

Characteristics of Successful Students

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As parents, we all want the same thing for our kids – success. We all want our kids to be winners. We want all of our children to be happy. Success in the classroom is definitely a step in the right direction. However, we sometimes wonder what exactly successful students look like. What are their characteristics?

Lots of research has been done in the area of student success. And though there can be several different definitions for success, we're really talking about getting good grades and fulfilling the requirements at a given level to move to the next level or graduate.

So, here's what the research says: Successful students ...

- Attend class regularly and on time
- Turn in all assignments
- Do assignments neatly
- Speak up in class
- Set short-term and long-term goals
- Learn to set aside time for homework
- Ask for extra help from the teacher if they need it
- Pay attention in class and are polite
- See their teachers before and after class
- Enjoy being successful students
- Know they are responsible for their success
- Have parents who are involved in their education

Now I know some of you are saying, “surprise, surprise, they just do what’s right.” Well, actually, although the list looks that way, there’s more to it than that and some keys. Let me pare down the list for you to the basics. Successful students hold themselves accountable, set goals, and have parents who are involved in their education. That’s it, that’s all it takes.

So how do you teach accountability? You live it, you model it, you talk about it, and you let your child experience it. Accountability has two sides – the positive side and the negative side. When students experience success (and you can catch them doing something right), they need to have that behavior reinforced and rewarded. When students experience failure, discuss what led to the failure, what needs to be changed for success, and then move on. We need to be careful not to dwell on the failures more than the successes.

Do your children have goals? Talk to your kids tonight about where they want to be in five years from now, in ten years from now. It makes a difference. Children who have goals begin to see the relationship between today’s actions and tomorrow’s results, and that’s important. My kids have a list ten miles long of things they want; they’re starting to develop a list of what they need to do to get some of those things. And, trust me, they know that mom and dad won’t provide them all.

Your involvement in your child's education means everything. Involvement at school, involvement at the dinner table when homework is being completed, and involvement in discussions on a regular basis about what your children did that day at school and how important their education is. Don't accept those standard answers, "we did nothing," "I don't know," and "I'm too tired." Your children are measuring the importance and value of education to you every time you have these discussions. Your child knows how important it is not to scratch the new car with their bikes when they ride by because of the tone and emphasis you had during that discussion. The message should be loud and clear when it comes to your child's education.

Very few things in life are more important than a quality education. I'm sure we all agree that success for our children is certainly a top priority. Working together, we can guarantee that our children will end up winners, successful, and happy. I look forward to working with you to accomplish this most important goal.