

Our guide to supporting your child in school



Listening to your child read, testing them on spellings and times tables or even building a scale model of Stonehenge from your recycling; all these familiar elements of primary school can disappear when your child starts at secondary school. And, for parents and carers, how best to help and support your child now can be confusing.

We know that it's still important though. The Education Endowment Foundation, a respected body which conducts research and publishes guidance for schools, has found that, on average, parental engagement in their children's learning equates to an extra [three months of learning](#) per year.

So, what is your new role - how do you support them in the best way possible? The most important thing is to be interested, to ask questions, to expect that they will have work to do outside the classroom. And on top of that there are three highly effective things you can do:

1. Nurture and support an effective independent learner

This is the biggest difference when children start secondary school; they need to develop as an independent learner and learn to self-regulate. This means getting to understand themselves in terms of how they learn effectively, and developing the habits and skills they need to do so. And this is where parents and carers can have the biggest impact.

Help them by:

- Developing a routine that works for them and your family; whether that's in the morning before school, after school or after some exercise at the weekend, a weekly planner that dedicates time for them and takes account of when they're at their best to work and learn can be really helpful.
- If you can, creating a quiet place for them to work uninterrupted. Don't forget that we have some opportunities for this at school, sometimes before the school day, at lunchtime or after school, and local libraries have computers and sometimes dedicated spaces that you could use. Ask your child to talk to their tutor or contact the school office if you're unsure when and where they can do this in school.
- Supporting them as they learn to manage their efforts and emotions, pacing themselves and developing the crucial skills of Aware and Resilient (two of our learning [attributes](#)) so that they learn *how* they learn, understand *how* they're behaving and *how* to course-correct and keep going or start again when they struggle.
- Supporting them as they develop their understanding of how they learn, the strategies that work best for them - whether that's finding visual models or pictures, creating mind maps or flashcards, or writing lots of notes. Teachers deliver learning in lots of different ways in lessons to help everyone in the class to learn, and your child will be discovering what works best for them. This might well change as they mature, so keep asking questions and helping them figure this out.

2. Keep on reading

Children still need to read in secondary school, both for pleasure and around the subjects they're learning, especially as they move into their GCSE years and beyond. Help them to see that independent reading

broadens their vocabulary, outlook and comprehension, which improves their academic outcomes in all subjects.

Although their bedtime routine can and should evolve as they grow up, reading should still have a role to play -that might be independent reading, or you reading to them or continuing to listen to them read every day if they need extra support. Talk to them about what they like to read and what you're reading, let them see you reading, and help them to access libraries - just encourage them to keep on reading basically! Reading should be seen as a pleasure, not a chore. If you need inspiration for books, there are plenty of age-appropriate lists online, or you can ask your child to talk to their English teacher, or contact the school office for their details and ask them yourself.

3. Ask the experts

Parents often say a humbling thing about their children growing older is the realisation they can no longer help them with their homework (not without some time on Google anyway), or when they do, they later discover that the work was wrong in some way.

So, if your child is struggling, please ask the teacher, or, better yet, encourage your child to ask their teacher if they can. It'll help them develop as an independent learner, build their relationship with their teacher and take the pressure off you. We as teachers ask our colleagues for help all the time.

Sources and further help

This guide is based on research from the EEF, which you can find [here](#).

SEND

How to support your child can be quite different if they have SEND: please contact our SENDCo for more support and resources if this is the case.

Approaching GCSEs or other assessments

We work with Maximise your Potential, an organisation that specialises in study skills for exam students, and you can read our summary of their masterclass for parents on GCSE study skills [here](#).