consider hiring a retired teacher. Some colleges and schools even offer free classes for those who need to brush up on skills.

12. Celebrate with your child. Attend all concerts, awards ceremonies and other school programs and be a cheerleader (yes, they may be embarrassed but it will be a "good embarrassment" and a few years from now they will be telling their children that you were there for everything!)

School is your child's job and needs to be given priority over other things (like part-time employment or sporting activities). But as a parent you need to take some responsibility for the process and outcome. It's the same as going to the dentist. You might not know how to fill the cavities but you need to get the child to the right professional on time!

Quit passing the buck onto the school system and the child. If the child fails he will suffer the consequences but so will you. You will have the child living at home an extra year and be required to watch self-esteem drop. In fact, you may even see the child give up and not be able to get to graduation. And think of what it does to the next generation.

The school year isn't over yet. You've got a few weeks to get back on track.

Now where is the phone number for that school teacher.....?