

EduText Presents: Helpful Tips for Parents

Talking to your student about grades

9 Tips to help with failing grades-as provided by Eileen Bailty Health Guide

- It happens. Your child brings home a bad report card. Maybe you already know he is struggling and are working with teachers. Maybe, you thought everything was OK (because every day your child tells you everything is OK) until you look at the report card and realize that the majority of grades are F's. Or, maybe there are only one or two F's but it still is a shock to realize things aren't going OK.
- Bad report cards, while disappointing, are not the end of the world. There is still time to turn around the grades and help build your child's self-esteem at the same time. The following are some tips for improving grades after a bad report card:
- **Always praise your child first.** Look at the report card and find something good to say. Maybe your child got an A in art or there was some improvement in one subject; maybe the teacher noted that he tries hard. Your child probably handed you the report card ready for your disappointment, complimenting him on something is bound to make him feel better about himself.
- **Let your child know you are going to work together on areas in which he is struggling.** Help your child create reasonable, manageable and measurable goals. He may see a goal as "I am going to study more," but this goal is too vague and there isn't any way for him to know if he has reached his goal. Instead set goals such as "hand homework in every day this week," or "get a B on the next test."
- **Talk with your child's teacher.** Set up an appointment to sit down with your child's teacher about the areas in which your child is struggling. Find out what is behind the grade. Is your child not handing in homework? Is he having a hard time taking tests? Is he not understanding concepts? Is he having a hard time remembering facts? Once you determine where the problem is, you can work together to create strategies to help your child.
- **Set aside homework/study time each evening.** Make sure it is scheduled at a time in which you, or someone who is able to help, is around. Review the homework once it is completed and go over problems or questions that caused difficulty. If you aren't able to help, talk to the teacher about outside resources. Some schools have after school tutoring programs that are free or low-cost.
- **Find out your child's learning style.** Understanding whether your child is a visual, auditory, verbal or kinesthetic learner impacts how he learns and how much information he retains. Use specific strategies during homework time (and talk with the teacher about instituting some in the classroom) to target learning to his specific style.
- **Look for ways to motivate your child.** Use special interests and build on success to motivate your child to do better. If your child is struggling in math, a computer or video game that helps practice skills may let him practice math while still having fun. Find ways to reward successes rather than punishing poor grades.
- **Build exercise time into your daily schedule.** Exercise helps to get the mind focused. If your child is having a hard time sitting still during homework time, consider delaying homework for 30 minutes and have your child go outside or do some physical exercise.
- **Check for learning disabilities.** Children with ADHD can also have learning disabilities. If your child is struggling and interventions aren't helping, ask the school to test for learning disabilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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- **Review your child's schedule.** Is your child overbooked? Clubs, sports and other extracurricular activities take time and energy. Is your child involved in so many that it is taking away from his time to complete school work? If so, reduce how the number of activities your child can participate in at any given time.
- **Continue to praise your child's efforts.** Look for areas of improvement, whether it is handing in homework, getting a B on a test or working hard on a project. Let your child know you notice and are proud of his efforts. Pay attention to areas outside of school too, such as extracurricular activities, and praise your child at every opportunity.
- **Make sure you follow up and stay involved.** It is easy to be committed to reviewing homework every night and then slowly let it go as your child improves. But, staying on top of homework and keeping communication open with your child's teacher will assure you that you aren't going to be surprised by the grades on the next report card.

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