

EduText Presents: Helpful Tips for Parents

Talking to your student about report cards

Talking to your student about Report Cards- provided by Eileen Bailey Health Guide

Report card time can be nerve racking for both the child and parents. Maybe your child has been working hard, but it seems they are still struggling. Maybe you can see the grades slipping and just aren't sure what to do about it. Whatever the reason, when your child brings home a report card that is less than satisfactory, everyone feels the stress.

Many children will associate their self-worth with their performance at school. If they are not doing well, their self-esteem drops. They can feel a sense of hopelessness making it even harder to pull grades back up. However, there are a number of steps parents can take to help improve their child's performance at school and to foster a sense of achievement and success.

Your reaction to the report card will set the tone to how it is handled by your child. If your reaction is to yell and scream and either punish or threaten your child, their reaction may be to become angry and withdrawn, believing that they are "bad" and "worthless." If your reaction is to berate your child, you will be reinforcing their poor view of themselves. They may feel defeated. *Choose instead to look at the report card, no matter what the grades are, as an opportunity to find ways to improve your child's school experience.* Use this time to listen to your child, find out where they believe the problems are, listen to the teacher and find their perspective. Once you can view the situation from different viewpoints, you can try to find solutions.

Please understand that bad grades do not make you a bad parent and they do not reflect on your ability to parent your child. Do not allow others to make you feel guilty or ashamed of your child. Remember, this is about finding solutions and helping your child. It is not about you.

- Once you have received and reviewed the report card, find a quiet and calm time when you can discuss it with your child. Listen carefully to what your child tells you.
- Think about whether you should go for a medication check to determine if medication needs to be adjusted.
- Think about whether your child might need to be tested for learning disabilities.
- Are there certain subjects that your child is struggling with? Could they use a tutor?
- Is it that homework is not being handed in? Is there a system that you can work out with the teacher to keep on top of assignments?
- What are your child's favorite subjects? Do they do well in those subjects? Try to find out why and use that knowledge to help them in other subjects.
- Does your child have ideas or suggestions for what they feel may help them do better? They may be more apt to follow through with a plan of action if they have a part in creating it.

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Rather than looking at each individual grade, try to see the big picture and find where the problem is. Look for something good on the report card. Maybe there is a positive comment from the teacher or a grade that has improved and you can focus on that, rather than leaving your child to feel like a failure. Talk to your child about goals they might like to work on over the next quarter. Maybe they would like to work on handing in assignments on time or on studying harder for tests. Let them decide on one or two goals and focus on them over the coming months. Let your child's teacher know what goals are being worked on and what they can do to help your child reach their goals.

- This might also be a good time to meet with your child's teacher and review any accommodations that have been in place. Together, you can evaluate which ones have been working and which ones may need to be adjusted. Talk with the teacher about your child's strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Discuss assignments and if needed, work on a communication system that will let you know immediately if your child does not hand in homework. If you do not already have a communication system in place, talk with the teacher about receiving weekly emails to let you know how your child is doing on a regular basis. You can also ask to be informed on upcoming projects and tests so that you can work with your child at home to make sure tests are studied for and projects are completed on time. Let the teacher know that you want to work together to make this school year successful and let them know of the goals your child has set for the upcoming quarter. Finally, request a follow up conference 2 to 4 weeks from your meeting to discuss your child's progress.

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