

## ***HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN SCHOOL***

There are many ways that parents can help their children do well in school, and none of these require additional homework for you or your child!

### ***WHEN YOUR CHILD IS A PRESCHOOLER:***

1. Surround your child with books, and read to your child every day.
2. Let your child see you reading books.
3. Turn off the television and computer.
4. Allow your child the opportunity to play with toys that allow her to develop her creativity. Toys like crayons, play dough, building blocks, and clothes for dressing up all allow your child the opportunity to think creatively.
5. Allow your child to have a lot of unstructured time – time to run outside, time to sit quietly and read, time to create new games.
6. Consider having your child start kindergarten at a slightly older age – this is especially helpful for boys.
7. Make sure your child is learning to follow directions – to listen to you and obey you when you give instructions.

### ***WHEN YOUR CHILD IS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:***

1. Try to structure your schedule so your child is able to sleep for at least 10 hours each night. Children who are not tired are more likely to learn. (If your child snores loudly every night, please let your pediatrician know since your child may not be sleeping properly.)
2. Make sure your child eats breakfast every day. Children who eat breakfast do better in school, especially on tasks that require memorization. Breakfast needs to include protein (meat, eggs, beans, dairy, nuts) to assure that the child's blood sugar remains at a constant level during the morning.
3. Children who are iron deficient may have more difficulty learning. Since many children do not eat lots of meat, consider giving your child a multi-vitamin with iron. Some studies show that magnesium and zinc can also help with learning and paying attention – these minerals are usually included in a multivitamin.
4. You may consider giving your child an omega 3 supplement, like flax seed oil.
5. Continue to spend time each day reading to your child – or allowing your older child time to sit quietly and read.
6. Let your children see you reading and continuing to learn.
7. Have a specific time each day that is set aside for homework. If possible, allow your child the opportunity to play and have a snack after school before starting homework.
8. Continue to limit the amount of time that your child watches television or plays video/computer games (< 1 hour / day). Children who watch less television and spend less time in front of a computer screen are able to pay attention better at school.
9. Do not allow your child to have a television or computer in his bedroom. Children who have televisions and computers in their bedroom do not do as well in school.
10. Enjoy meals together – and spend time sharing ideas with each other. Children who eat dinner together with their families do better in school.
11. Allow your child time to play outdoors. Children who spend time outdoors also do better in school and have fewer emotional problems.

Used with permission: Jane E. Anderson, M.D. “Prescriptions for Parents”