

A Parent's Guide To: Improving Your Child's Grades

If, after implementing the strategies outlined in the article “Everything EW Parents Need To Know”, your child is not meeting your academic expectations, this article should be helpful. Below you will find a step-by-step procedure to help your child bring up his/her grades, as well as troubleshooting ideas for solving problems you may encounter while helping your child become academically successful.

Step 1: Email the teacher(s) involved. Tell him/her that you want to work together to help your child become successful. Ask for details on what the teacher feels are the main concerns. Ask for suggestions on what you can do, as the parent, to help.

Step 2: Address the teacher’s concerns with your child. Ascertain what your child thinks the primary issues are.

Step 3: Develop a plan for success with your child based on the information given to you by the teacher(s) and your child utilizing the strategies outlined in “Everything EW Parents Need to Know.”

Step 4: Follow up regularly with the teacher(s) via email until the concern is resolved.

Troubleshooting Ideas

If your child is not filling out the agenda for every class:

- Set up consequences for every night that your child does not have his/her agenda filled out. Assigning additional chores or revoking free time for that night may help to motivate your student in getting the agenda filled out. Student starts with a clean slate every day.
- Have your child write down the names and phone numbers of three reliable students in every class on the last page of the agenda.
- Check the teacher’s website. Many teachers post assignments.
- Buy a student directory from the principal's secretary. Use the directory to call students in each class yourself. This seems to work extremely fast!
- Email the teachers letting them know that you would like each teacher to initial the agenda **when your child approaches the teacher with it**. Getting the teacher involved can be very helpful because your child

becomes accountable to someone in the classroom. Although it is unrealistic to ask teachers to remember to sign the agenda, letting the teacher know that you want your child to get his/her initials and that there will be consequences at home if it isn't signed often helps the teacher to remember in case your child forgets.

- If none of the above ideas work, email the teachers to see if they have any suggestions. If not, call your child's counselor.

If your child has a problem staying on task during the assigned homework/study time:

- Check in regularly to see if he/she needs help. If your child is having problems understanding an assignment, it is easy for him/her to get off task.
- Have your child study in a place where you can observe. You may be able to ascertain the problem from your observations.
- Determine how long your child can stay focused. Then set up 5-10 minutes breaks so he/she can stretch, get up and walk around, or get a drink of water.
- Email the teachers to see if they have noticed inattention issues in class. Then, take your child to his/her doctor to see if he/she might have an attention problem.

If your child is not completing homework in the allotted time:

- Have your child study in a place where you can observe him/her to see if you can figure out what the problem is. Students who are perfectionists might be spending too much time on insignificant details; students with attention issues get distracted easily.
- Email teachers or check teacher websites to find out how much time should be spent on assignments per night.
- Get teacher feedback on what the issue might be and ask for suggestions on what you can do to help.
- If you tried all the above and your child is still not able to get the homework done in a timely manner, call your child's counselor to discuss the problem.

If your child has persistent difficulties understanding the homework:

- Offer your assistance; however, be aware of the fine line between helping and doing the homework for your child.
- Help your child identify where the breakdown occurs. For example, does he/she understand steps A and B, but not C? This is an important learning strategy.
- Check teacher website for helpful suggestions.
- Seek feedback from the teacher on what the issue might be and what you can do to help.
- If none of the above works, call your child's counselor.

If your child is not turning in assignments on time:

- Make sure his/her notebook is organized and that all homework to be turned in the next day is kept in one particular place.
- Check teacher website for helpful information.
- Right after school, check to make sure that all the homework has been turned in. If not, have your child run to the classes and turn it in. If the teacher is not there, put the assignment in the teacher's mailbox with date and time turned in.
- Email the teacher regarding the problem for insights into what is (or is not) happening in class. Ask the teacher for suggestions.
- Call your child's counselor if you are not able to resolve the issue after trying the above strategies.

If an adult is not at home after school to supervise study time:

- Arrange for another adult to supervise study time. When you get home, check that all work is completed and that he/she is prepared for the next day.
- Set up the study time after you get home. This will give the student a long break between school and homework, which can be beneficial.
- Call your child's counselor and ask about after school programs. Set up a system where student signs in and out. Call program supervisor periodically to make sure your child is attending.

Important: Strictly following the steps outlined above can help pinpoint whether there is another factor involved in your child's inability to realize his/her full potential. **If you have been consistent** in your methods and your child's grades are still not what you think they should be, the counselor should become involved in finding a solution. With the data you have gathered from implementing these strategies and working with your child's teachers, the counselor can better determine the next steps to be taken to help your child succeed.

Other important factors to students' academic success:

1. Adequate rest. Much research has shown that middle school age students should be in bed no later than 9:00 pm. This can include time to unwind by lying in bed reading until he/she feels sleepy.
2. Health: Plenty of exercise and regular physicals are encouraged. Make sure your child gets adequate nutrition and drinks plenty of water. A healthy breakfast and lunch can help energy and concentration levels.
3. Providing a supportive, safe, and encouraging environment to talk will encourage your child to be honest and open with you.

Attendance and tardies are tied to academic difficulties. Ensuring your child is in school and on time for his/her classes will help him/her in being prepared and ready for school each day.