

# Raising a High-Achieving Student

## 9 Research-Based Tips for Parents and Caregivers



### Set high expectations

Talented students rise to the challenge – so talk with your child about what you expect and keep raising the bar. Researchers have found that regularly communicating high academic expectations for your child (for example, telling them that you know they will go to a great college) has a bigger impact on student success than other parental actions like being very involved in homework.



### Promote a “growth mindset”

Doing well in school takes more than just talent. It takes discipline, hard work and focus. Offer praise when you see your child trying hard, and say things like, “Great job! I know you worked really hard on that report” rather than, “Great job! You are really good at writing” (which implies writing is something you are either good at or not, rather than a skill you can improve). When he gets frustrated and says something like, “I just don’t know how to do this,” add “yet” to the end of the sentence: “You just don’t know how to do this... yet.”



### Celebrate learning

Learning is exciting! Pay close attention to your child’s work in school and celebrate accomplishments and those “a-ha” moments of discovery. That means more than praising good grades or test scores. When she brings home a big project, ask her to show it to you and explain what she did. When she’s excited about something she learned, ask her to explain it to you. Look for small opportunities to tell her how proud you are of her work as a student and the person she’s becoming.



### Seek out challenges

As a parent, you never want to hear your child say, “That class is so easy.” While you might feel proud, it’s probably a sign that he isn’t being appropriately challenged. Register your child for the most challenging courses in school, including AP and honors classes. If your child is younger, tell his teacher that you want him to be challenged and stretched in class, and seek out new opportunities like student clubs or extracurricular activities that push him even further.



### Make daily reading a habit

Reading is absolutely essential to learning, and numerous studies have shown that students who read more and enjoy reading do better in school. Go to the library regularly and make sure your child always has access to good books. Ask questions about what she’s reading and suggest new things to read based on her interests. Librarians and English teachers can help offer ideas.



### Clear space for learning

Sometimes, this means literal space – finding a quiet, well-lit place in your home where your child can do homework and study without interruptions. Sometimes, it means reducing distractions, like limiting how much screen time he gets each day, or turning down the music during homework time. Or it might mean ensuring your child gets enough sleep to focus on school. Most of all, it means clearly communicating that being a student is his top priority right now.



### Know their friends

A student’s friends and peers can have a powerful impact on their success in school. Encourage your child to form friendships with kids who share your family’s commitment to education, expand your child’s perspective, and make it easier—not harder—to focus on learning.



### Encourage personal interests

Curiosity is fuel for learning – and not everything worth learning gets taught in school. Find out what your child is curious or passionate about (Coding? Video production? Dance?) and help her explore those areas by going to museums or events, finding books or videos on the topic, or looking for camps or classes where she can learn more.



### Keep it fun

High expectations are important, but so is giving your child room to breathe, have fun, and be a kid. Be serious about school but be careful not to overdo the pressure, and look for ways to help your child take a break through sports, arts, or other activities he loves.