



MAY 2012

## SAT\*/ACT®: Tips For Parents to Help Students Prepare for Tests

How can you help your kids to study for tests in school, to be determined and purposeful in their academics, and to achieve the success both you and they want?

Here are some simple tips for parents of middle and high school students.

**Be the adult.** Adolescents and teens look to us adults for guidance, even though it's against the secret Teen Agers' Rulebook to admit it. So, let them know you're monitoring their progress, that you're aware of due dates for major reports and projects, that you know when report cards are coming out. Be omniscient – or at least let them believe you are.

**Monitor.** Keep track of their homework, their reading assignments, and their preparation for tests. For most kids, you don't need to look at every page of every assignment, but you do want them to know you'll be checking up with them every evening at a specific time. This sets deadlines and a routine. Routines help kids keep on track. They'll complain now and then, but they rely on and need these routines.

**Help them organize.** Help kids make the most of their time by insisting they keep a planner – electronic or on paper, doesn't matter – and regularly refer to it. Look over it with them periodically. Show them how to break up big, intimidating assignments into smaller, piece-of-cake ones. Show them how studying a little bit every day is efficient and confidence-building, and how cramming is just the opposite. Help them to estimate how long assignments will take to complete, so they can budget their time effectively. Mark the family calendar so everyone knows what's due when. Nag when they show they need nagging.

**Set goals.** With them, set goals for the short term and long term. Keep the pressure low but steady. Determine what rewards would be fair and reasonable. Extra curfew time for a special occasion? Some personal alone-time with you and no siblings? Also, determine together what appropriate consequences should be. Loss of curfew time? Temporary lowering of privileges?

**Give them the essentials.** Provide a quiet, comfortable place for them to do their work. Doesn't have to be a fancy set-up, but it should be conducive to study, with supplies, materials, books, and other necessities nearby. Help them decide on a workable routine that's efficient for learning and for the family activities. Help them see what time of day is the best for studying. We all learn differently, so what's good for one child may not be the best for another. Stick with the routines.

**Stay positive.** It's difficult sometimes, but keep your spirits up. Kids pick up on our moods and emotions, so stay encouraging and supportive. Share stories of times in your life when you've made mistakes or errors of judgment and what you've learned from those times.

Teens want independence, they want to take control of their lives, but they surely need our guidance, perhaps at this time of life more than ever. Be there for them, show them the way, lead them, and give them increasing amounts of independence along the way when they show they're ready for it.

### In this issue:

- Quiz Your Kids
- A Message from Dr. Rick
- SAT Prep: Do Your Homework



*A Message  
From  
Dr. Rick*

## Why Homework is Still Important

Is there a school-related topic more on everyone's mind than homework? Seems like it's a perennial favorite, as hotly debated today as it was when I started teaching over forty years ago.

The simple fact of the matter, after all the arguments, whether we like it or not, is that homework is here to stay. There simply aren't enough hours in a school day for kids and teachers to accomplish everything we want them to. Some of the work has to come home.

Here's why homework helps kids learn and why we parents and teachers should insist on its wise and helpful use.

**Benefit from the practice.** Homework allows learners to practice their skills. Any teacher will tell you that the level of skills in any class varies. Some kids speed. Others poke. Homework allows kids to practice their skills, just as athletes and musicians practice theirs. Increase speed. Deepen understanding. Build mastery.

**Refresh the memory.** We all need a little memory tweaking from time to time. Homework allows kids to remember what they've already learned, to refresh their knowledge, and to strengthen their memories.

**Establish good study habits.** Success in school – and life – depends on good habits and attitudes. Besides preparing kids for the weekly...

**Read the rest at  
[DrRickBlog.com](http://DrRickBlog.com)**

# QUIZ YOUR KIDS

Research has shown that when students take their studying seriously enough to quiz themselves on their progress, they up the ante for success. This is, after all, why teachers give no-risk pre-quizzes a few days before a major spelling, algebra, or social studies test. Students get an idea of what they've mastered and where they need to spend additional time and effort.

Here are some suggestions for no-risk, no-stress, pre-test quizzing that can be fun as well as helpful. Watch those grades and confidence rise.

## Give quizzes yourself.

When your child has a test coming up, encourage her to begin studying several days ahead of time. Each night during homework and study time, spend some time with her asking questions from her notes, textbook, online reading, or teacher materials.

## Make flash cards together.

Flash cards are particularly helpful for material that needs to be learned with "automaticity," or with such mastery that you don't even think about it. Quizzing with flash cards can be fun, especially for younger kids, who feel a real sense of accomplishment for correct answers.

## Encourage study buddies.

When kids quiz each other, they're particularly serious about doing well. They want to succeed in front of each other, and they enjoy thinking up questions that are even tougher than anything the teacher will throw at them.

## Use a stopwatch.

Timed quizzes add another dimension to studying. Set a simple stopwatch for a minute or two, or use an egg timer, and ask a series of questions to see how many your studier can get. This can be particularly helpful for material he'll need to know off the top of his head.

## Keep a chart of progress.

Kids like to see their progress in tangible form. Together, create a simple chart of correct answers, new concepts mastered, improved times, or thoughtful interpretations. Let her see how her studying improves her learning and grades.

## Talk about the results.

Talk about improvements and the valuable impact of studying. Remember, you're laying the groundwork for future achievement and good study habits.

## Talk about test-taking strategies.

Remind him of good practices for the important test day. Relax. Read directions carefully. Answer first the questions he's surest about, then go back and deal with the others. Keep an eye on the time. Encourage him to remind himself of the work he's done to prepare.





# SAT PREP: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

In just a few weeks, 17-year-old Caroline will take the SAT for the first time.

“Well I know it’s like a really important test and I am really kind of concerned about that because I want to go to a really good college,” says Caroline.

To prepare for the college entrance exam, Caroline enrolled in an SAT prep course where she learned some useful strategies.

“For instance,” she says, “What kind of questions are going to be asked and timing- it speeds me up so that I can get through more questions and hopefully get more answers right. “

## Tips for Parents

Anxiety stemming from standardized tests is not uncommon among today’s teens. In fact, a poll conducted by Public Agenda showed that 73 percent of surveyed students said they get nervous before taking a test, while 5 percent said they become too nervous to even take the test.

The University of Illinois Extension says that most students experience some level of anxiety during an exam, and this anxiety is due to a variety of reasons:

- Poor time management
- Failure to organize information
- Poor study habits
- Negative test-taking experience
- Low self-confidence
- Negative attitude about school

According to the State University of New York at Buffalo, children who frequently experience test anxiety also worry about the future and become extremely self-critical. Instead of feeling challenged by the prospect of success, they become afraid of failure. This makes them anxious about tests and their own abilities. And ultimately, they become so worked up that they feel incompetent about the subject matter or the test.

As a parent, you can be a great help to your child if you observe these tips about tests and testing from the U.S. Department of Education:

- Don’t be too anxious about your child’s test scores. If you put too much emphasis on test scores, this can upset your child.
- Do encourage your child. Praise her for the things she does well. If your child has self-worth, she will do her best. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes.

- Don’t judge your child on the basis of a single test score. Test scores are not perfect measures of what your child can do. Other factors might influence a test score. For example, your child can be affected by the way he is feeling, the setting in the classroom and the attitude of the teacher. Remember also that one test is simply one test.
- Meet with your child’s teacher as often as possible to discuss her progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and improve your child’s understanding of schoolwork. Parents and teachers should work together to benefit students.
- Make sure your child attends school regularly. Remember, tests do reflect children’s overall achievement. The more effort and energy your child puts into learning, the more likely she will do well on tests.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home.

For additional information and educational videos, visit

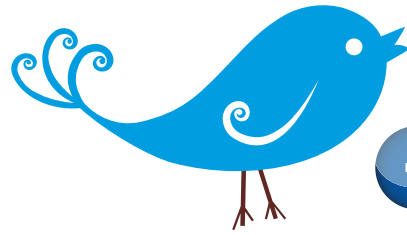
[www.ConnectWithKids.com](http://www.ConnectWithKids.com)



Connect with Kids

# Upcoming Events...

# MAY



Connect with us

MAY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		