

Supporting Children on their Academic Journey

B.E. T.H.E.R.E. for them

Believe in your child. Emphasise his/her strengths.

Encourage your child to give his/her best.

Treasure the process of learning, not just focus on the results.

Help your child develop a structure and routine for studying.

Expect realistically what your child is capable of. Help him/her experience success.

Recognise the signs of stress and anxiety. Address them with your child.

Empathise with your child regarding the challenges he/she is facing.

Believe in your child

Encourage your child to give his/her best

- Emphasise his/her strengths.
- When children feel good about themselves, they have higher self-efficacy.
- Self-efficacy = the belief in one's ability to overcome challenges
- This is an important attitude that will carry one far in life

Treasure the process of learning

- Emphasise the process and effort, not just the outcome (i.e. results)
- When academic results become the main focus, the rationale and joy for learning are often diminished and lost.

Help your child develop a structure and routine for studying

1. This starts with awareness about themselves. Guide them to think:
 - What are your stronger/weaker subjects?
 - How long do you take to study one unit?
 - What is your best time of the day for studying?

=> This guides effective organisation and time management

2. Guide your child in planning and sticking to a revision timetable

- Characteristics of a good timetable:
 - Realistic
 - Linked to the exam schedule so he/she revises subjects in the right order
 - Factor in time for **breaks and relaxation**
 - **Suited to him/her** e.g. allowing more time for weaker subjects
- Sticking to a revision timetable:
 - Track his/her achievements
 - Reward him/her with something he/she enjoys when the revision targets for the day are met

3. Minimise Distractions

- Separate the study space from relaxation space
- Put away gaming gadgets, handphone and other communication devices during studying time

Expect realistically what your child is capable of

- Help him/her experience success.
- Help your child set goals that are attainable, step-by-step.
- The goals should allow your child to challenge himself/herself and stretch his/her potential a little more than what he/she managed to achieve previously.
- Close parent-teacher communication can help in shaping realistic academic goals.

Recognise the signs of stress and anxiety. Address them with your child.

- Some signs to note when stress becomes too much:

Physical Reactions

- Feel tired easily
- Poor sleep
- Appetite changes
- Headaches & muscle tensions

Thinking Ability

- Memory problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions

Behaviours

- Lose interest in usual activities
- Social withdrawal
- Sudden outburst of anger/crying
- Underachieve

Emotions

- Feel anxious most of the time
- Feel worthless about self

- Address your child's stress. Have periodic check in with your child on stress levels and **encourage communication** about stress and how to handle it.
 - Acknowledge that stress is a part of our lives. It is normal to experience stress.
 - Identify the source of stress – e.g. Expectations from self? Expectations from significant people? Pressure to meet deadlines? Poor self-management?
 - Discuss realistic attitudes & expectations to have, and strategies to manage better next time. Identify and seek resources for help.
 - Listen more, judge less (especially when the child appears very distressed)

Empathise with your child regarding the challenges he/she is facing.

- Empathise = Being in another person's shoes
- Empathising with your child's difficulties help him/her know that you care and you understand. This makes it easier to explore further about handling challenges (and even the part on self-responsibility)
- Demonstrating empathy is easier said than done. Often, we look at the child's issues from an adult perspective and risk trivialising the intensity of the challenges he/she faces.

Tip: Think about how it was like when you were young? Were the way you see things then the same as you view them now?