

Learning Checklists



NoChild
LeftBehind

U.S. Department of Education



U.S. Department of Education

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Start With the Basics

The following checklists will give you some ideas about helping your child learn as he or she gets older and considers college. Tips are also offered in specific areas in which parents often have questions.

Always be part of your child's educational experience. Here are some things you can do at home to help your child be a more successful student.

Encourage Your Child to Read

Reading will help your child succeed. Start from an early age by reading to your child and listening to him or her read to you. Continue this habit through your child's early elementary school years. Make sure your child learns letters, learns how to put them together to make sounds, and then, learns how to recognize them on the page of a book. As your child begins to develop his or her reading skills, make sure your child is reading more difficult books. Ask your child questions to see if he or she understands what is being read. Introduce your child to languages other than English. Look for words in English that have come from other languages. If English is not your native language, help your child learn both your language and English.

Encourage Math and Science

Show your child how you use math and science in your everyday life. Count with your child and measure things. Answer your child's "why" questions; if you do not know the answers, look them up with your child in a book, at the library or by using the Internet. Talk about "cause and effect"—that is, when one thing happens, it makes something else happen.

"All of us have the obligation to invest in our young people ... especially parents—to be active participants in your children's education."
—First Lady Laura Bush

Visit science museums, watch television shows about scientific findings, play games that are based on numbers, and talk to people you know who have jobs in science and math fields. These activities will help your child see how science and math work in the world.

The World of Technology

Be aware of the possibilities of the computer and talk with the school about what resources are available for your child. Technology has created a knowledge revolution, and education is changing as a result of it. The Internet can provide research information for your child's homework and school projects at the touch of a button in a classroom, at the library or even in your own home. Using computers can help teachers provide instruction for a specific child's needs. Videos on the World Wide Web can take a class on a virtual field trip to a historic site or a scientific laboratory without ever leaving town. And lessons done by a student on a computer can be tested immediately to find out if the student has learned what was being taught.

The possibilities of technology are endless, but just like any other home activity, children should be watched to make sure their use of technology is safe and that they are wary of strangers.



If Your Child Has a Disability

By law, schools must provide special help to children with disabilities. If you notice your child has problems speaking, reading, writing or using language in general, talk with your child's teacher, principal or vice principal to get help quickly. Your child's skills will be checked, and a decision will be made whether your child needs special help and related services. If your child does need special education, an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which explains your child's educational plan and the special services your child will receive, as well as how your child will participate in state and district tests, will be developed with you as a member of the IEP Team. After the program is developed, you must be given a copy of the IEP, so you can make sure that it is being followed.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): a written document that explains the special educational and related services that a child will receive to enhance his or her learning.

One Parent's Story

Mark was becoming a behavior problem in school. Progress reports were coming home that showed Mark was failing. His mother realized there was a problem and called Mark's teacher for a conference. The teacher scheduled testing for Mark. The tests showed that he had a learning disability—slight, but enough to interfere with understanding his school work. Once the disability was discovered, the teacher and Mark's mother understood why he was so frustrated doing his classwork and homework. In addition to the special services and supports at school that were included in his IEP, the teacher agreed to give Mark's mother frequent updates about his performance. Mark's mother kept in constant communication with the teacher and continued to monitor his work at home and school, even checking his bookbag everyday for notes and work.*

*This anecdote is based on an interview with a parent conducted during the preparation of the *Empowering Parents School Box*. The story is for illustration only. The child's name has been changed to protect his privacy.



You and Your Preschool Child

Ensure That Your Child Is Ready to Learn

Allow time each day for the following activities in the life of your young child. These may affect how well preschool children perform in school later on. Remember, also, to set an example of how you want your child to behave. From the start, you can make sure your child's:

- ④ Physical needs are met with a healthy diet, enough sleep and rest, exercise and good medical care;
- ④ Social and emotional needs are met;
- ④ Confidence, independence and cooperation skills are nurtured;
- ④ Discipline is appropriate and consistent;
- ④ Play is stimulating;
- ④ Questions are answered;
- ④ Caregiver or preschool teacher reads to your child (you will want to bring books to the caregiver or teacher to be read to your child); and
- ④ Day is filled with different learning activities.

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"As any mom can tell you, a surprising amount of progress is made in the first three years of life." —Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings



Know What Your Preschooler Needs

The *Healthy Start, Grow Smart* publication series at www.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/healthystart has in-depth information about the health and nurturing of your baby. Babies need:

- ☻ Loving parents or caregivers who respond to their cries or noises;
- ☻ To feel safe and comfortable;
- ☻ To hear and make sounds;
- ☻ To move around;
- ☻ To be able to play in safe areas; and
- ☻ To play with safe toys.

Toddlers need:

- ☻ Activities that allow them to use their muscles;
- ☻ To experience their senses and develop language skills;
- ☻ To work with their hands;
- ☻ To learn to do things for themselves;
- ☻ To play with other children;
- ☻ To continue to learn about their movements;
- ☻ To build their vocabulary;
- ☻ To learn about their surroundings; and
- ☻ Opportunities to make choices within limits that you set.

Introduce babies and toddlers (birth to 2 years) to language:

- ☻ Talk to your baby or toddler often. You can talk to your infant during feeding; look at family photographs and tell your child about the pictures; or tell the baby what you see out the window—a bird, bus, cars;
- ☻ Show your baby things, name them and talk about them;
- ☻ Encourage babbling as your toddler starts to talk;
- ☻ Sing songs and read nursery rhymes;



- ④ Read aloud each day, even if it's just for a short time; and
- ④ Have your child handle books—books made especially for babies or toddlers, such as interactive books (lift-the-flap or touch-and-feel)—this will help your child with motor and language development.

Three- to five-year-olds need:

- ④ More books, games and songs;
- ④ Chances to do science, math and art activities;
- ④ To build their self-reliance and language skills; and
- ④ To become aware of the world and people around them.

Introduce young children (3–5 years) to language:

- ④ Talk to your young child often and encourage your child to speak by asking questions and talking about what happened during the day;
- ④ Show your child new things, making sure you name them and teach your child new words every day;
- ④ Read aloud each day, even if it is just for a short time;
- ④ Teach your child the alphabet; and
- ④ Check your local public library for books made especially for 3- to 5-year-olds.

Partner With Caregivers and Teachers

Talking with caregivers and teachers will help your child's academic, social and emotional development. This will also help you stay in touch with what your child is doing and learning. At all stages of your young child's growth:

- ④ Be aware of your child's learning activities throughout the day;
- ④ Make sure your contact information (telephone number and e-mail address) is up-to-date;
- ④ Be aware of how your child is behaving; and
- ④ Support what your child is learning at preschool or daycare with activities you do with your child at home.



Look for Community Resources

Community centers, parent information centers, hospitals and other local organizations can provide parenting training and services. Some community resources might include:

- ④ Home visits from trained parent educators;
- ④ Discussion groups with other families about children's learning; or
- ④ Classes on how to stimulate children's mental, physical and emotional growth.

Tips for Selecting a Caregiver

Begin looking for a caregiver long before you need one:

- ④ Find out where you can find a caregiver who fits your budget;
- ④ Gather as much information as possible about each potential caregiver; and
- ④ Look for services or agencies that can assist you.



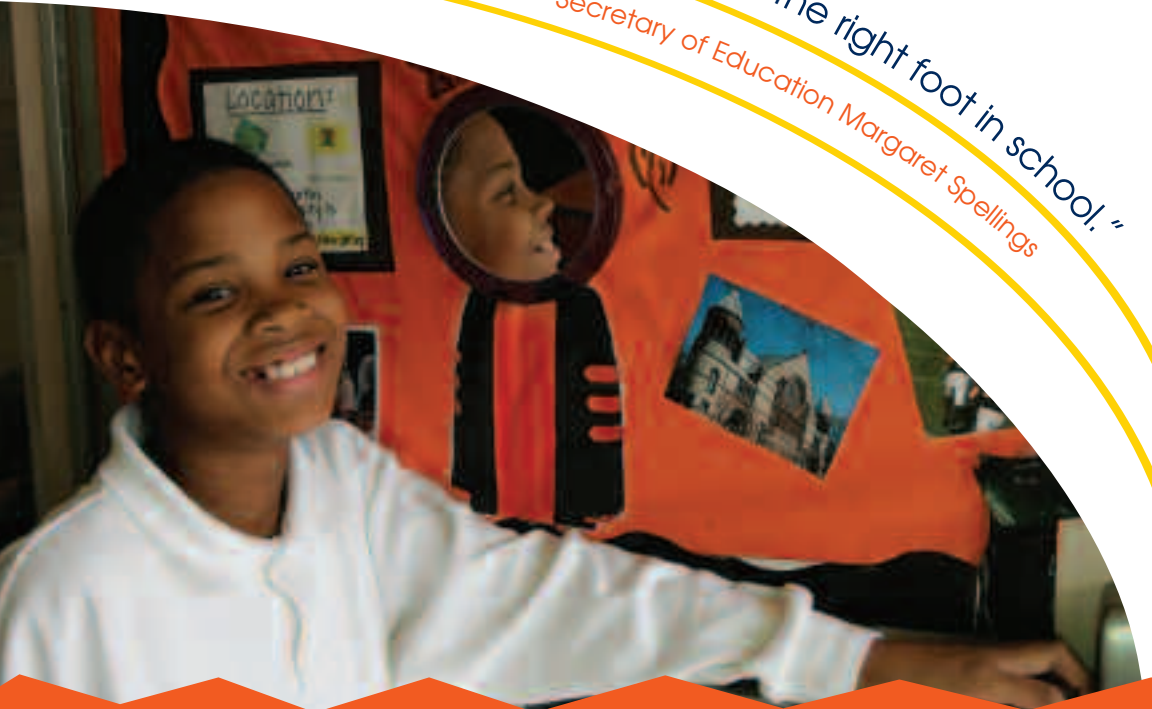
Caregivers should:

- ☉ Be kind to your child;
- ☉ Be nurturing;
- ☉ Be alert and responsive to your child's and your needs;
- ☉ Be experienced; and
- ☉ Have a child-rearing approach that is similar to yours.

The place where you take your child should:

- ☉ Be clean;
- ☉ Be safe;
- ☉ Be comfortable;
- ☉ Be parent-friendly; and
- ☉ Have many books and educational toys.

"It's crucial that we start our children off on the right foot in school."
—Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings





You and Your Elementary School Child

Lead Your Child on the Path to Success

Before the school year begins:

- ① Visit the neighborhood school;
- ① Visit a classroom;
- ① Get a copy of the school's parent involvement plan;
- ① Volunteer, for example, to be a room parent, organize a winter coat drive, help out on test day or be a reading coach; and
- ① Ask the principal for the school report card.

If the school your child would normally be assigned to is not meeting the state's academic goals:

- ① Your child may qualify to transfer to another public school, including a public charter school;
- ① Your child may be able to receive free tutoring and other supportive services; and/or
- ① You can contact your school district office to find out more about these opportunities.





Partner With Teachers and Counselors

Know your child's teachers and counselors. Attend school "open houses" or parent nights to meet your child's teachers, and request parent-teacher conferences when needed.

To communicate with teachers:

- ④ Find out the best time to contact them by telephone;
- ④ Ask for the teacher's e-mail address; and
- ④ Find out about Web sites where teachers may list class notes and homework assignments.

Parent-teacher conferences are important:

- ④ Be prepared to listen, talk and take notes;
- ④ Write out your questions before you meet with the teacher;
- ④ Ask for specific information about your child's work and progress;
- ④ Review what the teacher has told you and follow up by talking with your child; and
- ④ Check back with the teacher regularly to see how things are going as the year progresses.



Know that counselors:

- ④ Can help if there are problems at home, such as divorce or illness, which could affect your child's schoolwork;
- ④ Have information about achievement tests and can explain what the results mean; and
- ④ Can tell you what tutoring services are available.

Make Sure Your Child Continues to Read

- ④ Set a special time each day for reading aloud together;
- ④ Encourage your child to read to you;
- ④ Let your child see you enjoying reading;
- ④ Use audio books that you and your child can listen to together (children can also listen to audio books while following along with the written words in a book);
- ④ Play communication and educational board games with your child which involve words, such as those based on crossword puzzles and charades;
- ④ Practice day-to-day reading and writing such as following a recipe or writing a note; and
- ④ Continue to check with the teacher and the pediatrician about your child's language development.



Watch for School Resources

The school sees you as a partner in the learning process and will provide such resources as:

- ④ Interactive homework that involves parents with children's learning, such as writing assignments about what it was like when you were a child;
- ④ Workshops on topics that parents suggest like building children's vocabulary, developing positive discipline strategies and supporting children through a crisis;
- ④ Regular calls or e-mails from teachers, not just when there are problems but also when children are doing well in class;
- ④ Learning packets in reading, science and math, as well as training in how to use them; and
- ④ The School-Family Compact, required for all schools and programs receiving Title I, Part A, funds, encouraging communication between the school and parents.



Tips for Parents of Kindergarteners

Visit the school and learn as much as you can about:

- ④ How to enroll your child in kindergarten;
- ④ What forms must be completed;
- ④ What immunization and dental records are required;*
- ④ What the kindergarten program includes;
- ④ When the school is closed for holidays and administrative activities;
- ④ What the bus schedule is;
- ④ What meals and food are available;
- ④ What after-school care is available;
- ④ What volunteer opportunities there are for parents; and
- ④ What outside activities your child can participate in.

**Note:* Keep a copy of immunization and dental records, because you may need them later for after-school programs, summer camps, and sports participation, for example.

Academic Performance at the Fourth-Grade Level

Curriculum, instruction, homework and exposure to reading, mathematics and science in everyday life have a great impact on your child's performance. The goal of *No Child Left Behind* is for all students to be performing at the "proficient" level by 2014. What is meant by "proficient?" Although specific curriculum is set by each state, and varies from state to state, the following achievement levels can give you an idea of what to expect your child to know and be able to do in reading,¹ mathematics² and science³ when your child is in the fourth grade. These achievement levels are taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading, math and science at the "proficient" level.

¹ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp> (2005)

² <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/achieveall.asp> (2006)

³ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/science/achieveall.asp> (2002)

Reading

When reading, a fourth-grade student is expected to:

- ④ Understand the factual information and inferred meaning of what is read;
- ④ Be able to make connections and draw conclusions from what is read; and
- ④ Connect what is read with the child's own experiences.

Mathematics

When doing math problems, a fourth-grader is expected to:

- ④ Understand the basic concepts and procedures in five content areas: number properties and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and algebra;
- ④ Estimate, compute and determine whether results are reasonable using whole numbers;
- ④ Understand fractions and decimals;
- ④ Solve real-world problems in the five content areas above;
- ④ Use four-function calculators, rulers and geometric shapes appropriately;
- ④ Use problem-solving strategies; and
- ④ Write solutions that are organized with supporting information and explanations of how they were achieved.

Science

Fourth-graders are expected to:

- ④ Understand the earth's physical properties, structure and function;
- ④ Begin to understand classification, simple relationships and energy;
- ④ Solve familiar problems, as well as show a beginning awareness of issues associated with technology;
- ④ Explain day and night when given a diagram;
- ④ Recognize major features of the earth's surface and the impact of natural forces;

- ☉ Recognize water in its various forms in the water cycle and suggest ways to conserve it;
- ☉ Recognize that various materials possess different properties that make them useful;
- ☉ Explain how structure and function help living things survive;
- ☉ Have a beginning awareness of the benefits and challenges of technology;
- ☉ Recognize some effects of humans on the environment;
- ☉ Make straightforward predictions and justify them; and
- ☉ Read simple graphs and diagrams and be able to make limited conclusions based on data.

You and Your Middle School Child

The middle school years are a time of transition: emotional, physical, social and academic. Your support and involvement are essential at this stage of your child's growth. Research shows that preteens do better in school when their parents are involved in their lives.

"Our job is to give them the knowledge and skills to compete."

—Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings



Transitioning

You can help your child transition from elementary to middle school. You can discuss the concerns he or she may have before starting middle school: learning from many teachers, getting to class on time, finding his or her locker, getting on the right bus, knowing where the cafeteria is, navigating crowded hallways and doing more homework. You may also want to talk about the physical and social changes that will take place and the social pressures that often occur in the middle school years.

Transitioning: moving to a new stage of life as from elementary school to middle school or from middle school to high school.

Parental Involvement

Many parents feel that because their child is growing up, they can lessen their involvement with the school. At this time, more than ever, parents need to be involved. Continue to communicate often with your child, the teachers, and the principal, vice principal or both.

Visit the school. Be aware of the place where your child learns. You may want to ask the following questions:

- ④ Is there a transition program for students leaving elementary school and entering junior high or middle school?
- ④ Are counselors available who can help your child transition to middle school?
- ④ Are teachers and principals accessible to parents?
- ④ When are the parents' nights, sports and art events, and other times when parents are invited to visit the school?
- ④ When can parents volunteer at the school?

Help your child organize a schedule. You can show your child how to organize time, activities and schoolwork and how to stick to a plan. Help your child set goals with a time limit for completing particular tasks.



Listen to your middle school child. Communication is key in the preteen years. Be sensitive to any fears your child might have. Sometimes it is helpful to reserve comments and actions until you have facts about a situation and know how your child thinks and feels about it.

Discuss peer pressure. While riding in a car or doing chores together, you might want to describe “what if” situations. Ask, “How would you handle a particular situation?” Offer your thoughts. Encourage by always letting your child know he or she can count on you.

Welcome and get to know your child’s friends. At home, you can watch how your child interacts with them. Look for the influence others have on your child. Also, try to get to know, and be in contact with, the parents of your child’s friends.

Become aware of physical and emotional changes in your child. Boys and girls are noticing physical changes in themselves and in each other. Discuss these changes and be factual. Also, express your own values and morals. If you are uncomfortable discussing these things, have your child talk with a doctor or trusted relative. Ask about the sex education programs offered at the school.



Reading in the Middle School Years

Reading is an important part of the middle school years. Many of the subjects your child studies in middle school involve much more reading than in elementary school. Check with your child's school counselor to see what your child's reading level is. If your child reads below grade level, check with the school to see if additional reading programs, supplemental educational services (SES) or reading specialists are available. Under *No Child Left Behind*, for example, the Striving Readers program aims to improve the reading skills of middle school and high school students who are reading below grade level. The Striving Readers program is available to Title I middle and high schools that have a significant percentage or number of students reading below grade level.

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Looking to the Future

Help your child focus on academic needs for high school and college. Encourage your child to take challenging classes. You may want to ask these questions:

- ☉ Will the classes your child takes help him or her get into college, as well as be competitive in college and the workplace?
- ☉ Is your child having trouble with any classes he or she is taking?
- ☉ What tutoring programs are available?
- ☉ Does your child have good study habits: does he or she read what is necessary to complete the assignment and hand in assignments on time?
- ☉ Does your child have the supplies needed to complete the assignment?

Be sure that your child starts thinking about college early, both from an academic and financial point of view. What courses are needed for the career your child is interested in? What amount of money will you be able to contribute to your child's college expenses? What resources are available for financial aid? The U.S. Department of Education has a new resource that can help you figure out the financial commitments you will need to make. The FAFSA4caster at <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov> can help you calculate college costs before your child applies to college.

Your child is entering a phase of life that produces great change. Your active support and participation will help ensure a successful transition into middle school and then to high school.

Academic Performance at the Eighth Grade

What are the academic expectations for your child at the end of eighth grade? What should your child know at this point to be able to advance and perform high school work? Although specific curriculum is set by each state, and varies from state to state, the following achievement levels can give you an idea of what to expect your child to know and be able to do in reading,⁴ mathematics⁵ and science⁶ when your child is in the eighth grade. These achievement levels build on those for the fourth grade, but the knowledge is more in-depth and complicated. They are taken from the NAEP frameworks in reading⁴, math⁵ and science⁶ at the “proficient” level.

Reading

When reading, an eighth-grade student should be able to:

- ④ Show an overall understanding of the content read, including inferred meaning as well as factual information;
- ④ Interpret what he/she reads to understand broader themes or lessons and draw conclusions;
- ④ Make connections between the material read and his/her own experiences, including other reading experiences; and
- ④ Identify some of the strategies authors use to write the material.

Mathematics


Eighth-grade students should be able to:

- ④ Show an understanding of the concepts and procedures in complex problems in five content areas: number properties and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and algebra;
- ④ Apply the concepts and procedures in complex problems in the five content areas above;
- ④ Reason, defend ideas and give supporting examples;
- ④ Understand the connections between fractions, percents, decimals and other mathematical areas, such as algebra and functions;

⁴ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp> (2005)


⁵ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/achieveall.asp> (2006)

⁶ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/science/achieveall.asp> (2002)

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- ④ Apply arithmetic operations to solve problems in practical situations, understand quantity and spatial relationships, and convey reasoning skills beyond arithmetic;
 - ④ Determine what data are necessary in problem solving;
 - ④ Compare and contrast mathematical ideas and generate examples;
 - ④ Draw conclusions from data and graphs, apply properties of informal geometry and accurately use technology tools; and
 - ④ Understand the process of gathering and organizing data and be able to calculate, evaluate and communicate results within the area of statistics and probability.

Science

Eighth-grade students should be able to:

- ④ Understand earth, physical and life sciences. For example, students should be able to interpret graphic information, design simple investigations and explain such scientific concepts as energy transfer;
 - ④ Be aware of environmental issues, especially those addressing energy and pollution;
 - ④ Create, interpret and make predictions from charts, diagrams and graphs based on information provided or from investigations;
 - ④ Design an experiment and have an understanding of scientific phenomena and design plans to solve problems;
 - ④ Begin to identify forms of energy and describe the role of energy transformation in living and nonliving systems;
 - ④ Have knowledge of organization, gravity and motion within the solar system and identify some factors that shape the surface of the earth;
 - ④ Understand properties of materials and understand the particular nature of matter, especially the effect of temperature on states of matter, and understand that light and sound travel at different speeds;
 - ④ Be able to apply knowledge of force, speed and motion;
 - ④ Show a developmental understanding of the flow of energy from the sun through living systems, especially plants;
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- ③ Know that organisms reproduce and that characteristics are inherited from previous generations;
- ③ Understand that organisms are made up of cells and that cells have subcomponents with different functions; and
- ③ Develop their own classification system based on physical characteristics.

Challenging High School for All

Make Sure Your Child Is Ready

High school is the training ground for college and work. You can help prepare your child for college by encouraging him or her to take challenging courses such as English, math (algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, for example), foreign language, science (biology, chemistry, physics, for example) and history or social studies. Taking these challenging courses will not only help your child succeed in college, but may also qualify him or her to receive scholarships available from the U.S. Department of Education, your state, private foundations and colleges.

Foster your child's independence, but continue to be aware of your child's studies and after school activities. High school activities, such as sports, band, school plays, internships or community service, will help build skills needed on the job, such as responsibility, time management, confidence and leadership. Continue to stay involved with the school as your child progresses through high school.

"Getting every child to graduate high school with a meaningful diploma ... is one of the biggest challenges our country faces."
—Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings



One Parent's Story

Anthony wanted to be a member of the band. His teacher told him that unless he made good grades, he could no longer participate in the band. Anthony loved music. His mother noticed that she no longer had to tell Anthony to do his schoolwork. Anthony had an incentive to do well. He wanted to remain in the band.*

*This anecdote is based on an interview with a parent conducted during the preparation of the *Empowering Parents School Box*. The story is for illustration only. The child's name has been changed to protect his privacy.

Know What Your High School Child Needs to Succeed

Look for programs designed to help students succeed in college by teaching study skills, providing tutoring and helping students apply to college. Remember, college is a critical goal for what your child does in high school and for success in life. Those with a four-year college degree may earn more than 40 percent of what high school graduates earn.⁷ Some high schools offer Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or early college courses that might allow your child to skip some of the beginning-level courses in college, and, perhaps, graduate early. Charter schools or magnet schools, which focus on themes, such as science and technology or the arts, may help to encourage your child's talents and interests.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers: Fourth Quarter 2005," USDL 06-098, Jan. 19, 2006.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs: (<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>) offered at some public schools, most often at the high school level; coursework is challenging, and students may receive college credit for scoring well on tests offered by the program.

Keep on Reading

Continue to make sure your child is reading. Maintaining reading levels is important, and there are many ways to ensure your child does not fall behind. Check with the school to see if your child is reading on grade level. There are also programs under *No Child Left Behind* to help older students maintain their reading levels. The Striving Readers program is available for high school students. The purpose of the program is to raise the reading achievement levels of students in schools with significant numbers of students reading below grade level.



Whether or not there is a Striving Readers program in your child's school, continue to encourage reading. Knowing how to read smoothly and quickly and being able to understand facts and ideas are critical skills for all subject areas, including math and science.

Partner With Teachers and Counselors

Get to know your child's teachers and counselors. Attend school "open houses." Request parent-teacher conferences when needed. To communicate with teachers:

- ④ Find out the best time to contact them by telephone;
- ④ Ask for teachers' e-mail addresses so you may contact them outside of school hours (teachers are usually not available during school hours);
- ④ Find out about Web sites where teachers may list class notes and homework assignments;
- ④ Look for school newsletters in print and online; and
- ④ Sign-up to receive e-mail announcements.

White House photo by Paul Morse



Know that counselors:

- ☻ Handle class registration and schedules;
- ☻ Can help if there are problems at home, such as divorce or illness, which could affect your child's school work;
- ☻ Have information on how and where to get college financial aid; and
- ☻ Can tell you when college entrance exams are given, especially the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT).

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): a college entrance test to measure the critical thinking skills needed for academic success in college.

American College Test (ACT): a college entrance achievement test that seeks to measure what students have learned during high school.

One Parent's Story

Mia was having difficulty completing her homework. For several days, her mother watched her struggle. She reached out to Mia's teacher, who suggested tutoring as an option. Mia's mother concurred and found a tutor for Mia.*

*This anecdote is based on an interview with a parent conducted during the preparation of the *Empowering Parents School Box*. The story is for illustration only. The child's name has been changed to protect her privacy.

Consider Safety

Under *No Child Left Behind*, a student may leave a school that the state says is "persistently dangerous." Or, if your child is the victim of a violent crime at school, he or she may attend another public school in the same school district. To get your child through the high school years safely:

- ☻ Pay attention to your child's behavior and friends;
- ☻ Tell your child to leave valuables at home and to keep things locked up (theft is the most common school crime⁸);
- ☻ Be aware if your child's grades drop or if your child is sad or angry;
- ☻ Talk to your child about any concerns you may have;



- ④ Consult with counselors, social workers, school psychologists or others trained in solving these types of problems;
- ④ Stay involved with the school;
- ④ Be informed through your school’s parent-teacher organization and the school newsletter or Web site; and
- ④ Continue to be an advocate for your child and other students in the process.

Tips on Paying for College

The Federal Student Aid (FSA) program provides grants, loans and work-study assistance to students and parents with financial need, as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition, low-income students who have completed a rigorous high school curriculum may be eligible for Academic Competitiveness Grants of up to \$750 during the first year of college and \$1,300 during the second year of college, as long as the student maintains a minimum grade point average. Low-income college juniors and seniors who major in mathematics, science, technology, engineering or critical foreign languages may be eligible for National SMART Grants of up to \$4,000 per year.

In addition to applying for federal financial aid, students and families are encouraged to pursue scholarships available through colleges, businesses, civic groups and churches. In addition, families may want to learn more about tax-advantaged college savings plans and other sources of college aid.

Academic Competitiveness Grants: (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/AcademicGrants.jsp>) need-based grants available to first- and second-year college students who have completed a rigorous high school curriculum as determined by state and local agencies and recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education; recipients must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average.

National SMART Grants: (www.studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/SmartGrants.jsp) need-based grants available to those who are third- and fourth-year undergraduates who are majoring in “physical, life or computer sciences; mathematics, technology or engineering; or a foreign language critical to national security.”

⁸ U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*: 2005, Washington, D.C.



When Your Child Turns 18

When your child turns 18 years old or enters a college or university at any age, the rights under the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* transfer from you to your child. A student to whom the rights have transferred is known as an “eligible student.” Although the parents’ rights under *FERPA* transfer to the eligible student, *FERPA* provides ways in which a college or university can share education records on the student with his or her parents.

Under *FERPA*, colleges and universities, at their discretion, may release any and all information to parents, without the consent of the eligible student, if it has been determined that the student is a dependent for tax purposes under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules. Also, schools can disclose information from education records to parents if a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter. Another provision in *FERPA* permits a college or university to let parents of students under the age of 21 know when the student has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance. Nothing in *FERPA* prohibits a school official from sharing with parents information that is based on that official’s personal knowledge or observation.

Academic Performance at the 12th Grade

The NAEP exams are also given at the 12th grade. These tests, taken by a sample of students from across the country, give a “national report card” of what students know. Although specific curriculum and standards are set by each state, and vary from state to state, the following NAEP achievement levels can give you an idea of what to expect your child to know and be able to do in reading,⁹ mathematics¹⁰ and science¹¹ when your child is in the 12th grade. These achievement levels build on those for the fourth and eighth grades, but the knowledge is more in-depth and complicated. These NAEP achievement levels are taken from the frameworks in reading, math and science at the “proficient” level.

⁹ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp> (2005)

¹⁰ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/mathematics/achieveall.asp> (2006)

¹¹ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/science/achieveall.asp> (2002)



Reading

Twelfth-grade students, when reading material written at the 12th-grade level, should be able to accomplish the eighth-grade requirements plus:

- ④ Give answers to questions about what they have read that are thorough, thoughtful and extensive;
- ④ Judge reading material critically; and
- ④ Analyze the author's use of literary strategies.

Mathematics

Twelfth-grade students should be able to select strategies to solve problems and integrate concepts and procedures. They should be able to:

- ④ Interpret an argument, justify a mathematical process and make comparisons dealing with a wide variety of mathematical tasks;
- ④ Perform calculations involving similar figures including right triangle trigonometry;
- ④ Understand and apply properties of geometric figures and relationships between figures in two and three dimensions;
- ④ Select and use appropriate units of measure as they apply formulas to solve problems;
- ④ Use measures of central tendency and variability of distributions to make decisions and predictions, to calculate combinations and permutations to solve problems and to understand the use of the normal distribution to describe real-world situations;
- ④ Identify, manipulate, graph, and apply linear, quadratic, exponential and inverse functions;
- ④ Solve routine and nonroutine problems involving functions expressed in algebraic, verbal, tabular and graphical forms; and
- ④ Solve quadratic and rational equations in one variable and solve systems of linear equations.



Science

Twelfth-grade students should be able to:

- ④ Know the themes of science (models, systems and patterns of change) required for understanding the earth, physical and life sciences and know how these themes illustrate essential relationships among the sciences;
- ④ Analyze data and apply scientific principles to everyday situations;
- ④ Have a working ability to design and conduct scientific investigations;
- ④ Select and use simple laboratory equipment and write down simple procedures that others can follow;
- ④ Analyze data in various forms and use information to provide explanations and to draw reasonable conclusions;
- ④ Have a developmental understanding of both physical and abstract models and be able to compare various models;
- ④ Recognize some inputs and outputs, causes and effects, and interactions of a system and be able to correlate structure to function as parts of a system that they can identify;
- ④ Recognize that rate of change depends on initial conditions and other factors;
- ④ Apply scientific concepts and principles to practical applications and solutions for problems in the real world; and
- ④ Show developmental understanding of technology, its uses and its applications.





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