

READY TO LEARN

This joint NAHT and Family Action guide is based on the latest research about what helps children to succeed at school

EVERY DAY!



Talking and listening

It is really important to talk to your child and listen to them. Finding time for both can be so difficult with busy lives!

- Set aside time for talking – without being interrupted by phones, TV, radio, computer etc!
- Tell them about your day and encourage them to tell you about theirs
- Don't interrupt your child, be patient and allow them time to speak
- Ask your child for their opinions and value what they say

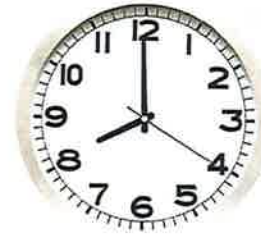
Spending time together

You can help your child if you:

- Share books and games in a quiet environment – not in front of the TV!
- Play games together as a family that encourage concentration, such as jigsaws and board games
- Encourage physical play and exercise by taking a trip to the park or the local leisure centre
- Give lots of hugs and praise

Being prepared!

- Check your child has their name in everything they bring to school
- Make sure your child remembers to bring everything they need each day – reading book, PE kit, homework
- Keep in contact with the school and let them know if you change phone numbers and addresses
- If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing, tell school as soon as possible so they can help to find solutions to any problems



Working out a family routine

- Children like routine so try to have regular times for going to bed and getting up, mealtimes and family time
- Make sure they have a healthy breakfast at home or at the school's Breakfast Club
- Have a regular time for a meal together in the evening
- Try to make time for homework, reading and talking together and bedtime stories

Getting enough sleep

- Children need sleep to develop, to concentrate in school and to learn well
- Under fives need up to 15 hours, primary children about 10 hours and even older children still need 9 hours
- Too many late bedtimes can make it hard for them to learn
- A good night's rest will help your child feel happy all day long

Behaving well

- Agree clear and realistic rules and stick to them!
- Encourage your child to always say 'please' and 'thank you' and not to interrupt you or others when you are talking
- Support school rules and encourage your child to follow these
- Ask for help if your child's behaviour is proving difficult at home

We want to work together with you to make sure your child feels happy, cared for, safe and ready to learn

READY TO LEARN EVERY DAY!

This joint NAHT and Family Action leaflet has been compiled using the expertise of both NAHT members and Family Action staff. The internet can play an important part in many aspects of school life, including teaching, learning and improving communication. However, if not used properly, it can be dangerous or harmful. This simple guide includes hints and tips for both parents and pupils.



Hints and Tips for Parents:

- Technology is constantly changing and young people are continually learning - keep up to date on latest developments so you know about the risks
- Online safety applies to all types of devices - PCs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, e-readers and online gaming
- As technology becomes more portable, set guidelines for where your child could/should use their device
- Treat online safety in the same way as you would offline safety such as stranger danger, crossing the road etc
- Set up internet security so children can't access websites with adult and inappropriate content
- Don't write anything online that you wouldn't say in person. Comments made on social media and/or public web pages/forums could reflect badly on your child
- Check out the IT policies, particularly the online safety policy, issued by your child's school and adhere to them
- Cyber bullying should be treated in the same way as other forms of bullying; contact your child's school to agree a plan for dealing with it
- Be aware that 'sexting' increasingly involves younger children, some as young as 10
- Try to establish a system which allows your child to talk to you about anything they feel uncomfortable about online



Things to Discuss with Children:

- Where is it acceptable to use your portable device? Bedroom? School?
- Who should you talk to if you feel uncomfortable about something you have seen online? e.g. parent, teacher or other responsible adult
- Don't spend too long online; make sure you get some physical exercise every day
- Keep passwords safe – don't write them down and change them regularly
- What personal information is it appropriate to post online?
- How do you report cyber bullying? Take a screen grab of any posts so these can be seen at a later date if needed
- How do you know the people you are talking to online, are who you think they are?
- What is the difference between a 'real life' friend and an 'online friend'?
- When is it sensible to meet up with an online friend?



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Preparing for Primary School (age 4-7):

The start of independence

- Teach your child to use the toilet (and urinal) independently; this will improve their self esteem when they are at school with their peers
- Ensure they can dress themselves and put on their own coat
- Encourage them to carry their own bag to school
- Be confident when dropping them off at school; don't let them 'cling' to you at the school gate
- Encourage them to become a 'playground friend' or 'school buddy'
- Support them to hang up their school uniform ready for the next day
- Include them when completing household tasks



Preparing for Secondary School (11+):

Supporting your child to be responsible for themselves

- Ensure your child is aware of the dangers of using social media and the internet inappropriately
- Teach them to manage a small budget
- Create a tidy space at home for them to complete their homework
- Show them how to create a study timetable; encourage them to complete their homework without unnecessary help or intervention
- Explain the importance of packing the right equipment for school each day e.g. calculator, books, PE Kit
- Encourage them to travel independently by public transport, bike or foot
- Make them aware of the costs of using a mobile phone
- Teach them how to prepare a simple meal
- Ensure they change their bed regularly



Preparing for Junior School (age 7-11):

Supporting your child to organise themselves

- Take turns in finding the way to the shops, playground etc; this will give them confidence when navigating their way around the school building and playground
- Support them to make their own bed each morning
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- Ensure they pack their own school bag in plenty of time
- Encourage them to walk or cycle to school by themselves or with friends when it's safe to do so
- Make time for your child to play out with their friends in a safe area
- Encourage them to become a 'reading buddy' and to take on responsibilities at school



Hints and tips for encouraging independence:

- Set appropriate boundaries for your child but help them to try out new things
- Try to guide your child rather than tell them what to do; this will encourage them to develop their own thoughts and ideas with your support
- Give positive support when your child faces challenges
- Praise effort rather than success and help them see we all learn from mistakes
- Don't do everything for your child, even if that seems easier!
- Try to be positive when your child is demonstrating independence

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Helping hand: at home



- Help your child to have all the equipment they need for learning
- Ask your child what they have learnt at school and take an interest in these topics
- Allow your child to help you with shopping, cooking and other jobs around the house
- Be patient when your child is helping
- Make time for regular reading with your child including books, magazines, newspapers and online

Helping with homework:



- Provide a quiet place for your child to work
- Help your child develop a routine and set dedicated time aside
- Give encouragement and support to help your child complete their homework
- Help your child to learn the basics such as spellings and tables
- Take time to answer your child's questions and address their concerns

Helping your child to learn in and out of the home:



- Link your child's learning to family activities. The school can give you ideas (or see the back page)
- Look for things in your local area that will help your child to learn such as nature reserves and museums
- Spend time playing outside and talk about the world around them
- Get to know what your child is learning and ask the school about it
- Take time to listen to your child and explain things carefully, developing their understanding and vocabulary

Helping hand: at school



- Offer to help out with educational trips, visits and clubs when you can
- Ask your child's teacher how you can help in class e.g. with reading and practical activities
- Attend as many parents' meetings as you can, especially ones that are about learning
- If your school offers family learning, try to get involved

SCHOOL

HOME

Helping with communication:

- You and your child's school both want the best for them so don't be afraid to ask questions
- Read the information the school provides – letters, leaflets, emails, texts or online
- Keep the school informed about family changes that might affect your child's learning, however small
- Respond promptly to school communications and let school know if you change your contact details

Helping with school life:



- Join the PTA and get involved with fundraising to support your child's school
- If your school has a Parents' Forum, use this to share views and ideas
- Take part in a Parent Helper Training Programme; this will help your own child as well as other pupils
- Give constructive feedback to your child's school about what is working well

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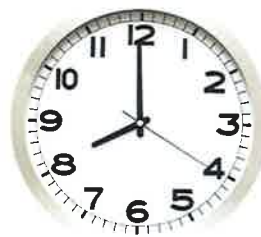
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In today's society, almost everyone faces stress at some point. Children can pick up on this stress and also feel pressure to 'follow the crowd'. This leaflet suggests ways to keep your child happy, healthy and safe, and we hope it will also provide a starting point for you to talk to them about wellbeing.



Emotional wellbeing

Relationships

- Tell your child that you love them every day
- It's good to establish and maintain boundaries with your child - it helps them to feel safe
- Be a positive role model for your child; don't shout and swear in front of them, it is rarely effective



Managing behaviour

- Praise your child's effort as well as their achievements - for example, telling them they've done well for trying hard
- It's okay to make mistakes, and let your child know this - it provides them with important learning opportunities
- If your child does something wrong, tell them, but focus on their action and how to do better next time



Raising self-esteem

- When things are difficult help your child to see it as part of life and learning and that it happens to all of us
- Teach your child not to give up and to keep trying
- Listen to your child and show them you value their views and opinions



Physical wellbeing

Healthy eating

- Help your child to understand about a balanced diet and the importance of eating fruit and vegetables to keep them fit and healthy
- Encourage your child to try a variety of foods and dishes from around the world
- Let your child help when you bake and prepare family meals; it will help them understand about food and encourage them to be creative



Exercise and activity

- Support your child to exercise vigorously for at least 30 minutes each day
- Encourage your child to have at least one hobby involving exercise, such as dance, swimming or football
- Get out and about as a family; play tag in the park, go for a bike ride or plan a timed treasure hunt – it's more fun to do things as a family



Body matters

- Book regular appointments with the optician and dentist, as well as frequent health checks and immunisations
- Exposure to cigarette smoke is damaging to your child's health; think before lighting up in front of them
- Talk to your child about the importance of personal hygiene, such as showering regularly, having clean PE kit and using deodorant when they need to

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READY TO LEARN

NAHT and Family Action have based the advice in this leaflet on the latest research about what helps children to speak and listen well.

EVERY DAY!

Your child: speaking and listening



It is important to help your child with speaking and listening because:

- Your child's ability to speak and listen well will be a good foundation for their future learning
- If they are good speakers and listeners they will do better at reading and writing
- If they can communicate well with others, it will help them to make friends more easily
- They will become more independent and be able to learn about the world
- Your child will learn to express their feelings and not become frustrated so easily

At school younger children will learn to:

- Think about what they say and choose the right words
- Speak fluently and confidently
- Listen to instructions from the teacher
- Listen to their classmates before speaking and take turns



As they get older they will:

- Join in group discussions and make useful points
- Present to an audience, expressing their opinions clearly
- Take part in decision-making and debate
- Learn how language varies in different situations



Your child: what you can do to help

Put listening to your child first:

- Show your child how to be a good listener by listening to them and others
- Be patient: don't interrupt or finish their sentences for them
- Give your child your attention: don't check your mobile phone at the same time as they are talking to you
- Show you're listening: ask questions about what they say, ask their opinions
- Listen to your child reading aloud regularly



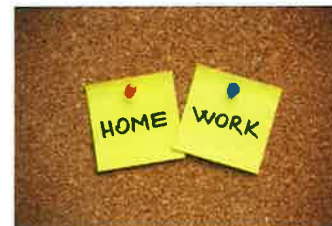
Be a clear speaker:

- Speak confidently, using the right words and set an example by talking in full sentences
- If English is not your first language, the most important thing is that you speak your own language confidently and well
- Use clear, simple directions for tasks and behaviours
- When your child follows directions, show you notice: praise them for listening to you



Get involved every day:

- Discuss their day with them when you see them after school
- Try to have a family meal together as often as possible
- Encourage your child to talk about their views and interests with others
- Ask them about their homework and get involved with it
- Switch off television and laptops well before bedtime: chat or read a bedtime story together instead



READY TO LEARN EVERY DAY!



This leaflet has been created jointly by NAHT and Family Action: This leaflet has been designed to explore ways to help children know their own worth and ways we can all increase and celebrate self-worth from a very young age.

Self-worth is what enables us to believe that we are capable of doing our best and deserve to lead a fulfilling life. We hope you find the following tips helpful.

How parents can create a sense of self-worth:



- Celebrate your child's individuality and talents whatever they are and let them know they are unique. Look at ways in which they could further explore these. For instance, are there local classes they can attend to develop their talents?
- Sit down and talk to them about appreciating and valuing themselves and how this translates into self-respect, and caring for themselves and others
- Advise them on eating healthily and exercising regularly
- Teach them to make decisions for themselves, rather than following their peers
- Help your child set realistic and attainable goals
- Focus on their strengths and not their weaknesses
- Remember that your child cares about your opinion so try not to withhold affection; a consoling cuddle can do as much to encourage a child to do better next time as a 'well-done' hug can be seen as part of their reward when they've succeeded



How children can be helped to develop their own sense of self-worth:



- Find out what they really enjoy and find interesting; it could be music, maths, sport, art or a hobby. Whatever it is, let them know they can speak to you or a teacher about it - you may find there are opportunities for them to further explore these topics
- Ask them to write a list of all the things they think are unique about themselves and to refer to the list to motivate them to do their best
- Let them know they don't have to be perfect at something to enjoy it and get a sense of achievement from it. Struggling and succeeding to be better than they ever thought they could be is a real reason to be proud of themselves
- Advise them not to avoid new challenges for fear of failure; let them know that everyone fails from time to time. Teach them to be their own measure of success rather than comparing themselves with someone else. Let them know how much people appreciate effort in life as well as the end results those efforts achieve
- Consider mentoring for them; ask for help from someone with vast experience and skill in the field they enjoy and let them help develop their skills
- If you are concerned, ask them directly if they are struggling with anything at school. Talk it through with them and assure them that their family and teachers are rooting for them and want to help them succeed
- Remind them that if someone has shown them this leaflet, it's because they really care about them. Let them know they have supporters and not to forget it!

READY TO LEARN

EVERY DAY!

This leaflet has been created jointly by NAHT and Family Action to suggest ways parents and carers can encourage children to do their best using praise and reward.

It sounds simple but we all like to be told we are doing well. Everyone's pride and motivation are boosted when someone tells us we are doing a great job. Children and teenagers, hearing this from their parents and carers, will truly want to do better and their self-esteem will increase daily.

No matter how blasé and tough some children can appear, it is rare to meet a child or young person who genuinely doesn't care what people think. No matter how indifferently they behave towards you, children do take on board the comments of their parents and carers - a few warm words of encouragement for some positive behaviour or after the completion of a task can go a very long way towards affecting a child's whole outlook for the rest of their day. It might give them the boost they need to do the next thing better or improve on what they've already done.

Here are a few simple things you can do to motivate your child to do their best.

Praise:



- Praise your child immediately, it is then meaningful
- Make sure you have eye contact with your child and smile
- Be enthusiastic and genuine
- Use positive words - 'wonderful' 'great' 'proud' - and tell your child you are so very pleased with them
- Notice the little things your child either does well or without prompting and praise them for it - eg making their own bed or putting their clothes in the laundry bin. If you praise these efforts, your child is more likely to seek other ways to please you

Reward:



- The reward of parental attention and approval can mean far more to a child than material goods - an enthusiastic 'well done' and a hug have a very quick brightening effect on a youngster's mood
- Like adults, children have their stresses and worries. Saying 'well done' in passing isn't the same as making a point of focusing on them for a few seconds and making sure they really understand how you have been impressed with their achievements. Make sure your child knows their efforts have been appreciated - even for small things. Busy adults often forget how hard simple things can be when you are learning. No matter how small the task and how clumsily the early efforts might appear, from tying shoe-laces to reading basic phrases for the first time or just showing kindness to someone, give your child plenty of praise for their efforts
- It is really important to praise the effort more than the achievement. The skill or behaviour doesn't have to be perfect, especially if a child has worked really hard at something. Say what it is you liked about your child's attitude, rather than just the level of skill they displayed. Make sure your child knows that it isn't perfection that pleases you but the way they've gone about tackling something that's impressed you
- Again, be enthusiastic. We often think that children just 'know' we are proud of them and don't need to be told. You may be surprised at how your words really will have an effect on a child or adolescent's sense of achievement and motivation, especially if you focus on their hard work and effort
- As busy people we can often get wrapped up in our own duties and worries. Take a little time to notice and remark on those little things that children do to help themselves and others