

10 Steps to Better Grades – Back to School with BigIQkids.com



BigIQkids.com, the world's leading online learning destination for children K-6, strives to provide the tools necessary for every child to become an A+ student. Drawing upon our professional and personal experiences and thousands of interviews with students, parents and educators, we've consolidated our best practices into a new *Back to School Guide -*

10 Steps to Better Grades.

The truth is, when dealing with young children, there is a significant onus on the parent(s) to establish expectations, lead by example and outline the required parameters associated with homework and study. No matter how smart a child is, without firm oversight from a committed parent or guardian, academic success will be elusive. Kids need to learn the importance of education early on and the younger you start your child on the road to academic appreciation, the easier it will be for them to excel in middle and high school.

10 Steps to Better Grades

1. Structure

Children thrive in structured environments. Your kids need to be on a schedule and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them each day. If left to their own devices, children make childish decisions. Parents need to schedule their children's time and communicate that schedule in an easy to follow format. This doesn't mean EVER minute is accounted for resulting in a gulag-like environment. A good schedule should include free time

providing a child the opportunity to test their own decision making skills.



Parent ?: Does your child have a schedule? If not, visit www.bigiqkids.com for sample schedules that can start you and your young learner on the road to structure and understanding.



BigIQkids Tip: Get the TV, computer and video game console out of the bedroom. Place them in a common area and strictly enforce their usage, particularly during the school week. Use them as a reward for completing all academic and reading lessons.

2. Expectations

Aim high! If there are no goals or just general instructions like “try your best” children will invariably underachieve. We recommend setting lofty objectives. Communicate to your child that his/her JOB is school. You expect a report card filled with A’s and demonstrate your commitment to excellence by providing all the tools necessary for Junior to achieve success. Remember, these goals need to be communicated in a positive “Yes We Can” atmosphere. When your kids miss the mark, and they will, discuss these shortfalls in a loving manner. Continued proactivity is the only way to ensure established goals become realized results.



Parent ?: Are you aware of your child’s assignments? When their projects are due? What chapters are being covered on their next math test?



BigIQkids.com Tip: Your child's education requires your daily involvement. Make it a priority to review each day and know the dates for upcoming tests, projects and assignments. This not only sends a signal to your child that these events are important but such involvement will also inspire earlier and more intense preparation by your child.

3. Don't Procrastinate

Start homework as soon as your child gets home. Yes, we realize your angels need some time to decompress, so we first

recommend a snack and quick chat about their day. But then it's off to knock out some worksheets and finish those book reports. Best to strike while the teacher's instructions are still fresh in their minds. You will be amazed at how stress free bedtime and the following morning will become. No last minute rushing or frantic searching. Everything is finished and the backpack is packed, waiting next to the door. This approach does wonders towards instilling a strong work ethic and appreciation for academic preparedness.



Parent ?: Is your child staying up late to complete their homework? Are they rushing in the morning to finish assignments creating a stressful environment before school?



BigIQkids.com Tip: Don't put free time ahead of school work. Your child **MUST** do their homework. They're not required to go to dance class, they have no contractual obligation to attend baseball, and the last we checked, Girl Scouts is not mandatory in any of the 50 States. Kids need to think of school as their job and parents are their managers. All the other activities are privileges for those employees who get their work finished on-time.

4. Daily Engagement

Not a day should go by without some kind of academic stimulation. Especially over the summer break. "Learning" must be a part of a child's daily life. Just like rolling out of bed, breakfast, and the Disney Channel. Based upon the idea that "a little bit everyday does a long way" BigIQkids.com provides daily, grade appropriate lessons in spelling, math, vocabulary and U.S. geography. These lessons take approximately 10 minutes each to complete and revolve around your child's proficiency with the goal of achieving true mastery. As parents, it's our job to monitor and make sure daily academic stimulation becomes part of the schedule.



Parent ?: What is your child doing "academically" over weekends, vacations and summer break? If you don't know you need to reprioritize academics and make it part of your young learner's 365 day schedule.



BigIQkids.com Tip: Fact - kids have a lot of down time. Fact – school is becoming more competitive, even elementary school. Instilling an element of learning every day will give your child an academic edge and establish wonderful study habits that last a lifetime.

5. Diet and Exercise

Your child's dietary requirements are vastly different from yours. Unlike adults, kids need fat in their diets to facilitate proper growth and development. Unless recommended by a child's physician or a registered dietitian, children should not eat a strict low fat diet. It is prudent to limit their intake of artery-clogging saturated fats and to avoid heart-harming trans fats, but following the low fat diet of an adult will lead to nutritional deficiencies. Children need whole milk, meat, dairy, and oily fish. The types of food that traumatize most soccer moms and middle aged dads. Be mindful of their needs.

Equally as important is exercise. Kids who are active will have stronger muscles and bones, be less likely to become overweight, have a better outlook on life and will sleep easier and longer.



Parent ?: Does your child exercise daily?



BigIQkids.com Tip: Don't simply say "go outside and play". You need to make sure your child is actually being active and not just sitting in the sand box. This is a great opportunity for you to get outside and spend some time with your child. Exercise together by riding bikes, playing catch or kicking a soccer ball.

6. Sleep

LIGHT OUTS! It's time parents understand the correlation between quality sleep and a child's ability to reason, process and learn. In his book *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD, provides these insightful comments on the functions of sleep:

"Sleep is the power source that keeps your mind alert and calm. Every night and at every nap, sleep recharges the brain's battery. Sleeping well increases brainpower just as weight lifting builds stronger muscles, because sleeping well increases your attention span and allows you to be physically relaxed and mentally alert at the same time. Then you are at your personal best."

Dr. Paul Suratt of the University of Virginia studied the impact of lack of sleep on vocabulary test scores of elementary school students. He found those children who did not get the requisite amount of nightly sleep scored significantly lower than their well rested counterparts. According to Dr. Suratt "sleep disorders can impair children's I.Q.'s as much as lead exposure."

OK, so how much is enough sleep? The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends children in preschool sleep between 11 and 13 hours a night and school aged children between 10 and 11 hours of sleep a night.



Parent ?: Does your child have a bedtime? Are they getting at least 10 hours of sleep every night?




BigIQkids.com Tip: Have a routine and stick to it. Have few or no expectations to your child's bedtime. And get that TV out of their room! Also, tuck your child in at bedtime and make sure they are not stressed or worried about anything. Talking with a parent before going to sleep helps to make for a restful night.

7. Praise

Following the rules should result in a reward. It's one thing to set out a list of demands for your child but it's another to praise them when they deliver. Hugs are free and give them generously. Children ultimately want to make their parents happy. So let them know they are doing a great job.





Parent?: When was the last time you told your child he/she made you proud? Or they did a great job on something?

 **BigIQkids.com Tip:** Little things do matter to kids. They are constantly absorbing and processing their interactions and parental praise is highly coveted. Become less self absorbed and focus more on your child's efforts, accomplishments and shortfalls.

8. RIF


READING IS FUNDAMENTAL. Studies show the more children read, the better readers and writers they become. And, the better test takers they become. If you can't read the question, answering correctly is a long shot. As a parent, you need to appreciate the importance of reading and minimize the many forces that pull children away from reading like television, video games, cell phones and computers. Take action and promote the simplistic virtues of a good book.

 **Parent?:** Do you monitor what books your child is reading? Are you familiar with the recommended reading lists from school?

 **BigIQkids.com Tip:** Your child's reading needs to be managed. By declaring 7:30pm – 8:30pm "reading time" is a step in the right direction but one that also requires proactive management. Know what your child is reading and have them summarize to you books they've finished and what they liked and disliked about the story, characters and theme.

9. Role Model Needed

It's easy to set rules. What's difficult is walking the walk and being a role model your children can look up to for inspiration. If reading is so important Mom, you better pick up a book and set aside some time. Same goes for diet, exercise, sleep, structure and procrastination. Be an example for your kids and they will be more apt to adopt a similar lifestyle.

 **Parent ?:** Do you eat healthy? Read regularly? Get enough sleep? Are you composed and organized?



BigIQkids.com Tip: Taking care of yourself helps you be a better parent. Looking in the mirror is tough. But a candid self assessment along with a roadmap to improvement will benefit everyone around you.

10. Communication

Without dialog, interaction and sharing we have nothing. BigIQkids.com encourages every family to put a priority on old-fashion, sit down dinners filled with conversation. Each child should have the opportunity to speak and talk about his/her day and by doing so, will not only improve their public speaking skills, but according to recent studies, improve their chances of bringing home straight A's by 64%.



Parent ?: How are the channels of communication between you and your son or daughter? Do you know their friends' names? Do you know what they had for lunch? Is there a bully in your child's classroom?



BigIQkids.com Tip: Talk, Talk, and talk some more. There are many opportunities to talk to your children. Talking during dinner, on the way to practice, and before bed are great times to demonstrate your genuine interest in their lives and will build strong bonds between the two of you.

Yes, following these steps is a lot of work. But remember, nothing worthwhile in life is ever easy. And, there's nothing more important than your child. Try to implement these steps at home you'll see better grades and a more self confident, self assured young learner.

BigIQkids.com bundle package includes daily lessons in spelling, math, vocabulary and U.S. geography and for more information on our programs please visit www.BigIQkids.com.